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# Welsh Women's Aid

## Annual Membership Report: Data from specialist services in Wales 2020/21

Period 01/04/2020 – 31/03/2021

integrity support  
 high-quality services  
**needs-led** equality  
 sexual violence **excellence**  
 gender responsive  
**survivors**  
 well-being **Wales**  
 safety **feminism**  
**women children**  
 non-discrimination  
**independence**  
 integrity holistic  
**domestic abuse**  
 children **high-quality services**  
**needs-led** collaboration  
**Wales** integrity advocacy support  
 men human rights **empowerment**  
 support equality **live fear free**  
 sexual violence  
**feminism**  
**safety**

## **Acknowledgements**



We are extremely thankful to the specialist services that are members of Welsh Women's Aid, who have provided their data which informs this report. We acknowledge the increasing demands on their services and resources to support the women, men and children and young people who have been affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV), and appreciate their efforts in working with us to build a national picture of the sector.

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## Foreword

Welsh Women's Aid membership report for 2020-21 is a unique one, and not only reflects the increased challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions posed, but also how local membership services remained responsive and proactively ensured those in need of services were still supported in such unprecedented circumstances. Welsh Women's Aid, along with our members, have also had a renewed focus on diversity and inclusion this past year and are working with Race Council Cymru to improve responses.

WWA member services supported 19,916 people during this year, which is technically a decrease from the previous financial year, but the data also tells us about the increase in complexity of cases, reflecting the impact of lockdown on families and how all members responded to this changing landscape. Notably, there was a double the number of survivors who reported financial abuse and an increase of almost six times in online abuse when compared with the previous year.

Also of note, there was a 274% increase in the number of referrals made to MARAC when compared with the previous financial year and a 25% increase in the number of survivors discussed at a MARAC. This is likely due to the increased severity and risk during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our specialist Sexual Violence services within the membership supported 1,346 individuals in 2020-21, with the majority of those being women. Notably, most referrals into Sexual Violence services as recorded was individual self-referral, followed by referral by Health Service and other specialist VAW service.

Whilst dealing with the new challenges of supporting survivors through a pandemic, WWA and its member services faced ongoing challenges including local commissioning, short-term funding and a continued lack of consistent support for children and young people affected by VAWDASV. WWA have committed to prioritise campaigning on behalf of its membership for long-term and appropriate funding as well as advocate for the recognition of the vital work delivered by services. We are also continuing to profile the value of specialist expertise not only in long term prevention but for those who directly benefit from your commitment to making Change that Lasts for survivors and communities across Wales.

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## Introduction

Welsh Women's Aid is the national umbrella body for third sector violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) specialist services in Wales. Our vision is a world in which women and children live free from domestic abuse, sexual violence and all forms of violence against women and by doing so achieve independence, freedom and liberation from oppression. We are working as a federation so that:

- Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence is better understood, challenged and prevented.
- Governments, agencies and communities are held accountable for delivering action for change by women and children.
- The state, agencies and communities deliver more effective responses to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- Survivors access early support which meets their needs and improves their health and well-being.
- Specialist services are strengthened and supported to effectively meet diverse needs and reduce harmful effects of violence.
- Women and children have healthy, safe and equal relationships.

The prevalence of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence remains largely hidden. The extent of femicide, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation and other forms of abuse are often invisible in official statistics nationally and locally, and there is a lack of consensus about how such violence should be defined and measured, and how this can best be achieved. Recent estimates by the UK Government put the cost of domestic abuse for victims in England and Wales as £66 billion.<sup>1</sup> This does not account for the cost of all other forms of violence against women and girls, including sexual violence, so called honour-based abuse and sexual exploitation.

This report focuses on the referrals to and use of specialist services by survivors, for the 2020/21 financial year. The data is limited to that provided by members of our federation through the year and at the year-end, and by our Wales database of provision of local and national VAWDASV specialist services.

Specifically, the data sources that inform this report are:

### Quarterly Monitoring Data

At the end of each quarter in 2020/21, Welsh Women's Aid distributed a data form to gather output and outcome statistics from member services.

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<sup>1</sup> Home Office, *Research and analysis: The economic and social costs of domestic abuse*. (UK Government website, 2019). Available at:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-domestic-abuse](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-domestic-abuse).

This annual data analysis report comprises the cumulative datasets submitted by our members to depict the national demand for their services and the nature of the responses provided across Wales.

### **'Routes to Support' database**

Data has also been included from "Routes to Support", the only UK-wide online database which contains up-to-date information about local and national domestic abuse and other violence against women services throughout the UK. This report includes data for all

services in Wales – wider than our membership – to provide a national picture of demand and provision of services throughout Wales.

The Routes to Support project is managed by Welsh Women's Aid (for Wales) in partnership with Women's Aid Federation of England, Scottish Women's Aid and Women's Aid Federation of Northern Ireland.

### **Live Fear Free Helpline**

Data has been included from the national Live Fear Free helpline in Wales, managed and delivered by Welsh Women's Aid and funded by the Welsh Government.

## **National Overview: 2020/21**



The Live Fear Free Helpline responded to **30,063** contacts

**26,669** survivors were referred to local specialist services during this financial year, a 19% increase from 2019-20.



**19,916** survivors were supported by specialist services during this year, a 6% decrease from 2019-20.

### *Refuge-based support services*

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**1,226** survivors benefitted from refuge-based support services



**941** survivors were unable to be supported by refuge-based support services



**283** children and young people, on average, were living in refuge



**33** survivors without 'recourse to public funds' (NRPF) were supported by refuge

### *Community-based support services*

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**17,344** survivors were supported by community-based support services



**1,992** survivors were unable to be supported by community-based support services



**3,914** children and young people, were supported directly, this period



**84** survivors were supported to apply for the Domestic Violence Rule<sup>2</sup>

### *Sexual Violence-based support services*

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**1,346** survivors were supported by sexual violence-based support services



**321** survivors remained on the waiting list at the end of Quarter 4

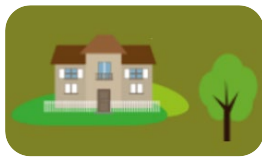
<sup>2</sup> Persons who come to the UK on a spouse or partner visa who are experiencing domestic violence can apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain under the domestic violence rule.



## **About specialist services**

Specialist services for survivors (delivered, for example, through refuge-based services that include refuge-based support, floating support, and community outreach support; or through rape crisis and sexual violence support and counselling; independent advocacy and 'one stop shop' women's centres) aim to deliver needs-led, strengths-based, gender responsive, trauma-informed support. These services protect, support, and empower survivors and their children and work to prevent violence and abuse from starting and escalating, and are provided by specialised staff with in-depth knowledge of violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence.

This report focusses on our member services that offer physical and emotional safety, support, advocacy, and practical help, delivered through a combination of **refuge-based support, community outreach support**<sup>3</sup> and **dedicated sexual violence/rape crisis services**. Refuge-based services form part of a national and UK network of provision that helps families to have 24-hour access and move between refuges if needed.



**Refuge-based support** delivers a planned programme of therapeutic and practical support, above

and beyond a safe place to stay, and access to peer support from other survivors.

This includes 24-hour access; information and practical help, individual and group support and safety planning; counselling; support and advocacy with housing, finances including benefits/debt, health and well-being, parenting, immigration, legal, criminal and family justice systems, education and employment. The service is designed to meet, and is led by, the needs of survivors and their children, and is delivered by support workers (including dedicated support workers for children and young people)

trained and experienced in violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, in an environment which empowers women and children and promotes their autonomy and self-determination. This also includes resettlement support which helps survivors move on to rebuild their lives and establish themselves in local communities.



**Domestic abuse/VAWDASV community outreach support**

delivers advocacy, protection and support for survivors in local communities through helpline support and information; short and long-term psychological counselling; information and practical help, individual and group support, and safety planning; peer support groups; support and

<sup>3</sup> Includes 'floating support'. Floating Support is support provided in the community funded by *Supporting People* where the aim is to provide housing-related support in the community to sustain tenancies or re-house survivors.



advocacy with housing and sustaining tenancies, support with finances including benefits/debt, health and well-being, parenting, immigration, legal issues, education and employment; advocacy and support for survivors accessing specialist domestic violence courts, criminal and family justice systems; advocacy and education to support survivors using primary care, maternity and urgent treatment health services (e.g. IRIS advocacy in GP practices); and advocacy, support and counselling for survivors who have experienced multiple forms of abuse.



**Dedicated rape crisis and sexual violence services**

provide services to survivors of rape and sexual assault through counselling, therapeutic sessions, individual or group support. Trained professionals are also available to provide information and advocacy with health services, housing, finances, well-being, parenting, education and employment, as well as providing support through the legal process, should individuals choose to report or not.



**Partnership working** includes institutional advocacy, training, provision of expert advice and

upskilling professionals, services and partnerships to better identify, respond to, and prevent violence and abuse, and providing referral pathways from public services for survivors to access specialist support.



**Prevention work in local communities**

through community engagement and supporting champions to speak out against violence; education of children, young people and adults; supporting survivors to engage in service improvement; delivering empowerment programmes (e.g. employability and anti-poverty work) and challenging inequality between men and women and intersectional discrimination which is the predominant cause and consequence of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.



**Promotion of equality and human rights**, which includes developing

and delivering services that are led by and for women and led by and for Black and minority ethnic (BME) women. Safe separate provision for men and women, and services led by/for women and by/for BME women enable specialist services to operate from a framework of empowerment and self-determination. Services not only provide safety and support, but also empower women who see and hear that their experiences of sexism, racism or homophobia are not isolated, and help women find mutual support and self-determination. The provision of tailored support to survivors from Black and minority communities and to survivors who are women, by support workers who understand the particular risks and dynamics of violence experienced by women and experienced in different communities and the barriers to approaching

mainstream services, is highly valued by survivors of abuse.

**Risk management and behaviour change perpetrator programmes;** some services also provide behaviour change and risk management programmes and individual interventions for perpetrators, which includes domestic violence perpetrator programmes and parallel partner/victim safety and support services.

**The Live Fear Free Helpline** offers a 24-hour, 365-days-a-year lifeline for survivors impacted by violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence. It provides a main point of contact to survivors, family/friends and professionals, delivering holistic and integrated responses including information/sign-posting; needs and risk assessments; safety-planning, support and advocacy; and referral pathways to specialist and general services in Wales and the UK.

**Access to all specialist services** is through a combination of self-referrals, referrals from other agencies, or referrals from the national Live Fear Free Helpline (delivered by Welsh Women's Aid and funded by the Welsh Government).

**Quality standards:** VAWDASV specialist services in Wales operate within a framework of accredited quality service standards which provide benchmarks for service providers, funders and commissioners about the extent and mix of services that should be available, who should provide them, and the evidence-

based principles and practice base from which they should operate. In Wales, Welsh Women's Aid delivers the National Quality Service Standards for domestic abuse services, supported by the Welsh Government, that operate alongside dedicated sexual violence service standards for Wales accredited by Rape Crisis England & Wales and Survivors Trust. These are accompanied by Imkaan's service standards for specialist services led by and for Black and minority women, and Respect standards for working with perpetrators.

## Who uses specialist services?

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence occurs in all communities and is widespread throughout every socioeconomic group, irrespective of age, gender identity, ability, sexuality, ethnicity religion or belief. However, it often remains hidden due to threats, shame, embarrassment, and fear.

Men are disproportionately perpetrators of abuse and women are disproportionately impacted by domestic violence and abuse, sexual violence and child sexual abuse, stalking, so called 'honour-based' violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), gang-related violence, and human trafficking.

Some groups of women are more likely to be abused, including younger women, disabled women and girls, women and girls with mental health support needs, drug/alcohol dependency, or facing homelessness. Women from some Black and minority groups may face further barriers to seeking help due to racism, discrimination, stigmatisation, and community rejection.

Welsh Women's Aid promotes an intersectional approach, recognising the unique experiences of survivors of abuse and the ways in which difference and disadvantage may help or hinder access to support, safety, and justice. Differences such as age, sex, gender, class, ethnicity, ability, and sexuality intersect to inform lived experiences and these factors can further reinforce conditions of inequality and exclusion. This means that sex and gender-based violence can also be connected to factors such as ethnicity, age, class, disability, and sexuality.

When delivering support services, specialist services are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and to addressing the intersecting inequalities experienced by women and men.

Member services are encouraged to disaggregate data by the nine 'protected characteristics' identified in the Equality Act 2010 (sex, age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity). This data is collected for survivors who are newly referred to and who engage with specialist services for support<sup>4</sup>, to help services comply with their legal responsibility to ensure services are accessible and targeted, and that anyone using their services is treated fairly and not discriminated against.

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<sup>4</sup> Data is available for survivors who engaged with community-based, sexual violence and refuge-based services only. Data related to protected characteristics related to children and adults aged 16+.

### **1.1: Sex of survivors**

The sex of survivors was collected for 99.9% (n=16,082) of survivors who engaged with specialist services in the financial year 2020/21. Across the specialist services, 92% (n=14,868) of all survivors were female whilst male survivors represented 7% (n=1,177) of the data sample. Of note, <1% (n=33) of survivors were categorised as 'other', however, organisations often record survivors as 'other' when they have been unable to record their sex. Of the 1,177 male survivors, the highest proportion (n=94, 12%) accessed sexual violence services.

**Table 1:** Sex of survivors in specialist support services

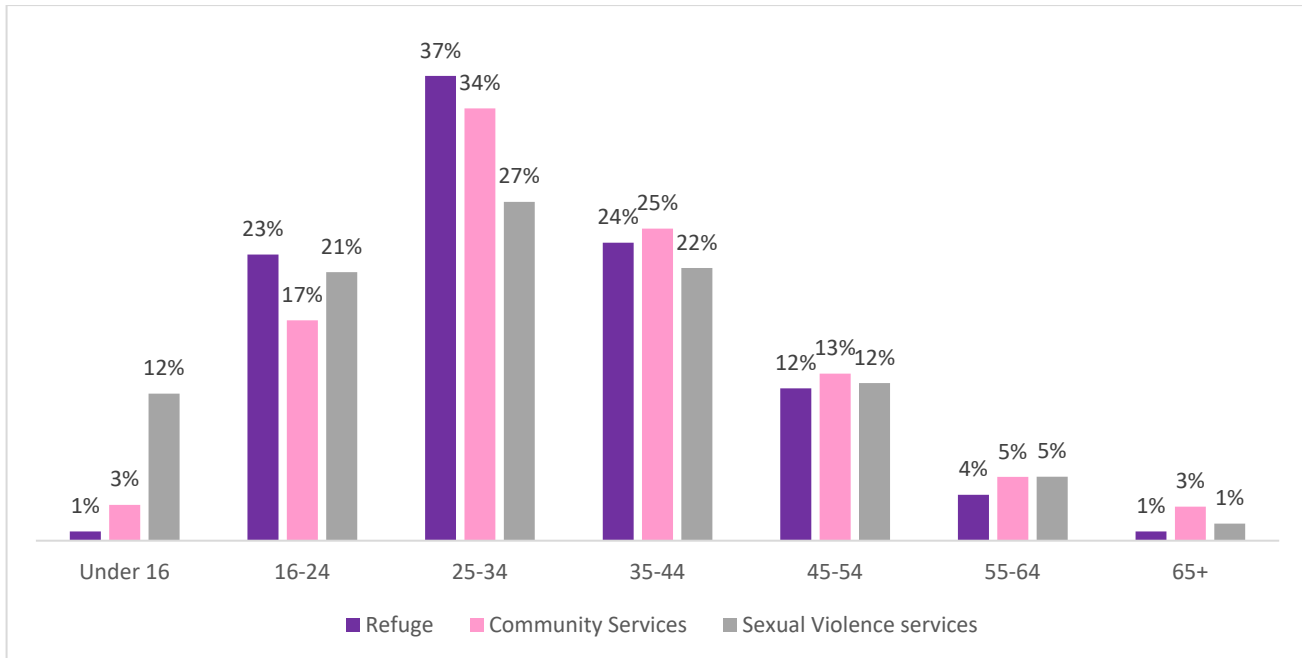
	Refuge-based support		Community-based support		Dedicated sexual violence support	
Male	22	2%	1,061	7%	94	12%
Female	962	98%	13,218	92%	688	87%
Other	0	0%	24	0%	9	1%
Prefer Not to Say	0	0%	0	0%	4	1%
Data Unavailable	0	0%	1	0%	0	0%
<b>Total sample</b>	<b>984</b>		<b>14,304</b>		<b>795</b>	

### **1.2: Age**

The data on age was available for 80% (n=12,847) of the survivors accessing specialist support services. The most prevalent age category of survivors accessing support services this financial year were between the ages of 25-34 (n=4,369, 34%). This aligns with the data provided in the previous financial year (2019/20). Of the 12,847 survivors whose age was recorded, 18% (n=2,310) were aged 16-24 whilst 3% (n=396) were aged 16 or under. Notably, there was a 25% increase in the number of survivors in the 16-24 age range when compared with the previous financial year. For the community-based services specifically, there was a 34% increase in the number of survivors accessing support who were in the 16-24 age category when compared with the previous financial year. Whilst there was a 54% increase in the number of survivors who accessed specialist support services from the 65+ age group when compared with the previous financial year, this age group represented just 2% of all survivors who accessed support services (and disclosed their age). WWA have supported the Older People Commissioner for Wales report<sup>5</sup> on the abuse of older people which looks at how support can be more accessible for older people who are or have experienced abuse.

<sup>5</sup> Older People's Commissioner for Wales, *Stopping the abuse of older people* [Website], <https://olderpeoplewales.com/en/stopping-abuse.aspx>, (accessed 25 August 2021).

**Figure 1: Age ranges of survivors engaging with services following referral**



### 1.3: Disability

Welsh Women’s Aid supports and advocates for the social model of disability and thus we aim to remove unnecessary barriers which may prevent survivors with a disability from accessing specialist support services. Of the survivors who engaged with the services, at least 10% (n=1,603) identified as a disabled person, with the highest proportion (17%) accessing sexual violence-based support services. Of note, it is likely that these figures are an underestimation as not all organisations are able to collate this data. Research<sup>6</sup> has evidenced that women with a disability are more likely to experience violence and abuse than non-disabled women. Whilst there was a 78% increase in the number of survivors who identified as disabled accessing specialist support services when compared with the previous financial year, it cannot be guaranteed that this was a result of WWA’s continued work specialist services and Disability Wales to encourage specialist services to be more accessible to disabled people.

For more information about VAWDASV and disability, please refer to our recent report with Disability Wales surveying survivors, which sets out recommendations for specialist and public services.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> ONS, *Disability and Crime, UK: 2019* [Website], [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/compendium/focusonviolentcrimeandsexualoffences/yearendingmarch2015/chapter4intimatepersonalviolenceandpartnerabuse#heavily-victimised-groups-of-partner-abuse](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/compendium/focusonviolentcrimeandsexualoffences/yearendingmarch2015/chapter4intimatepersonalviolenceandpartnerabuse#heavily-victimised-groups-of-partner-abuse), (accessed 25 August 2021).

<sup>7</sup> The report is available online: [www.welshwomensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/WWA-and-Disability-Wales-2019-report-Final-ENG.pdf](https://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/WWA-and-Disability-Wales-2019-report-Final-ENG.pdf)



#### **1.4: Gender reassignment**

Survivors who disclosed that they had undergone gender reassignment represented <1% (n=31) of the data set, the highest proportion of whom accessed sexual violence-based support services. There is a possibility that these figures represent an underestimation as not all organisations are able to collate this data.

#### **1.5: Race and ethnicity**

Data on ethnicity was available for 66% (n=10,602) of survivors. Of these, White: British, was the most prevalent ethnicity of survivors (n=9,404, 89%), followed by White: Other (n=382, 4%). Of note, just 11% (n=1,198) of survivors identified as a race or ethnicity other than White British. A full breakdown of ethnicity has been provided in *Table 2*.

**Table 2:** Ethnic backgrounds of survivors engaging with services following referral

	Refuge-based support		Community-based support		Dedicated sexual violence support	
White: British (Welsh/English/Scottish/Northern Irish)	707	<b>85%</b>	8,196	<b>89%</b>	501	<b>94%</b>
White: Irish	4	<b>0%</b>	28	<b>0%</b>	2	<b>0%</b>
White: Irish or Gypsy Traveller	4	<b>0%</b>	27	<b>0%</b>	2	<b>0%</b>
White: Other	24	<b>3%</b>	344	<b>4%</b>	14	<b>3%</b>
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Asian	2	<b>0%</b>	31	<b>0%</b>	2	<b>0%</b>
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Black African	4	<b>0%</b>	28	<b>0%</b>	0	<b>0%</b>
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Black Caribbean	1	<b>0%</b>	82	<b>1%</b>	0	<b>0%</b>
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: Other mixed	6	<b>1%</b>	77	<b>1%</b>	0	<b>0%</b>
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	6	<b>1%</b>	55	<b>1%</b>	2	<b>0%</b>
Asian or Asian British: Chinese	4	<b>0%</b>	13	<b>0%</b>	1	<b>0%</b>
Asian or Asian British: Indian	5	<b>1%</b>	43	<b>0%</b>	4	<b>1%</b>
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	11	<b>1%</b>	49	<b>1%</b>	1	<b>0%</b>
Asian or Asian British: Other Asian	10	<b>1%</b>	91	<b>1%</b>	2	<b>0%</b>
Black or Black British: Black African	12	<b>1%</b>	59	<b>1%</b>	0	<b>0%</b>
Black or Black British: Black Caribbean	2	<b>0%</b>	19	<b>0%</b>	0	<b>0%</b>
Black or Black British: Other Black	10	<b>1%</b>	34	<b>0%</b>	0	<b>0%</b>
Other Ethnic Group: Arab	10	<b>1%</b>	43	<b>0%</b>	0	<b>0%</b>
Other Ethnic Group: Other	6	<b>1%</b>	21	<b>0%</b>	3	<b>1%</b>
<b>Total sample</b>	<b>828</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9,240</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>534</b>	<b>100%</b>
Data unavailable	156		5,064		261	

### 1.6: Religion or belief

Of the 7,120 (44%) survivors who disclosed their religion or belief, 68% (n=4,826) were recorded as having no religion. The most prevalent categories of religion were 'Christianity (all denominations)' which accounted for 18% (n=1,266) of survivors, followed by Islam which represented 4% of survivors (n=271).

**Table 3:** Religion or belief of survivors engaging with services following referral

	Refuge-based support		Community-based support		Dedicated Sexual Violence support	
No religion	524	<b>72%</b>	4,244	<b>68%</b>	58	<b>54%</b>
Buddhist	2	<b>0%</b>	9	<b>0%</b>	0	<b>0%</b>
Christian (all denominations)	135	<b>18%</b>	1,100	<b>18%</b>	31	<b>29%</b>
Hindu	1	<b>0%</b>	10	<b>0%</b>	0	<b>0%</b>
Jewish	0	<b>0%</b>	0	<b>0%</b>	0	<b>0%</b>
Muslim	41	<b>6%</b>	226	<b>4%</b>	4	<b>4%</b>
Sikh	3	<b>0%</b>	8	<b>0%</b>	0	<b>0%</b>
Other	8	<b>1%</b>	135	<b>2%</b>	4	<b>4%</b>
Prefer Not to Say	17	<b>2%</b>	550	<b>9%</b>	10	<b>9%</b>
<b>Total sample</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,282</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100%</b>
Data unavailable	253		8,022		688	

### 1.7: Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation was disclosed by 8,657 survivors (2020/21) which represents 54% of all survivors accessing support services in this financial year (2020/21). Of the 8,657 survivors, 92% (n=7,977) disclosed that they were heterosexual. *Table 4* provides a breakdown of sexual orientation by service.

**Table 4:** Sexual orientation of survivors engaging with services following referral

	Refuge-based support		Community-based support		Dedicated sexual violence support	
Bisexual	27	<b>3%</b>	209	<b>3%</b>	16	<b>5%</b>
Gay/homosexual male	1	<b>0%</b>	26	<b>0%</b>	6	<b>2%</b>
Lesbian/homosexual female	13	<b>2%</b>	80	<b>1%</b>	11	<b>3%</b>
Heterosexual	745	<b>92%</b>	6,938	<b>93%</b>	294	<b>85%</b>
Other	4	<b>0%</b>	17	<b>0%</b>	13	<b>4%</b>
Prefer not to say	23	<b>3%</b>	227	<b>3%</b>	7	<b>2%</b>
<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>813</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>7,497</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>100%</b>
Data unavailable	171		6,807		448	



### **1.8: Pregnancy and maternity**

Of the 14,868 survivors who identified as female, 4% (n=557) were pregnant when accessing support services. When each service was viewed in isolation, 5% (n=51) of survivors accessing refuge-based support services, 4% (n=504) of survivors accessing community-based support services and <1% (n=2) of survivors accessing sexual-violence based support services were pregnant. In addition, within this reporting period, 3% (n=434) of women were reported to have had a child in the previous 12 months.

### **1.9: Language**

In this reporting period, 3% (n=417) of survivors disclosed that their first language was Welsh, the highest proportion of whom (n=163, 21%) accessed sexual violence-based support services. Notably, for 3% (n=483) of survivors, their first language was neither English nor Welsh.

### **1.10: Marriage and civil partnership**

The marital status of survivors accessing support services was recorded for 43% (n=6,865) of all survivors. The highest proportion of survivors were 'single' (n=3,325, 48%), followed by 'separated' (n=1,387, 20%). *Table 5* provides a further breakdown of marriage/civil partnership status by service.

**Table 5:** Marriage/civil partnership status

	Refuge-based support		Community-based support		Dedicated sexual violence support	
Single	412	<b>64%</b>	2,790	<b>46%</b>	123	<b>62%</b>
Co-habiting	46	<b>7%</b>	714	<b>12%</b>	21	<b>11%</b>
Engaged	5	<b>1%</b>	10	<b>0%</b>	0	<b>0%</b>
Married / Civil partnership	87	<b>14%</b>	733	<b>12%</b>	27	<b>14%</b>
Separated	76	<b>12%</b>	1,291	<b>21%</b>	20	<b>10%</b>
Divorced	11	<b>2%</b>	257	<b>4%</b>	7	<b>4%</b>
Widow/Widower	0	<b>0%</b>	20	<b>0%</b>	1	<b>1%</b>
Other	6	<b>1%</b>	208	<b>3%</b>	0	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,023</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>100%</b>
Data unavailable	341		8,281		596	

## **Refuge-based support services**

### 2.1. Referrals and access to services

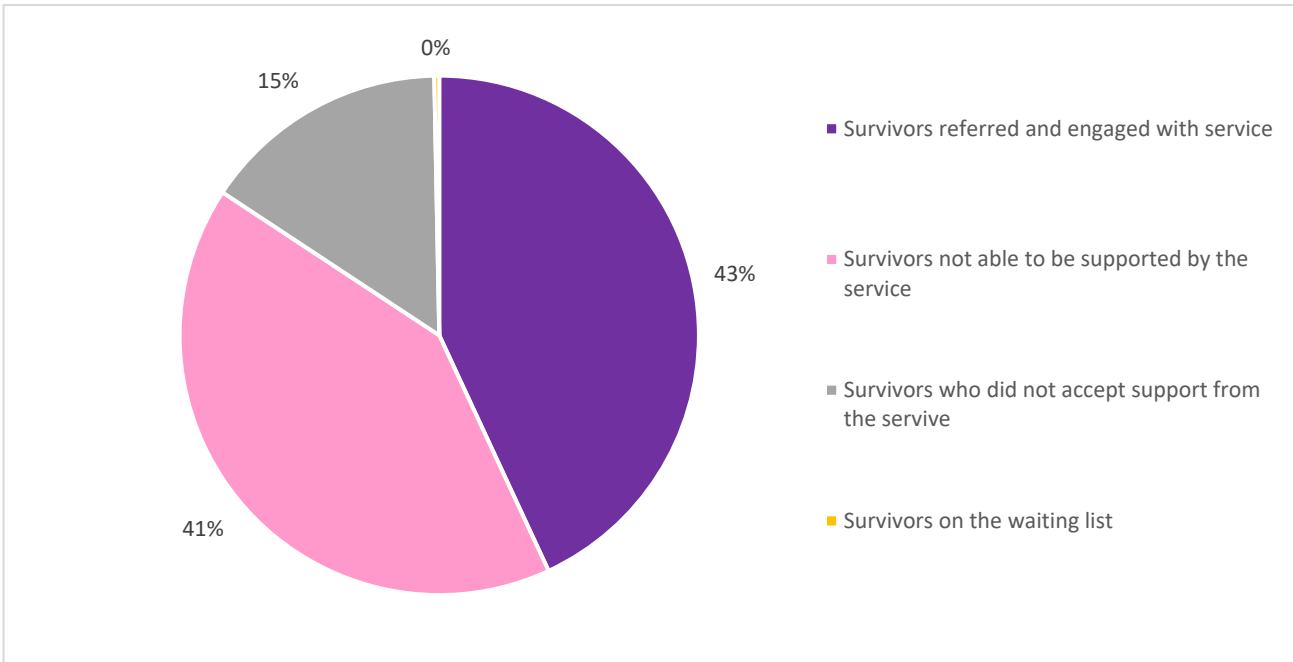
In this financial year, largely due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic the data returns revealed that there was a slight 10% decrease in the total number of survivors supported/accommodated when compared with the previous financial year<sup>8</sup>. Of the 1,226 survivors, 98% (n=1,198) were female whilst the remaining 2% (n=28) were male. Whilst there was a 2% increase in the number of new referrals received in this period, there was a 12% decrease in the number of survivors who engaged with the service and a 17% increase in the number of survivors who could not be supported by refuge-based support services.

**Table 6:** Survivors referred to and accessing refuge-based support

	Women	Men	Other	Total
Total survivors supported in refuge-based services in 2020/21	1,198	28	0	<b>1,226</b>
No. of new referrals received in period	2,197	98	0	<b>2,295</b>
No. of survivors referred and engaged with service	962	22	0	<b>984</b>
Survivors not able to be supported by service	883	58	0	<b>941</b>
No. of survivors who did not accept support from service	335	17	0	<b>352</b>
No. of survivors on the waiting list at the end of Q4	7	0	0	<b>7</b>

<sup>8</sup> Total supported calculated with total supported figure in Q1, then all new starters from Q2, Q3 and Q4 to prevent double counting.

**Figure 2: Engagement with refuge-based support services across Wales<sup>9</sup>**



## **2.2. Survivors unable to be supported**

### *Survivors who could not supported by the refuge*

In this financial year, there was a 17% increase in the number of survivors who could not be supported by the refuge at the point of referral when compared with the previous financial year, as approximately 41% of all new referrals were refused refuge-based support services. Additional support needs associated with drugs and alcohol and a shortage of refuge spaces were the two most prevalent reasons for refusal reasons for both male and female survivors (*Figure 3*). Of the referrals where the refusal reason was provided (n=923), 5% (n=45) could not be supported due to previous convictions/criminal record and 7% (n=69) of survivors could not be supported as it was deemed to be unsafe as the perpetrator knew the location of the survivors and/or refuge. *Table 7* demonstrates the number of refuge-based organisations in Wales who have the capacity to offer support to survivors with certain additional support needs and services to highlight the additional barriers faced when accessing support services.

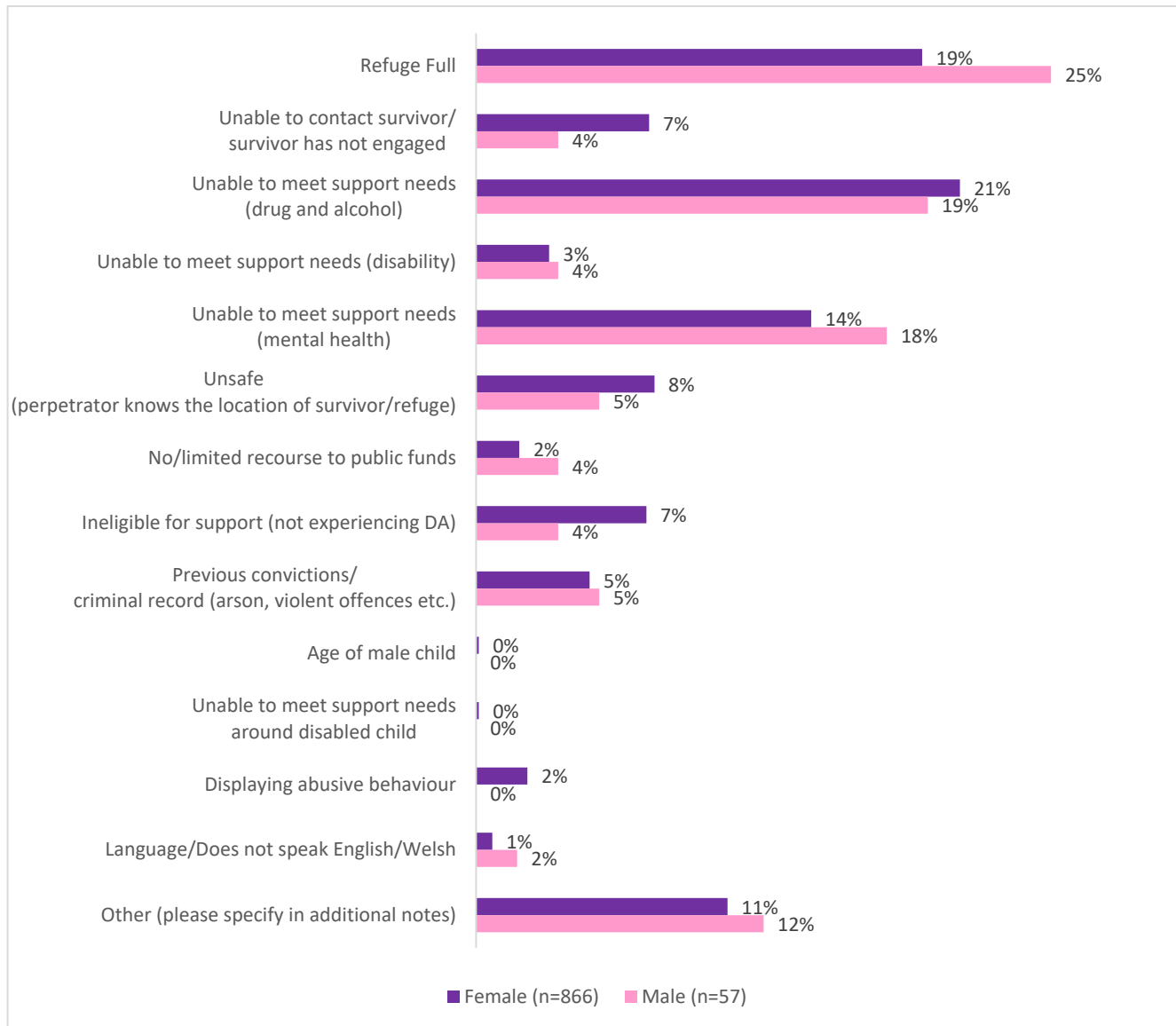
<sup>9</sup> Figure 2 is based on 2,284 referrals; the discrepancy is due to referrals placed on waiting lists across the financial year and therefore does not match the total number of new referrals received in this financial quarter.

**Table 7:** Number of refuge-based support organisations in Wales who accept women with additional support needs across 36 services in Wales<sup>10</sup> (Routes to Support, October 2021).

<b>Additional Support needs</b>	<b>No. services</b>	<b>% of services</b>
Women with mental health support needs	30	83%
Women with drug dependency needs	23	64%
Women with alcohol dependency needs	23	64%
Women on a Methadone programme	29	81%
No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)	13	36%
Wheelchair access	14	39%

<sup>10</sup> This data includes multiple services which may fall under one umbrella organisation

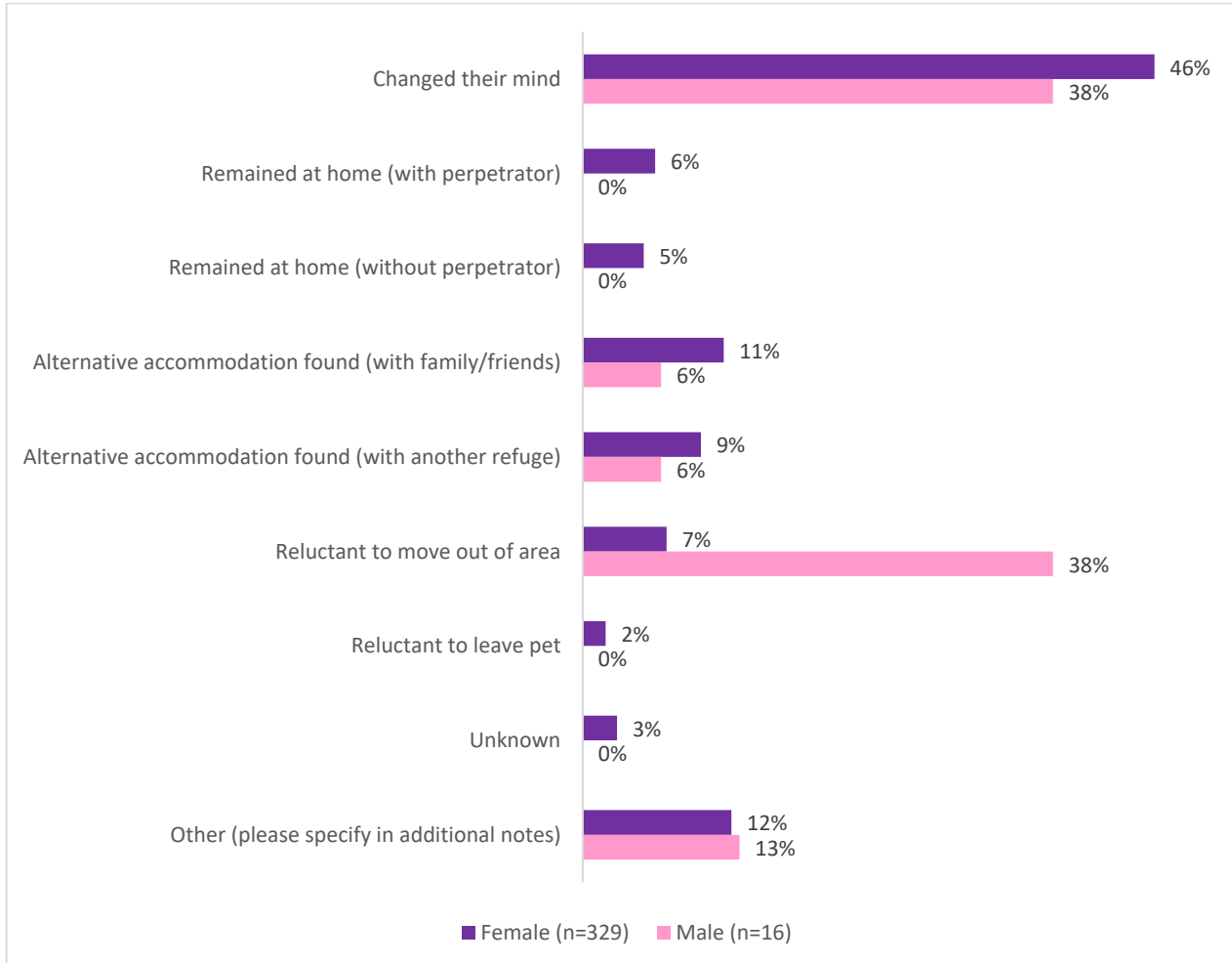
**Figure 3: Reason survivors were not able to be supported by services in Wales**



*Survivors who did not accept support following referral*

In this financial year, 15% (n=352) of all survivors referred to refuge-based support services did not accept support, of which the reason was recorded for 98% (n=345) of survivors. The most prevalent reason documented was ‘a change of mind’ (n=156, 45%). Of note, 8% (n=28) of the survivors were reluctant to move out of the area and 2% (n=6) of survivors were averse to leaving their pet. The lack of refuge spaces, as aforementioned, has an impact on the accessibility of refuge, as survivors may be required to temporarily relocate which means leaving the comfort of their community, family, work, pets, and children.

**Figure 4:** Reason survivors did not accept support from services



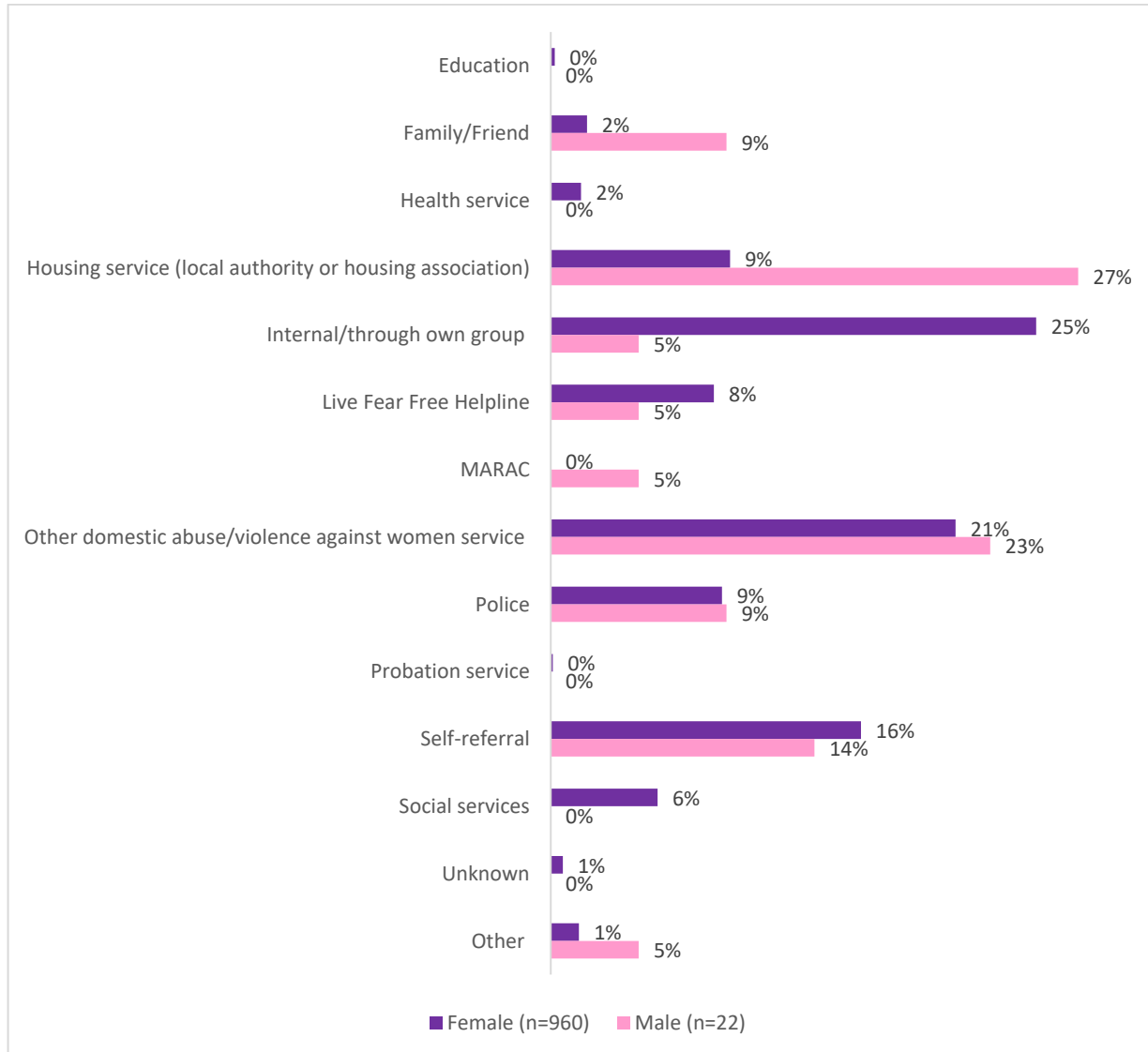
### **2.3. Referral sources and location**

#### *Referral sources*

The data on the referral source was collected for 99.8% (n=982) of all survivors (n=984) accessing support this financial year. Internal referrals (n=242, 25%) and ‘other domestic abuse/violence against women services’ (n=206, 21%) were the two most prevalent referral sources which aligns with the data provided in the previous financial year. ‘Other VAWDASV services’ refers to external organisations within the sector who may not have capacity to support survivors themselves, and ‘internal service’ refers to another VAWDASV service being delivered within the organisation such as drop-in or IDVA. Both referral sources indicate that the survivor has already been accessing support for domestic abuse and, as such, has been assessed by a professional as requiring refuge support. This is a pivotal finding as it demonstrates that it is the wider system prior to refuge that enables engagement. When the data is broken down by sex, the most prevalent referral source for males (n=22) who engaged with refuge-based

support services in the financial year 2020/21 was through the housing service (local authority or housing association) (n=6, 27%).

**Figure 5: Referral sources for survivors in Wales**



*Location*

Specialist services in Wales provided information on the referral areas of 98% (n=969) of all survivors (n=984) who engaged with refuge-based support services in this financial year. Aligning with the data from the previous year, the largest proportion of survivors (n=452, 47%) were supported by services outside their local authority (within Wales). These findings support the importance of the national network of refuge services which enables survivors to move across local authority boundaries to access support and safety. Survivors and their children fleeing domestic abuse need quick access to the national (and UK) network of refuge-based support. Survivors will not

always be accepted or referred to refuges within the same area because there may not be capacity at that point to accept referrals, or it may not be safe to be housed within proximity to the perpetrator(s).

**Table 8:** Local referral area of survivors who engaged with refuge-based support services

	Female	Male	Total	
Own local authority	404	8	412	<b>42%</b>
Another local authority area in Wales	442	10	452	<b>46%</b>
Another local authority area in UK	101	4	105	<b>11%</b>
Outside of the UK	0	0	0	<b>0%</b>
Data unavailable	15	0	0	<b>2%</b>

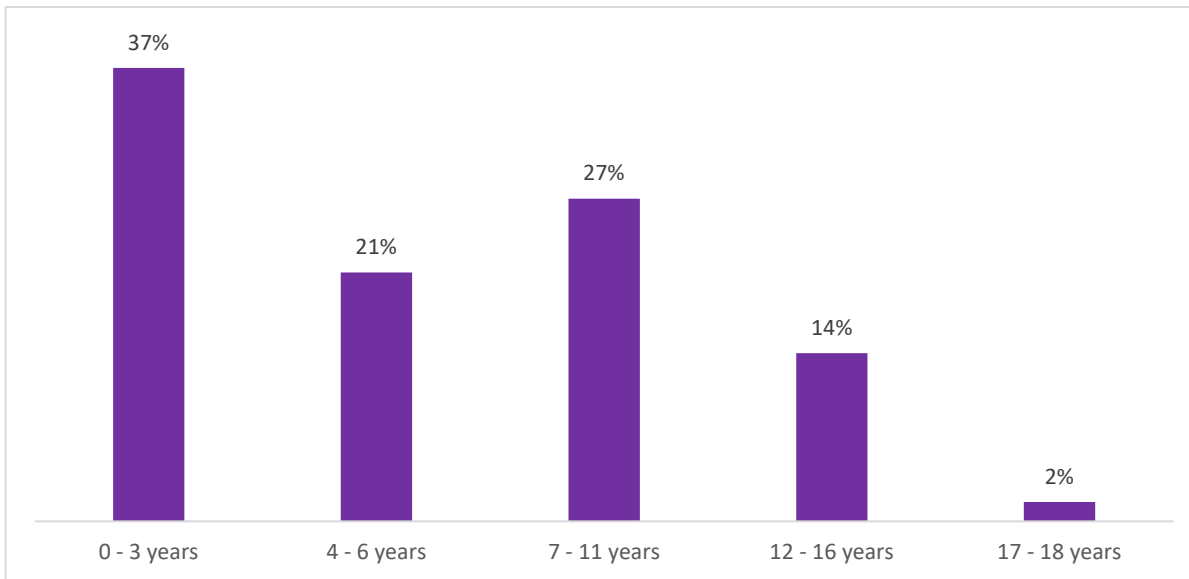
#### **2.4. Children of survivors in refuge-based support**

Due to the format in which this data is collated, to avoid double counting, a quarterly average has been used to represent the number of children supported by refuge-based support services<sup>11</sup>. Eleven percent (n=215) of all survivors supported in this financial year (n=1,929) had children either living with them in the refuge (n=136, 63%) or elsewhere (n=79, 37%). Subsequently, it can be purported that refuge-based support services directly supported 283 children in refuge, of which data on age was available for 94% (n=267) of children. Of these, the most prevalent age category of children in refuge was between 0 and 3 years of age (n=100, 37%). Notably, this represents a 2% decrease from the previous financial year despite a 17% increase in the number of survivors who could not be supported by refuge-based support. It may be assumed that services prioritised women with children although this cannot be said with any degree of certainty.

<sup>11</sup> Data is calculated from the quarterly datasets for all children in service. As children can be in the service over multiple quarters, a quarterly average has been used to represent the number of children supported in refuge in any one period to prevent double counting.

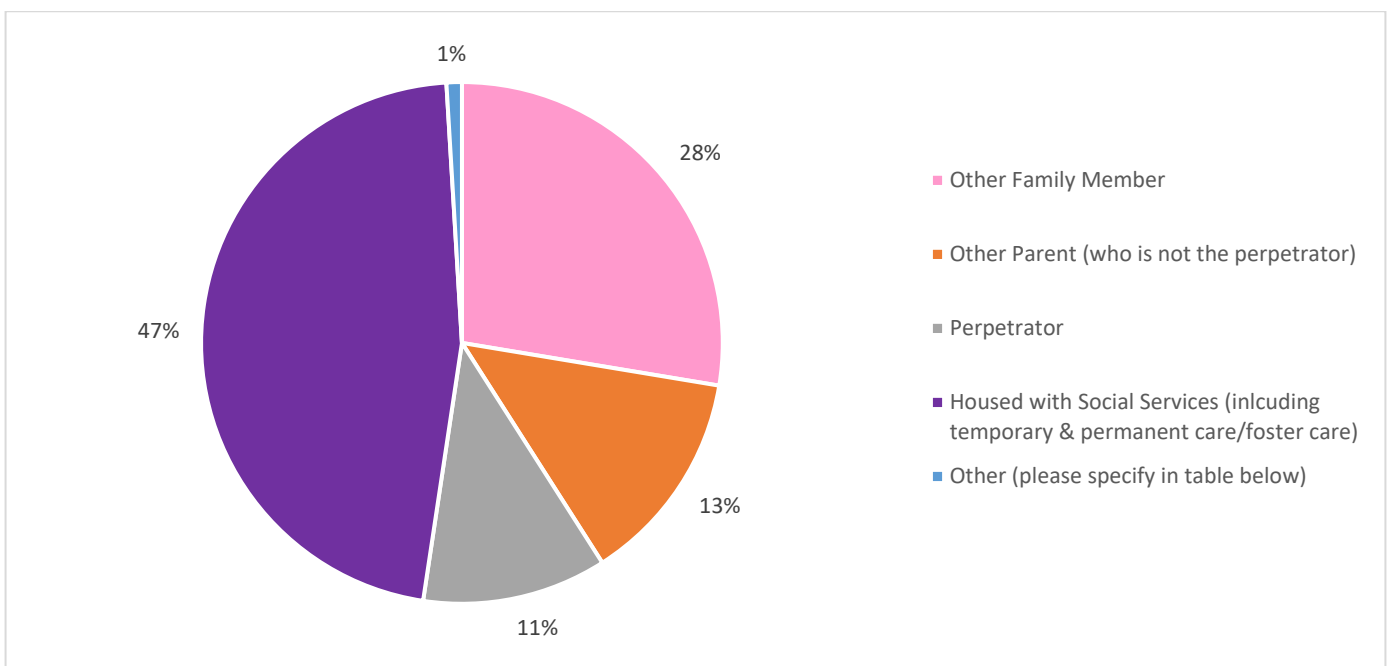


**Figure 6:** The average age of children in refuge



In addition to the average of 283 children supported by refuge-based support services, there were 105 children who did not live with survivors in the refuge, 47% (n=49) of whom were housed with social services, 28% (n=29) with another family member, and 13% (n=14) with a parent who was not the perpetrator. Eleven percent (n=12) of children remained home with the perpetrator.

**Figure 7:** Place of residence of the children not housed in the refuge



## 2.5. Sex of primary perpetrator

The sex of the primary perpetrator was recorded for 98% (n=963) of all survivors (n=984) who engaged with specialist services in this financial year. Of the 963 survivors where the sex of the primary perpetrator was recorded, 94% (n=902) of the perpetrators were male whilst the remaining 6% (n=61) perpetrators were female. A further breakdown revealed that male perpetrators were involved in 96% (n=899) of disclosures by female survivors (n=941).

**Table 9:** Sex of primary perpetrator

	Female Survivor	Male Survivor	Total	
Male Perpetrator	899	3	902	92%
Female Perpetrator	42	19	61	6%
Identifies as Another Gender	0	0	0	0%
Data Unavailable	21	0	21	2%

## 2.6. Types of abuse

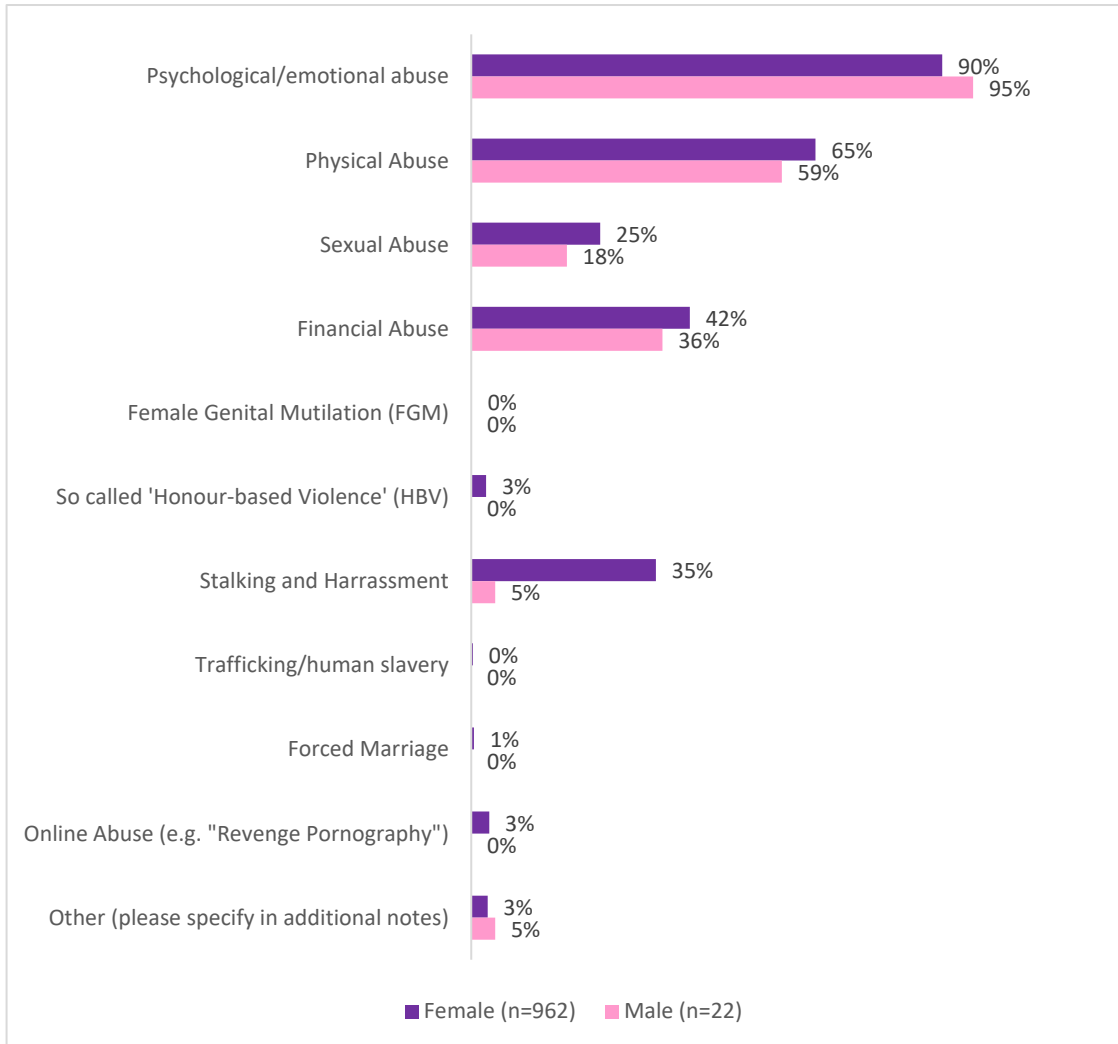
Notably, survivors were likely to experience an average of two types of abuse<sup>12</sup>. Psychological/emotional abuse (n=883, 90%) and physical abuse (n=643, 65%) were the two most prevalent forms of abuse experienced by survivors (n=984). A substantial proportion of survivors were also experiencing financial abuse (n=408, 41%). Furthermore, 35% (n=338) of females (n=962) and 5% (n=1) of males (n=22) had been subjected to stalking and harassment. This is a substantial indicator of the need for refuge for women as the abuse continues beyond the end of a relationship. Recently, coercive control which is defined as “an act or a pattern of acts of assaults, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim”<sup>13</sup>, has been recognised as an ongoing form of abuse which continues post-separation<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Total number of abuse types divided by total number of survivors included in the dataset.

<sup>13</sup> CPS, *Domestic abuse* [website] <https://www.cps.gov.uk/crime-info/domestic-abuse#:~:text=Coercive%20behaviour%20is%3A%20an%20act,punish%2C%20or%20frighten%20their%20victim>. [accessed 25 August 2021].

<sup>14</sup> Home Office, *Amendment to the controlling or coercive behaviour offence* [website], <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/amendment-to-the-controlling-or-coercive-behaviour-offence>. [Accessed 25 August 2021]

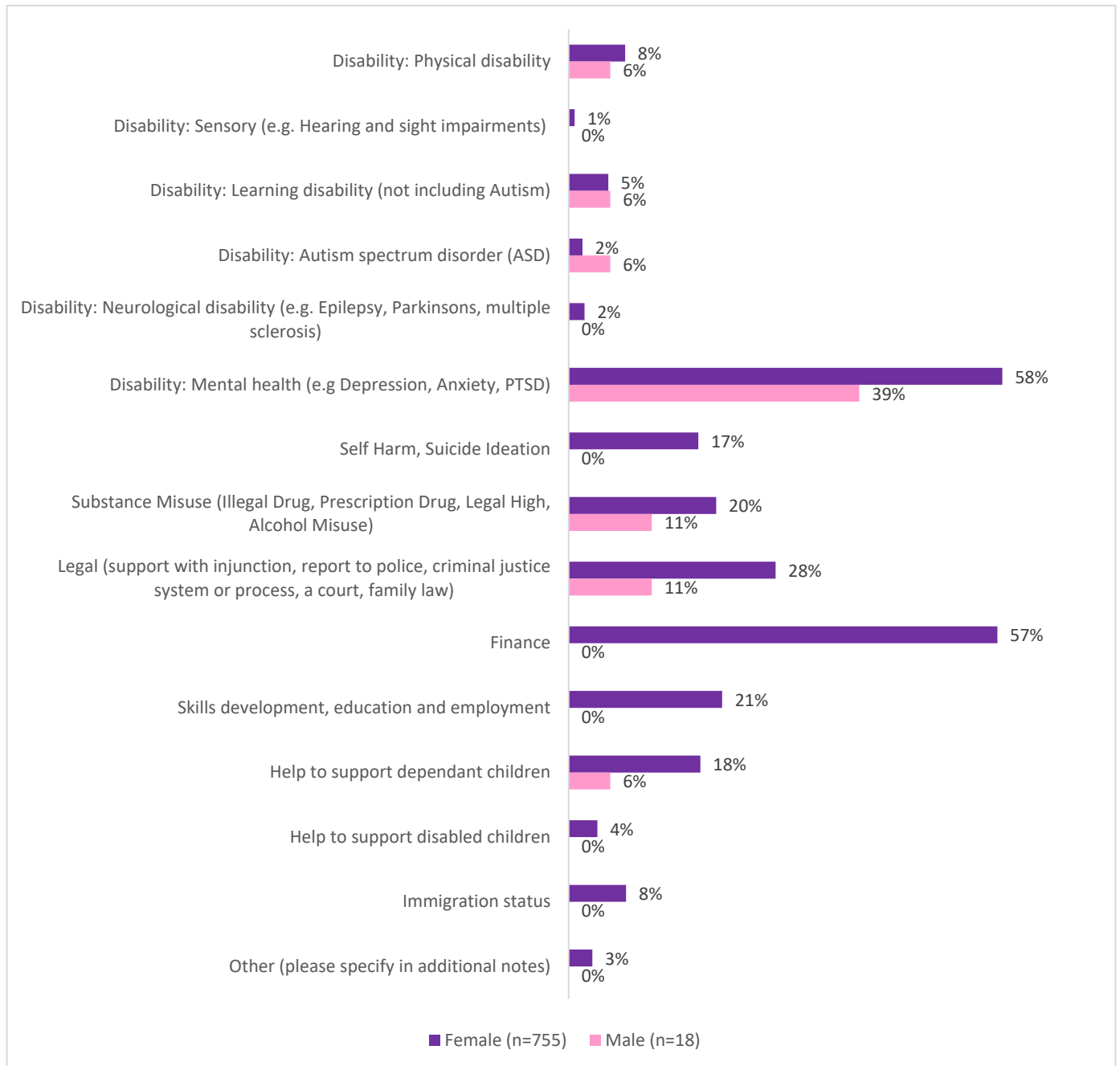
**Figure 8: Abuse types experienced by survivors in refuge-based support**



## **2.7. Support needs**

There are many survivors accessing refuge-based support services who have additional support needs (*Figure 9*), however, not all services are able to record this data and thus the data presented in this report is likely to be an underestimate. On average, survivors were likely to require between one and two different forms of support. Mental health (n=445, 58%) and finance (n=433, 56%) were the two additional support needs which were the most prevalent in this financial year. Of note, 8% (n=58) of the survivors who disclosed additional support needs (n=773) had a physical disability, however, according to the 'Routes to Support' database, of the 37 refuge-based support services in Wales, just 35% had wheelchair access. In addition, just 11% of refuges could accommodate a caregiver. These present substantial barriers for survivors.

**Figure 9: Additional support needs of survivors in refuge-based support**



## **2.8. Multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) referrals**

Survivors who are assessed as being at a high risk of being subjected to significant harm and/or homicide from perpetrators of domestic abuse are referred from the specialist services to a multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) - a meeting attended by key agencies to discuss options for increasing the safety of the victim. For survivors who reside in refuge-based support services, the number of referrals made to MARAC and the

number of service users who have been discussed at MARAC this financial year have been recorded. In total, 176 referrals were made to MARAC, of which 99% (n=174) were female and the remaining 1% (n=2) were male. There were 185 survivors discussed at MARAC<sup>15</sup>.

## **2.9. No Recourse to Public Funds: Refuge-based support**

In this financial year, 33 survivors with 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF) were referred to refuge-based support services in Wales, 70% (n=23) of whom were supported by refuge-based support services. This represents a 51% decrease in referrals when compared with the previous year. Whilst women and children with NRPF can still access refuge accommodation and other types of support, the UK Government issued guidance asking local authorities to assist people with NRPF in finding shelter and other support during the pandemic<sup>16</sup>. This may have resulted in the decrease in referrals. For some survivors, their residence permits enable them to live in the UK, however, it may include the 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF) clause which prevents access to benefits, tax credits, homelessness assistance and/or social housing<sup>17</sup>.

## **2.10. Moving on from specialist support**

### *Length of stay*

In this financial year, 938 survivors ceased support with refuge-based support services, of which, data was available for 98% (n=916) of survivors. *Table 10* displays the length of time spent in refuge. Of the 916 survivors whose length of stay was recorded, the most prevalent length of stay was between 1-2 months (n=158, 17%). Of note, 14% (n=132) of survivors accessed refuge-based support services for a period of six days or less.

**Table 10:** Length of stay for survivors who left the service

	Female		Male		Total Survivors	
6 Days or Less	132	15%	0	0%	132	14%
1 - 2 Weeks	103	11%	4	27%	107	12%
2 - 3 Weeks	66	7%	1	7%	67	7%
3 - 4 Weeks	61	7%	0	0%	61	7%
1 - 2 Months	153	17%	5	33%	158	17%

<sup>15</sup> The number of survivors discussed at MARAC were greater than the number of referrals as it is likely that a number of referrals were not discussed in quarter 4 of the previous financial year.

<sup>16</sup> Scottish Women's Rights Centre, *Covid-19 and Support* [Website], <https://www.scottishwomensrightscentre.org.uk/news/covid-19coronavirus-info/domestic-abuse-during-covid-19coronavirus-what-can-i-do/>. [Accessed 26/08/2021]

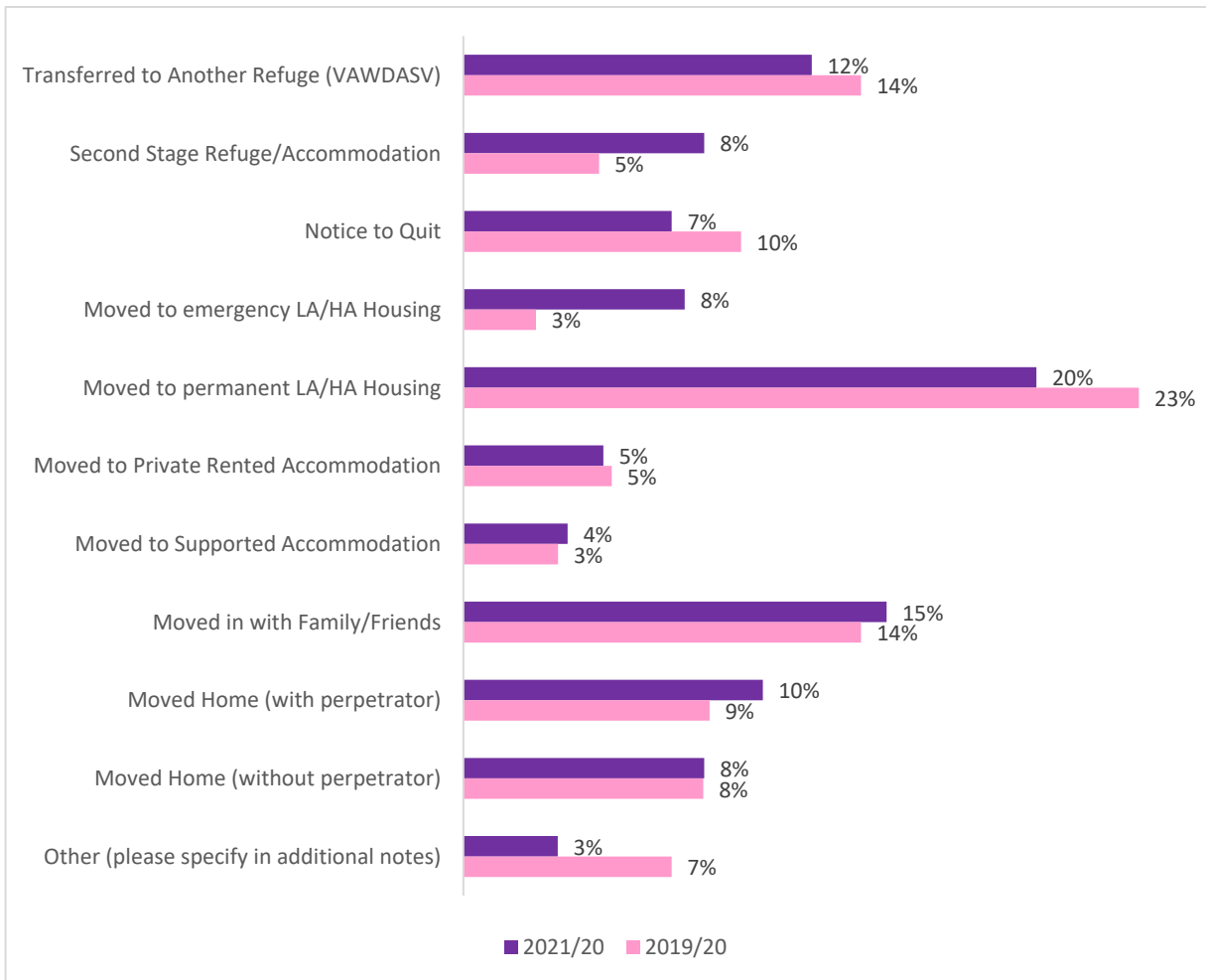
<sup>17</sup> A full list of what is classed as 'public funds' and exceptions is available at: <http://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/information/Pages/public-funds.aspx>.

2 - 3 Months	101	11%	0	0%	101	11%
3 - 4 Months	79	9%	0	0%	79	9%
4 - 5 Months	55	6%	1	7%	56	6%
5 - 6 Months	37	4%	2	13%	39	4%
6-12 Months	93	10%	1	7%	94	10%
More than 12 Months	21	2%	1	7%	22	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>901</b>		<b>15</b>		<b>916</b>	

#### *Move-on reason*

The move-on reason was recorded for 95% (n=889) of survivors in this reporting period. Of the 889 survivors whose reason for ceasing refuge was recorded, 20% (n=176) moved to permanent local authority/housing authority homes, 15% (n=130) moved in with family or friends, and 12% (n=107) transferred to another refuge. The remaining move-on reasons have been compared with the previous financial year and presented in *Figure 10*.

**Figure 10: Reason for ceasing refuge-based support**



## **Community-based support services**

### **3.1: Referrals and access to service**

Community-based support services in Wales supported 17,344<sup>18</sup> survivors in the community, 93% (n=16,148) of whom were female. Examples of community-based support services include, but are not limited to, drop-in sessions, group work, advocacy, counselling, and peer-support. It is important to note that this figure is likely to be an underestimate as some member organisations were unable to report their figures.

**Table 11:** Survivors referred to and accessing community-based support<sup>19</sup>

	Female	Male	Other	Total
Total survivors supported in community-based services in 2020/21	16,148	1,169	27	<b>17,344</b>
No. of new referrals received in this period	20,950	2,188	77	<b>23,215</b>
No. of survivors referred and engaged with service	13,218	1,061	25	<b>14,304</b>
Survivors not able to be supported by service	1,654	333	5	<b>1,992</b>
No. of survivors who did not accept support from service	5,093	699	11	<b>5,803</b>
No. of survivors on the waiting list at the end of Quarter 4	379	44	1	<b>424</b>

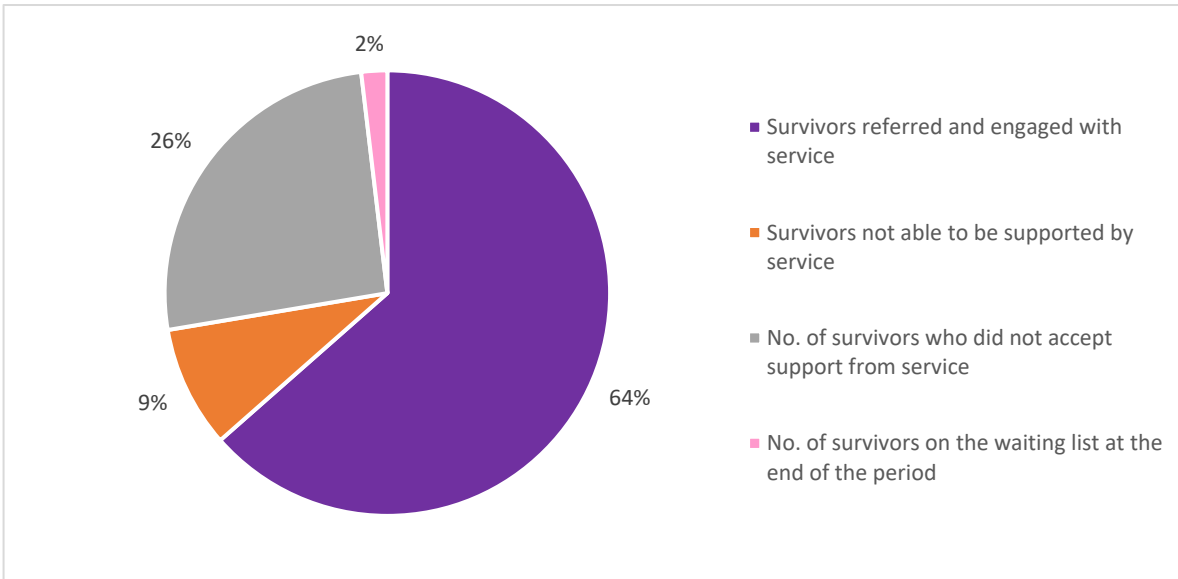
There were 23,215 new referrals received in this period, representing a 23% increase from the previous financial year (2019/20). According to the data provided by the national membership of services, 14,304 survivors engaged with the service, which is a 23% increase from the previous financial year. There was, however, a 12% increase in the number of survivors who could not be supported by community-based support services due to resource and capacity issues.

<sup>18</sup> Total supported calculated with total supported figure in Q1, then all new starters from Q2, Q3 and Q4 to prevent double counting.

<sup>19</sup> Inconsistency of 692 referrals in *Table 11* are due to referrals engaging with community-based support services this quarter who may have been on previous waiting lists.



**Figure 11:** Engagement with community-based support services across Wales<sup>20</sup>



### **3.2: Children and young people service provision**

The national membership of services supported 3,914 children, representing an 18% increase from the previous financial year. Direct services accessed by children and young people can include one-to-one counselling, or group programmes designed to help children and young people come to cope with their experiences of domestic abuse. In 2019, the first set of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) National indicators were published<sup>21</sup>, one of which stipulates the requirement for “increased awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong”. This financial year, 201 children attended awareness raising training/workshops. Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, this is a 97% decrease from the previous financial year.

**Table 12:** Support delivered to children and young people

	No. Supported
No. of children directly supported (either one to one or in family sessions)	3,914
Total children supported this quarter through awareness raising (e.g. in schools)	201

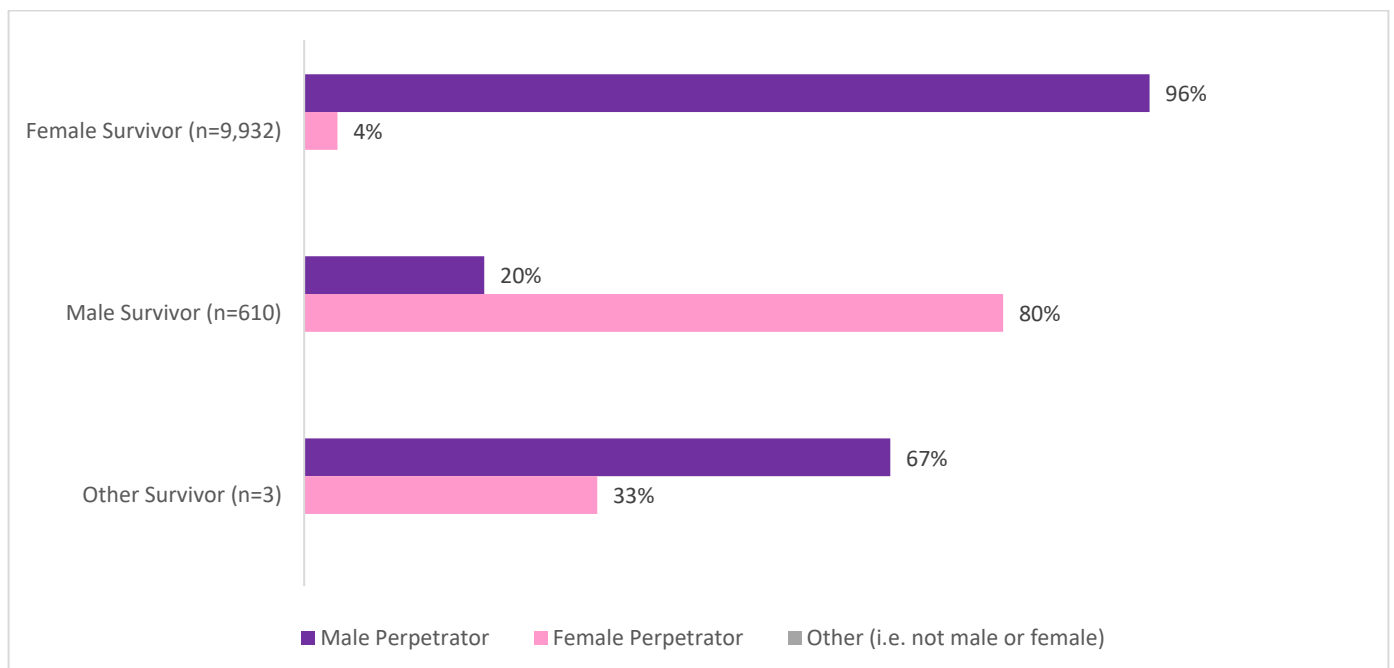
<sup>20</sup> Figure 10 is based on 22,523 referrals. The inconsistency of 692 referrals is due to referrals being placed on a waiting list.

<sup>21</sup> Welsh Government, Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence: progress report 2019 to 2020, *Welsh Government [website]*, <https://gov.wales/violence-against-women-domestic-abuse-and-sexual-violence-progress-report-2019-2020-html>, (accessed 26 July 2021).

### **3.3. Sex of primary perpetrator**

The sex of the primary perpetrator was recorded for 74% (n=10,545) of survivors accessing support services in this financial year with 92% being male (n=9,679), thus demonstrating the gendered nature of the violence. For female survivors (n=9,932), 96% (n=9,552) of perpetrators were male whilst the remaining 4% were either female (n=377) or other (n=3). For male survivors (n=610), 80% (n=485) of the perpetrators were female and the remaining 20% (n=125) were male. Notably, of the survivors who disclosed their sexual orientation in this financial year (n=7,497), 93% (n=6,938) disclosed that they were heterosexual.

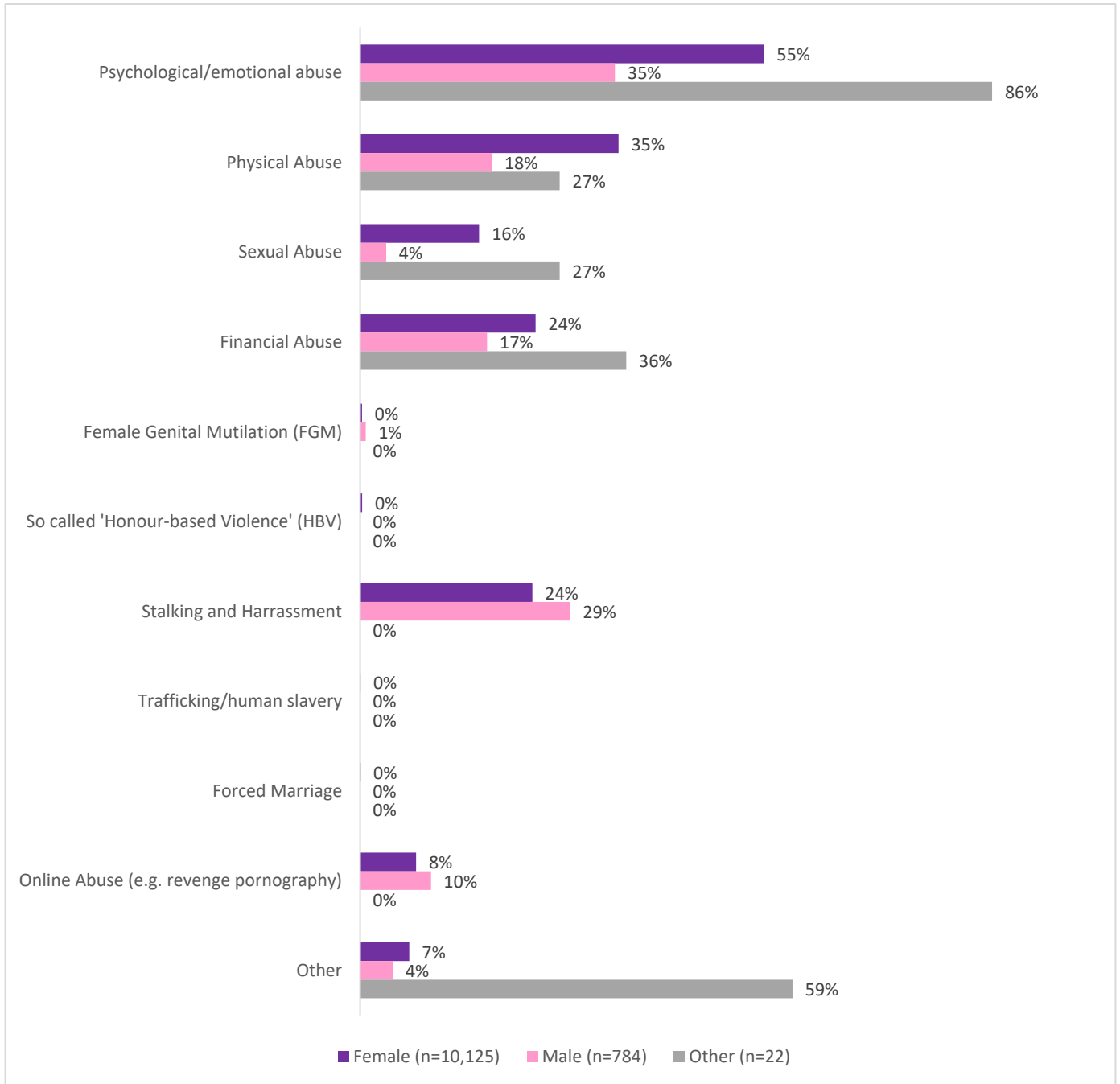
**Figure 12:** Sex of the primary perpetrator



### **3.4: Types of abuse disclosed**

The abuse experienced by survivors was recorded for (n=10,931) 76% of survivors engaging with community-based support services this financial year. Psychological abuse (n=5,882, 54%) and physical abuse (n=3,723, 34%) were the two most prevalent forms of abuse. Notably, there was a 100% increase in the number of survivors who reported financial abuse and a 580% increase in online abuse (e.g. image-based abuse, which is often referred to as so called revenge pornography) when compared with the previous year.

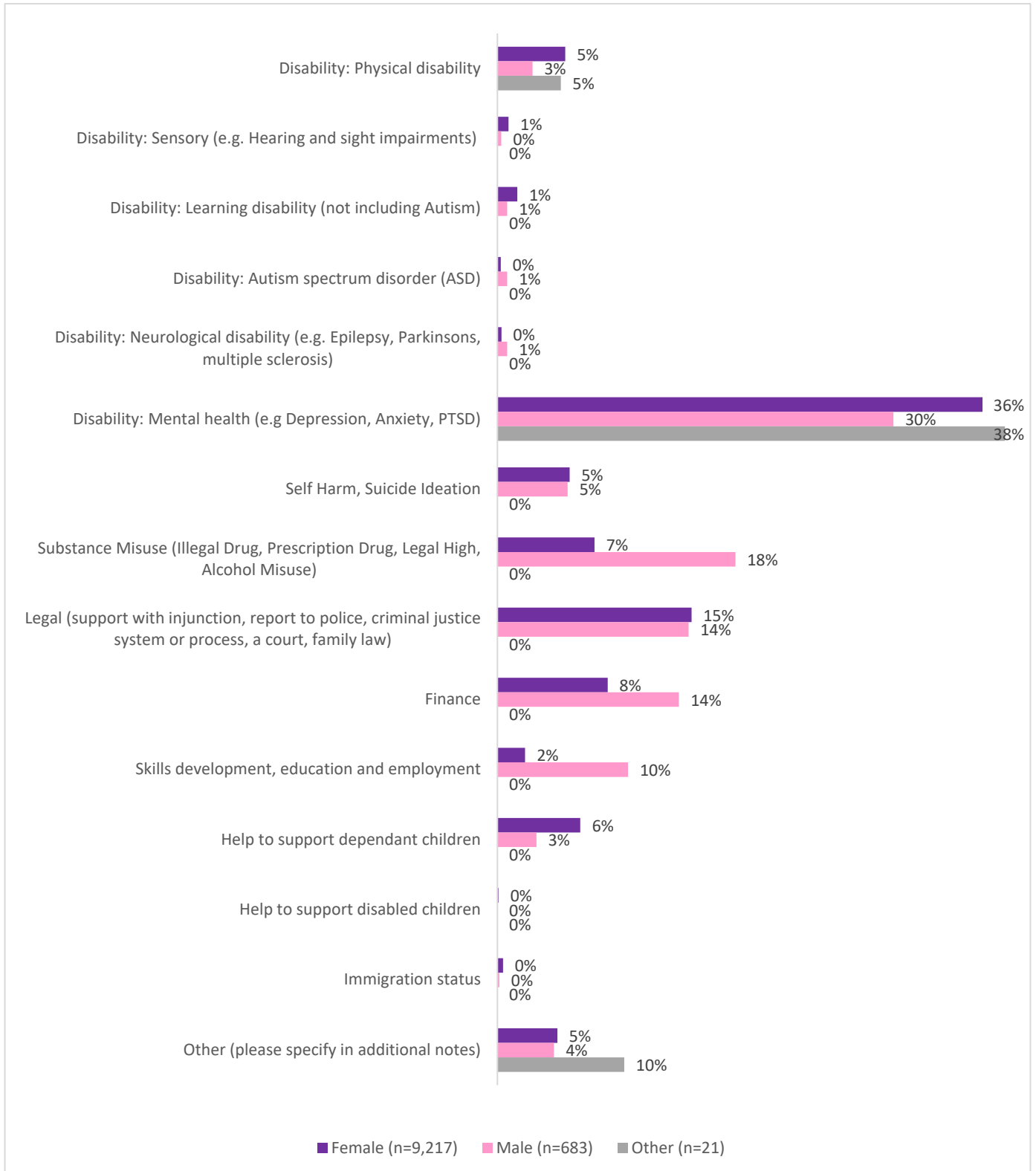
**Figure 13: Abuse types experienced in community-based support services**



### **3.5: Support needs**

Additional or complex support needs were recorded for 69% (n=9,921) of survivors accessing community-based support services. Services reported that the highest support need for survivors was that of a disability related to mental health, which was disclosed by 36% (n=3,567) of survivors. This was followed by the need for legal support, which was disclosed by 15% (n=1,441) of survivors. This data aligns with the findings of the previous financial year.

**Figure 14:** Additional support needs in community-based support services



### **3.6: Safeguarding and Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) Referrals**

Survivors who are assessed as being at a high risk of being subjected to significant harm and/or homicide from perpetrators of domestic abuse are referred from the specialist services to a multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) - a meeting attended by key agencies to discuss options to increase the safety of the victim. In 2020/21, 4,202 referrals were made to a MARAC whilst 1,979 survivors were discussed at a MARAC. While MARAC referrals can be made by community based VAWDASV services, referrals can also originate from other organisations, meaning survivors are discussed at meetings without being referred by the service. Notably, there was a 274% increase in the number of referrals made to a MARAC when compared with the previous financial year and a 25% increase in the number of survivors discussed at a MARAC. This is possibly due to the increased severity and risk during the Covid-19 pandemic.

## Sexual Violence services

### 4.1 Referrals and access to service

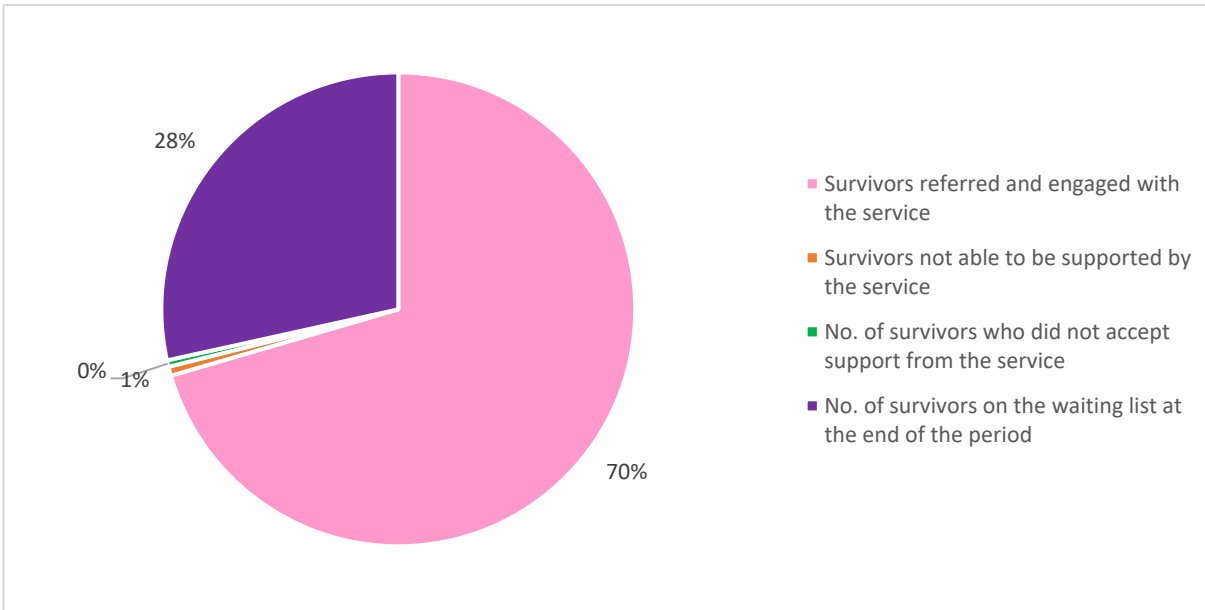
Referral data obtained from four dedicated sexual violence support services revealed that a total of 1,346 survivors<sup>22</sup> were supported across the financial year 2020/21 which represents a 7% decrease from the previous financial year. Notably, all specialist support services have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated restrictions. Of the 1,346 survivors, 87% (n=1,173) were female, 12% (n=159) were male, and the remaining 1% (n=14) were categorised as 'other'.

**Table 13:** Survivors referred to and accessing sexual violence support

	Female	Male	Other	Total
Total survivors supported in this financial year 2020/21	1,173	159	14	1,346
No. of new referrals received in this period	983	169	7	1,159
No. of survivors referred and engaged with service	688	94	13	795
Survivors not able to be supported by service	5	2	0	7
No. of survivors who did not accept support from service	5	0	0	5
No. of survivors on the waiting list at the end of Quarter 4	278	43	0	321

<sup>22</sup> Total supported calculated with total supported figure in Q1, then all new starters from Q2, Q3 and Q4 to prevent double counting.

**Figure 15: Engagement with dedicated sexual violence services<sup>23</sup>**



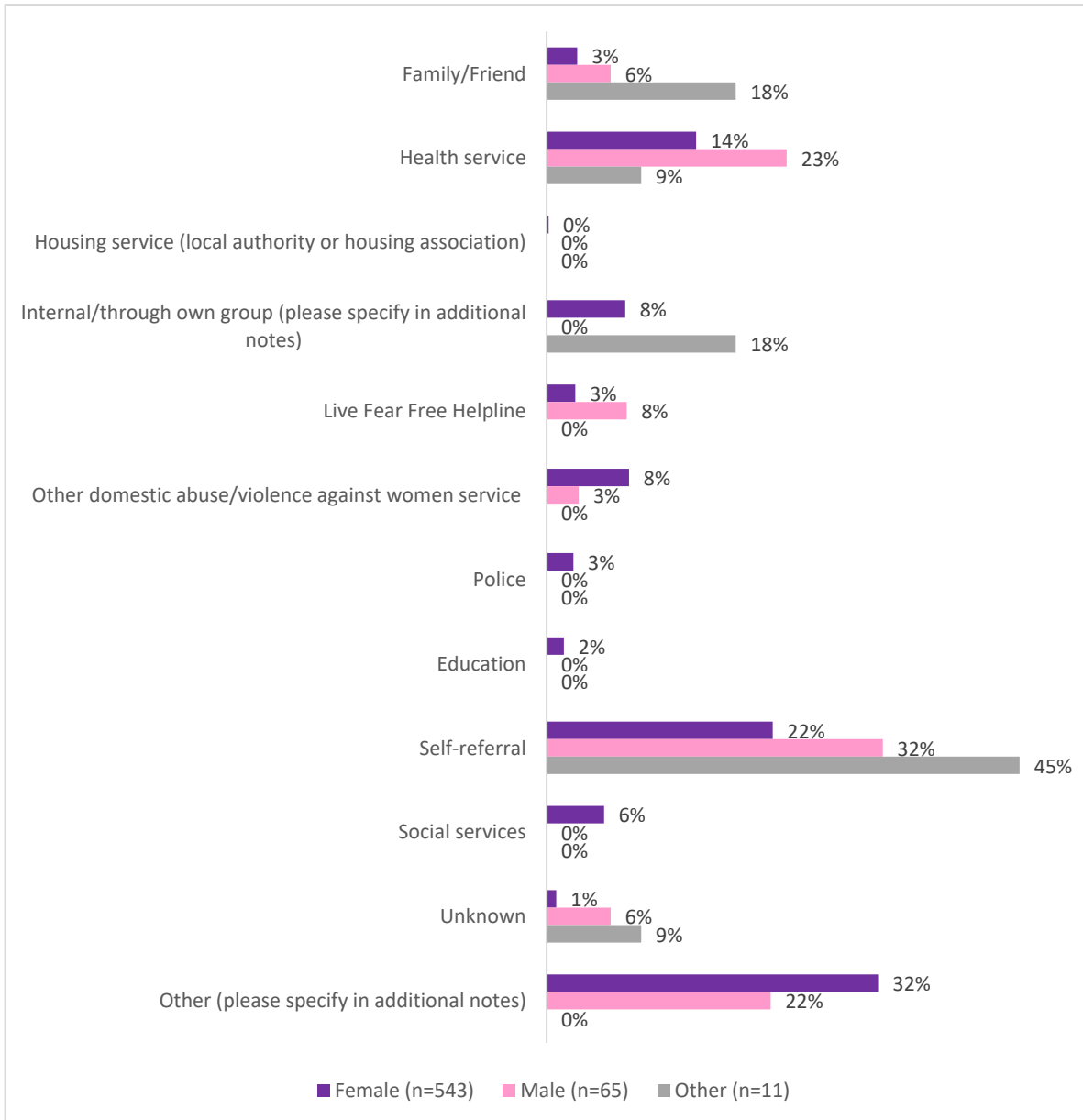
## **4.2 Referral sources**

### *Referral sources*

In this financial year, the source of referral was recorded for 78% (n=619) of survivors. Of the 619 survivors, self-referral was the primary referral source disclosed (n=144, 23%) followed by the 'health service' (n=94, 15%) then 'other domestic abuse/violence against women services' (n=45, 7%). No referrals were made through a MARAC or the probation service which somewhat aligns with the previous financial year as just 1% of referrals were made through MARAC or the probation service during that period.

<sup>23</sup> Figure 15 is based on 1,128 referrals; the discrepancy is due to referrals placed on waiting lists across the financial year.

**Figure 16: Referral sources in Wales**

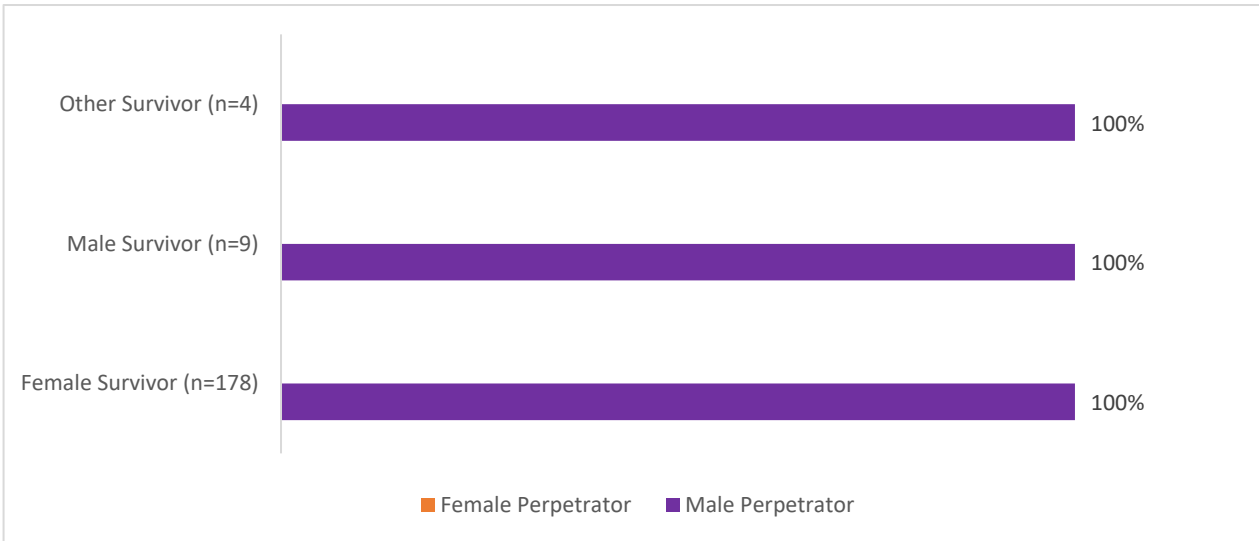


### **4.3: Sex of primary perpetrator**

The sex of the primary perpetrator was recorded for 24% (n=191) of all survivors accessing sexual violence-based support services (n=795). Of the 178 female survivors where the sex of the perpetrator had been recorded, 100% (n=178) were male. For the nine male survivors and the four survivors categorised as 'other' where data on perpetrators was recorded, all perpetrators were male (n=13, 100%).



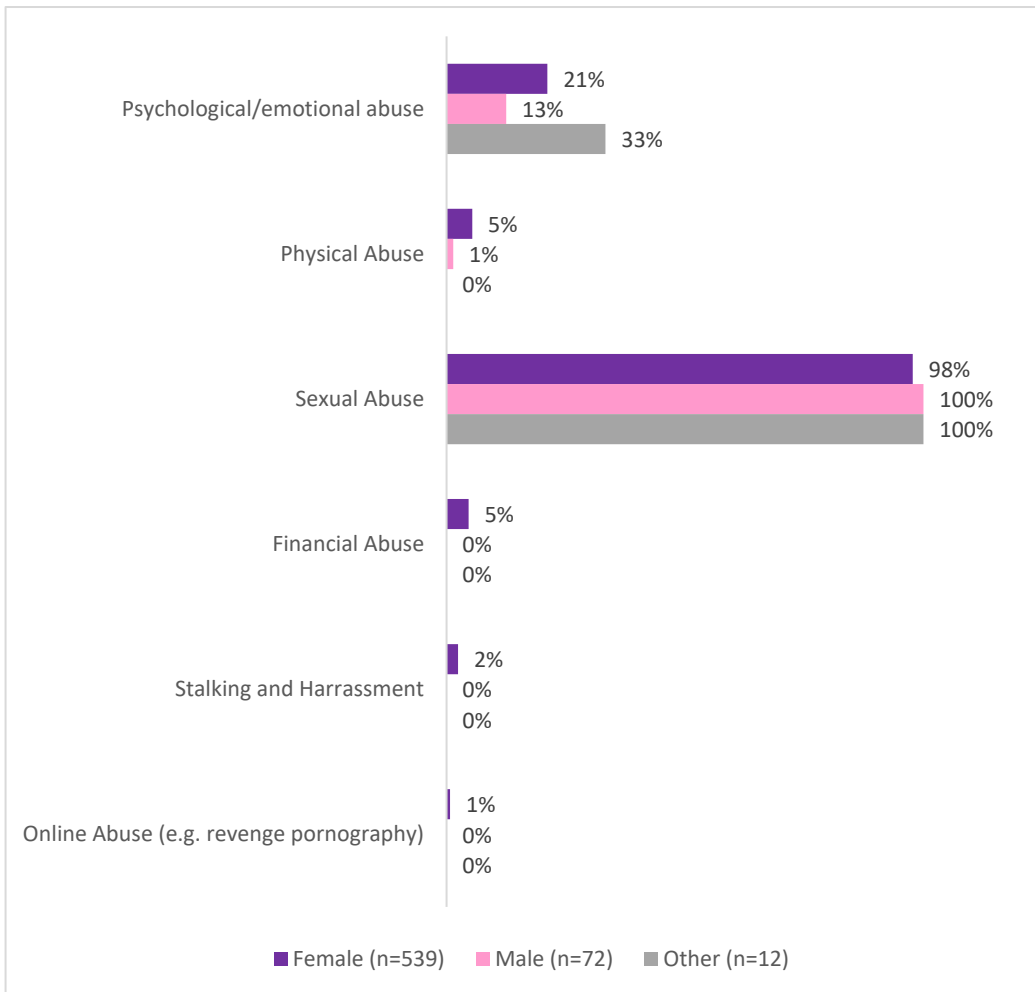
**Figure 18: Sex of primary perpetrator**



**4.4: Types of abuse disclosed**

The type of abuse experienced by survivors in this financial year was recorded for 78% (n=623) of survivors who engaged with sexual violence-based support services. It can be purported that on average, survivors experienced between one and two forms of abuse. Sexual violence (n=611, 98%) and psychological/emotional abuse (n=127, 20%) were the two most prevalent forms of abuse experienced by survivors.

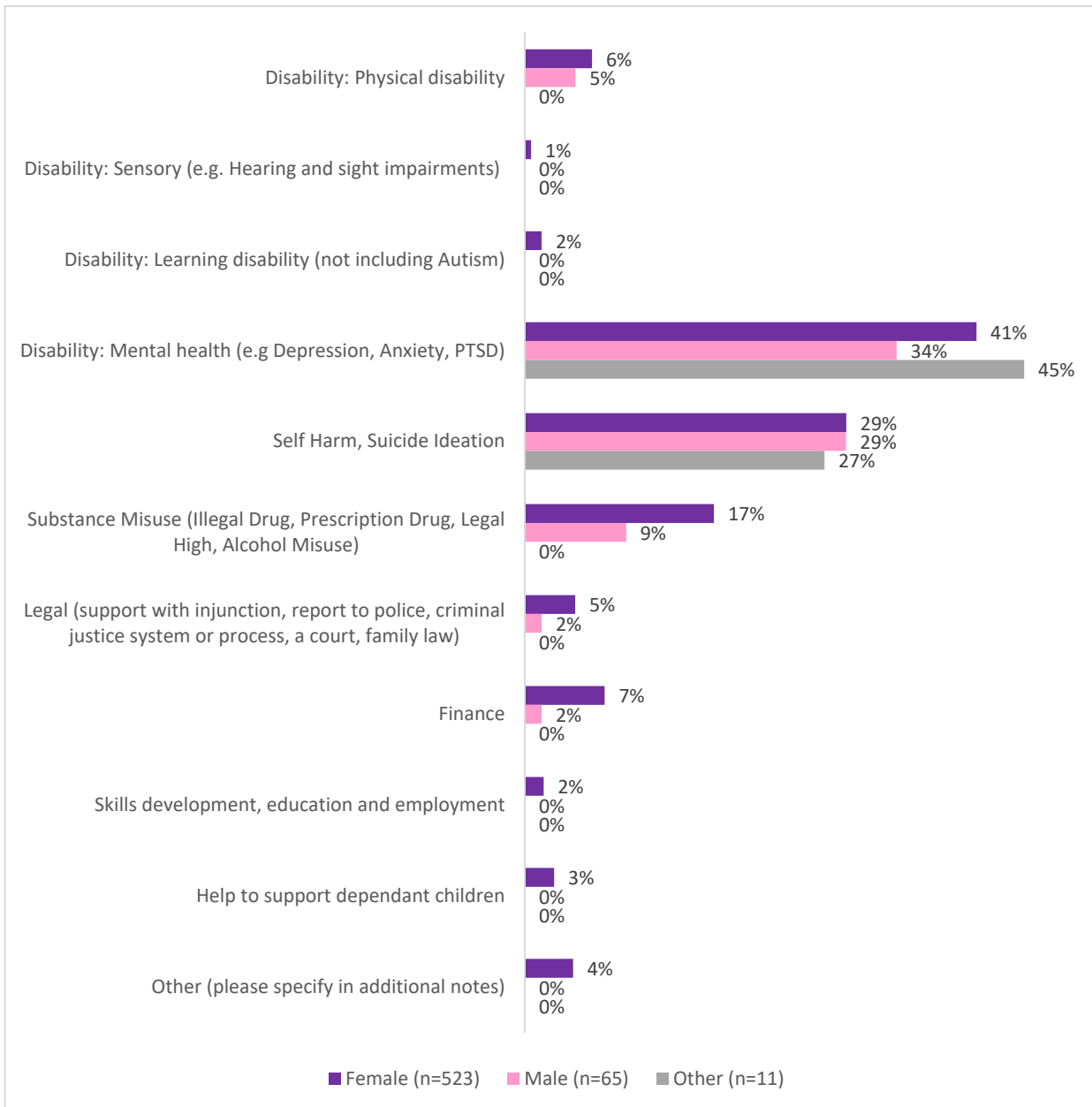
**Figure 19: Types of abuse disclosed**



#### **4.5: Support needs**

Data pertaining to the additional support needs of survivors was recorded for 75% (n=599) of survivors who engaged with sexual violence-based support services. Mental health support was the most prevalent additional support need disclosed by survivors in this reporting period (n=242, 40%). In line with the findings from the previous financial year, the proportion of survivors with additional support needs surrounding self-harm and suicidal ideation was greater for those who were accessing sexual violence-based (22%) support when compared with both refuge (13%) and community-based (4%) support services.

**Figure 20:** Additional/complex support needs of survivors



## **Live Fear Free Helpline**

Funded by the Welsh Government, the Live Fear Free Helpline was first established by Welsh Women's Aid (WWA) in 2004 as an all-Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline. The helpline is a free and confidential service which is accessible to all persons who have indirect or direct experience of domestic abuse, sexual violence, and/or violence against women. The helpline also supports concerned others, professionals and agencies 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

### **5.1. Call volume**

Between April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 and March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021, the Live Fear Free Helpline received **30,063** contacts: **26,817** calls, **435** e-mails, **2,424** webchats and **387** texts. Whilst overall, this represents a 7% decrease from the previous financial year, a further breakdown revealed that there was a 22% increase in contacts from survivors and a 43% increase in the contacts received from concerned others, however, due to the limitations associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a 19% decrease in the number of contacts received from professionals. It should be noted that there has been an 84% increase in silent modes of contact (e-mails, webchats and texts) this financial year. Since 2019/20, the Live Fear Free Helpline has experienced:

- **12%** decrease in the number of calls
- **146%** increase in the number of e-mails
- **66%** increase in the number webchats
- **200%** increase in the number of SMS text messages

**Table 14:** Volume of contacts received by the LFF Helpline: a two-year comparison

	Annual Totals (20-21)	Annual Totals (19-20)	Difference (%)
Calls	26,817	30,506	-12%
Emails	435	177	146%
Webchat	2,424	1,458	66%
Texts	387	129	200%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,063</b>	<b>32,270</b>	<b>-7%</b>

In March 2020, national COVID-19 related guidelines and movement restrictions which included social distancing, shelter in place orders, and quarantines were imposed across the United Kingdom and thus a rise in 'silent' modes

of contact and a decrease in calls was to be expected. The average length of a telephone contact received in this financial year averaged 4.94 minutes. It should be noted that the average call length includes hang-ups and testing calls.

**Table 15:** Volume of calls received by the Live Fear Free Helpline (April 2020-March 2021)

	2020/21	2019/20	Difference (%)
<b>2020</b>			
April	1,916	2,601	-26%
May	2,055	2,359	-13%
June	2,070	2,381	-13%
July	2,534	2,863	-11%
August	2,325	2,723	-15%
September	2,555	2,638	-3%
October	2,271	2,795	-19%
November	1,903	2,513	-24%
December	2,102	2,713	-23%
<b>2021</b>			
January	2,313	2,559	-10%
February	2,054	2,246	-9%
March	2,719	2,115	29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,817</b>	<b>30,506</b>	<b>-12%</b>

## 5.2. Caller information

Where possible, the type of caller is recorded by the Live Fear Free Helpline. Due to the sensitive and confidential nature of the service, some callers may find it difficult to discuss their experiences and thus will end the call prior to reaching a Helpline Support Worker. In other instances, the Helpline Support Workers may be engaged with another call, or the lines disrupted by other types of calls (*e.g. testing calls from malicious and abusive callers*). In 2020/21, the caller profile was recorded for **18,849** (70%) of the calls received by the Helpline. Of these:

- **9,266** (49%) were from survivors directly experiencing abuse,
- **899** (5%) were calls from concerned others,

- **51** (<1%) calls were from perpetrators,
- **7,748** (41%) calls from other agencies,
- **885** (5%) calls which were not VAWDASV related.

**Table 16:** Type of unique callers: a two-year comparison

	2020/21	2019/20	Difference (%)
Survivors directly experiencing abuse	9,266	7,585	22%
Professionals contacting on behalf of survivors	7,748	9,589	-19%
Calls from concerned others (family/friends/colleagues)	899	630	43%
Calls from perpetrators	51	31	65%
Not VAWDASV related	885	453	95%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,849</b>	<b>18,288</b>	

This financial year, the proportion of calls received by the helpline from survivors directly experiencing abuse accounted for 49% (n=9,266) of all recorded calls. This represents a 22% (n=1,681) increase in the number of calls received from survivors from the previous financial year (2019/20). Where possible, the demographic data of survivors was recorded. The data collected revealed that 88% (n=8,142) of survivors were female, 10% (n=890) were male, and the remaining 3% (n=234) were categorised as unknown.

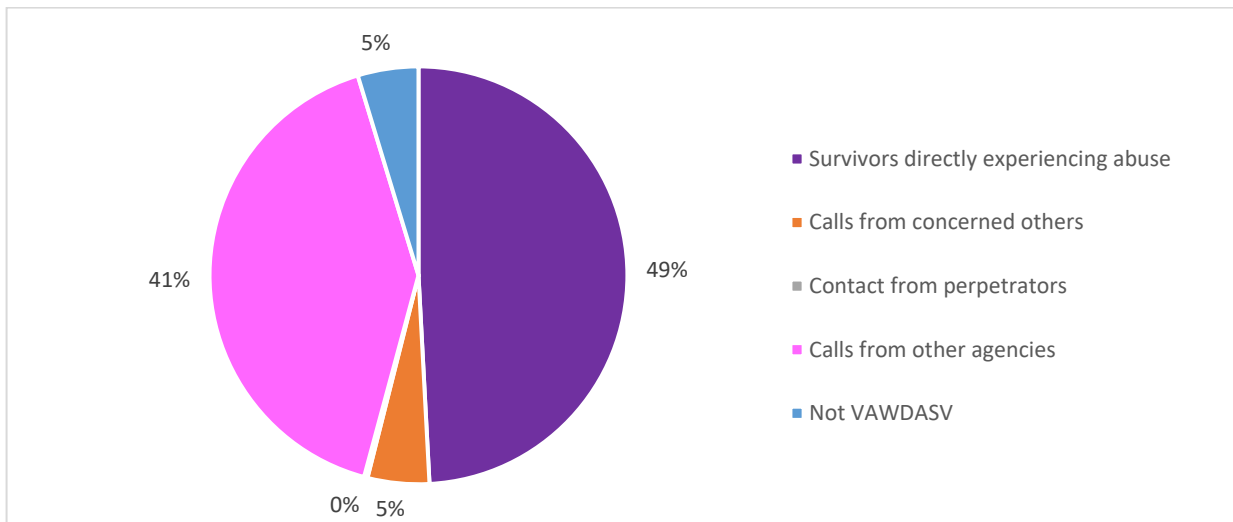
The Helpline received 899 calls received from concerned others, representing a 43% increase from the previous financial year. This accounted for 5% of all recorded calls received by the Helpline in 2020/21. In response to COVID restrictions, Welsh Women's Aid delivered the 'Stand with Survivor' campaign to encourage friends, families, community members and colleagues to contact the helpline if they were concerned about someone they knew experiencing abuse.

There were 885 calls which were categorised as not VAWDASV related which was a 95% increase from the financial year 2019/20, which may have been the result of the promotion of the helpline on shop receipts. This initiative aimed to promote the helpline in communities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The helpline received 51 calls from perpetrators of abuse which was a 65% increase from 2019/20. Where appropriate, perpetrators of abuse were referred to the Respect phoneline for perpetrators and provided with information about accredited local community programmes.

Notably, there was a 19% (n=1,841) decrease in calls from professionals contacting on behalf of survivors when compared with the previous year (n=9,589), which may be attributed to professionals having less contact with clients due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated restrictions.

**Figure 21:** Type of caller to the Helpline



### **5.3. Supporting children and young people**

Between April 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 and March 31<sup>st</sup> 2021, **3,116** survivors who were experiencing abuse reported that they had children and thus it can be purported that the Helpline supported the parents of approximately **5,994** children<sup>24</sup>. This represents a 104% increase in the number of survivors and a 109% increase in the estimated number of children supported when compared with the previous financial year. Additionally, **31** children and young people (calls from persons under the age of 18) called the Live Fear Free Helpline directly. This represents a 94% increase from the previous financial year (2019/20).

**Table 17:** The number of adults and estimated number of children supported

	Adult Survivors	% of Adults	Number of Children
1 child	1,111	36%	1,111
2 children	825	26%	1,650
3 children	327	10%	981
4 children	169	5%	676
5 children	56	2%	280
6 children	15	0%	90
7+ children	7	0%	49
Not known	606	19%	1,157*

<sup>24</sup> \*denotes estimated data based on the average number of children per family in the UK (1.91) multiplied by the number of contacts for whom this information was unknown. Not including the estimated data, the number of children supported was 4,837, an 86% increase.

<b>Total</b>	<b>3,116</b>		<b>5,994</b>
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\*Calculated at 1.91 children per adult<sup>25</sup>.

#### **5.4 Signposting and referral to other agencies**

The helpline directly referred or signposted **4,570** calls to other agencies for ongoing local support. A large proportion of the referrals made were to other agencies which include, but are not limited to, support for money-related issues, child contact services, alcohol and substance misuse, male support services, victim and witness support, NHS and self-harm support groups.

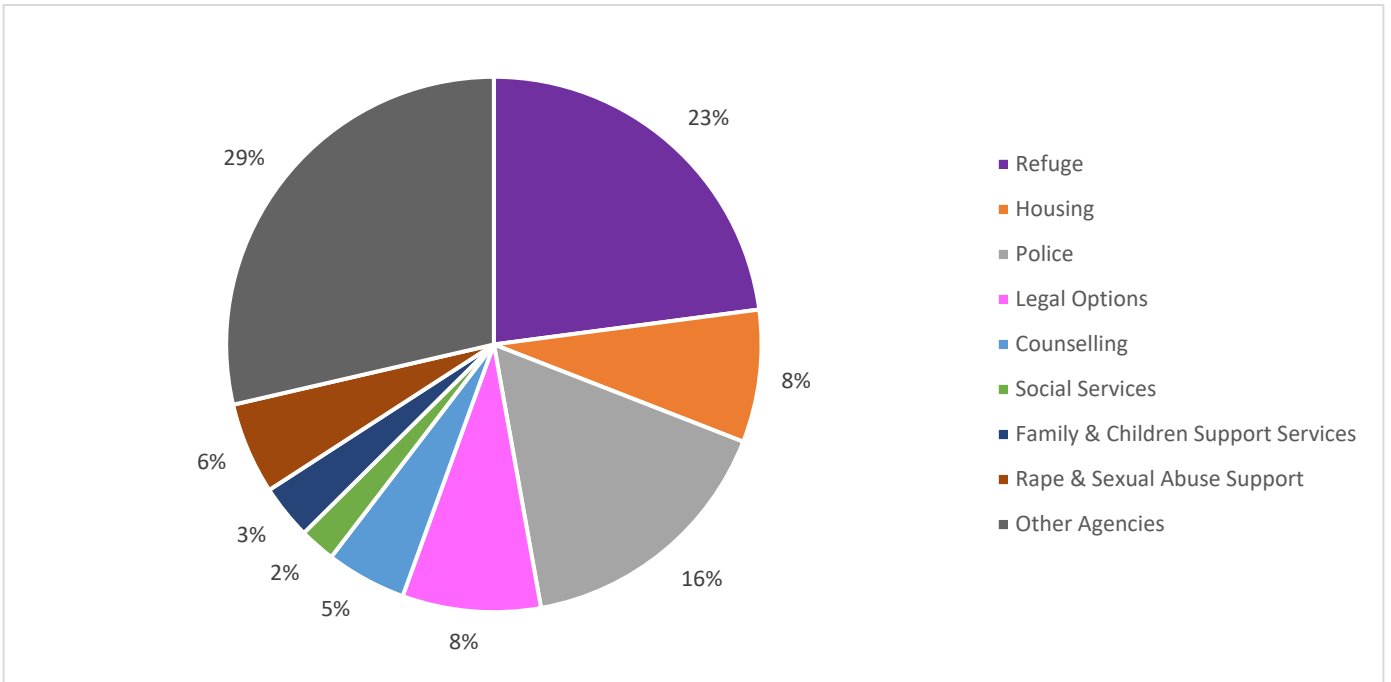
**Table 18:** Number of referrals made to other agencies

<b>Referrals made</b>	<b>No. of referrals</b>	<b>% of referrals</b>
Emergency Refuge (Direct & Indirect)	1,881	23%
Emergency Housing	657	8%
Police	1,335	16%
Legal Options	686	8%
Counselling	399	5%
Social Services	178	2%
Family & Children Support Services	270	3%
Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Services	454	6%
Other Agencies	2,349	29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,209</b>	

<sup>25</sup> ONS, Childbearing for women born in different years, England and Wales: 2015 (2016).



**Figure 22:** Breakdown of referrals made by the Helpline



### **5.5 User feedback**

When appropriate, Helpline Support Workers ask for feedback from service users. It should be noted, however, that due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, all Helpline Support Workers have been working from home and thus retrieving feedback has become increasingly difficult. To encourage honest feedback, Helpline Support Workers are not responsible for the collection of their own feedback. Whilst this process is successful whilst office-based, it is a process which has become more challenging whilst working from home. There are preparations being made to gather feedback via Survey Monkey (rebranded as Momentive). This financial year, there have been no complaints raised against the Helpline regarding the services received.

### **5.6 Survivor and concerned other feedback**

The feedback received by survivors this financial year revealed an improvement in several outcomes following contact with the Live Fear Free Helpline:

- An average of 86% survivors reported an improved sense of safety.
- An average of 89% survivors reported an improvement to their emotional well-being.
- An average of 86% survivors experienced a reduction in violence, risk, and abuse.

- On average, 100% of survivors revealed that that they have accessed information and advice which has enabled them to make informed choices as a result.
- On average, 100% of service users reported that they had been referred to the appropriate support services.

A random sample of the qualitative feedback received from survivors and concerned others this financial year have been presented below:

*"I remembered your voice and trusted you and that's what kept me going, you told me that things would escalate and knowing that left me with no choice but to go ". "You enabled me to do this, and I will always be grateful".*

*"The way she was... she was lovely. She was very helpful. She was quite firm... she doesn't beat around the bush. She got me out of some dark times where I was nearly tempted to end it... please give her my kindest regards."*

*"You have been very helpful to me this morning-you have no idea how much I appreciate it. I almost gave up."*

*"I'm crying with relief here-God bless you all".*

*"Thank you from the bottom of my heart... It takes a phenomenal person to work for Women's Aid and it shows your character".*

*"I feel relieved. I feel better – I feel a bit more empowered."*

### **5.7 Other agency feedback**

In addition to the feedback provided by survivors, the Live Fear Free Helpline also collects any feedback received from other agencies, a small selection of which have been provided below for demonstrative purposes:

*" Thank you for all the support you given this client, I know it has been very beneficial to him, couple times I have spoken to him he has said he is grateful – Thank you".*

*"Every time I call the Helpline I always get a very helpful call handler. All the staff are very friendly. If I was a woman or man in need, I would feel very comforted with the service received. Thank you all for your hard work."*

*"Thank you for all your help today as I had tried every option, including England. You offered as much support as possible".*



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*"I was shocked as to the level of service I received from you tonight. I never knew there was a service like yours in Wales".*



## Conclusion

This year, the annual data report demonstrated the value of the national network of specialist VAWDASV Support Services, and the vital work Welsh Women's Aid delivers. In the last year, there were 30,063 contacts to the Live Fear Free Helpline and 26,669 referrals to community outreach support services, refuge-based support services, and sexual violence-based support services. The current Covid-19 pandemic has proven to further exacerbate the issue as the outbreak has curtailed access to support services for survivors and increased the likelihood of survivors being refused access to support. This year, there was a 13% increase in the number of survivors who were refused assistance across services when compared with the previous financial year. In particular, there was a 45% increase in the number of survivors with complex needs (mental health, disability, misuse of drugs and alcohol) who were turned away due to refuges operating at a reduced capacity as a result of Covid-19 restrictions.

Years of austerity have led to underinvestment in the sector, which has had a detrimental impact on gender equality, survivors' lives, and their space for action. This has resulted in women being in an increasingly vulnerable position whilst specialist services are having to deliver support with reduced funds.

The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 makes a clear national commitment for the delivery of sustainable funding for specialist services in order to realise its objectives. It is important that the Welsh Government delivers on its commitments, develops and implements a sustainable funding model in Wales.



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**Appendix 1: Specialist services – service provision**

Organisation		Service	Refuge-based service				Community-based service				Dedicated Sexual Violence Service			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1	Aberconwy Domestic Abuse Service	Aberconwy Domestic Abuse Service	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES				
2	Atal Y Fro	Atal Y Fro	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES				
3	Calan DVS	Calan DVS - Ammanford	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES				
		Calan DVS - Bridgend												
		Calan DVS – Neath Port Talbot												
		Calan DVS- South Powys												
4	Cardiff Women's Aid	Cardiff Women's Aid	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES				
5	Carmarthen Domestic Abuse Services	Carmarthen Domestic Abuse Services	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES				
6	Clwyd Alyn Housing Association (CAHA) Women's Aid	CAHA Women's Aid	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO				
7	Cyfannol Women's Aid	Cyfannol Women's Aid (Monmouthshire)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
		Cyfannol Women's Aid (Torfaen)												
		Cyfannol Women's Aid (Blaenau Gwent)												
8	DASU North Wales	Colwyn Bay Women's Aid	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES				
		Flintshire Women's Aid												
		Denbigh Women's Aid												
		Rhyl Women's Aid												
		Wrexham Women's Aid												
9	Gorwel	Gorwel Gwynedd	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES				

		Gorwel Anglesey				NO								
10	Montgomeryshire Family Crisis Centre	Montgomeryshire Family Crisis Centre	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES				
11	RASASC North Wales	RASASC North Wales									YES	YES	YES	YES
12	Rhondda Cynon Taff Women's Aid	RCT Women's Aid	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES				
13	Safer Merthyr	Safer Merthyr					YES	YES	YES	YES				
14	Safer Wales	Safer Wales					YES							
15	Stepping Stones North Wales	Stepping Stones North Wales									YES	YES	YES	YES
16	Swansea Women's Aid	Swansea Women's Aid	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
17	Threshold DAS	Threshold DAS (Llanelli)	YES	YES	YES	YES								
18	Thrive Women's Aid	Thrive Women's Aid	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES				
19	West Wales Women's Aid	West Wales Women's Aid - Cardigan	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES				
		West Wales Women's Aid - Aberystwyth												
			<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

## Appendix 2: Methodology

Welsh Women's Aid collects data to obtain a national and regional overview of the service provision and demand for support, and to support specialist services with their regional and organisational data collection. The data contributes towards the identification of trends and patterns which will inform policy and campaign work and thus will ultimately benefit both the federations and survivors. In the absence of a robust national picture, the impact of this work is reduced.

Each quarter, in line with their partnership agreement with WWA, member services complete the WWA data collection form which are then combined annually to provide an annual overview.

The WWA Data Collection Form (2020/21) requests data in the following sections:

Section	Information Requested
Member Overview	Contact and service details (i.e. number of units, programmes delivered, types of support etc.).
Protected Characteristics	Number of survivors in refuge and community services, broken down by protected characteristics (age, gender, religion/belief etc.)
Refuge	Data surrounding number of survivors who have accessed refuge services.
Community-Based Support	Data surrounding number of survivors who have accessed community-based services.
Sexual Violence Services	Data surrounding number of survivors who have accessed dedicated sexual violence services.

The series of data requests are further broken down by 'type of survivor':

Type of survivor	Description
'Total supported'	Total supported survivors in the period, which includes survivors who started in that period and those who are in continual service from a previous period.
'Starters'	Survivors who were referred and accepted into service during that period only.
'Leavers'	Survivors who were exited from service/ceased support during that period.
'Non-starters'	Survivors who were not accepted by the service or did not accept support offered by the service.



For transparency on how and where members' data has been used for reporting, below is a summary of all data requested quarterly, broken down by type of survivor and section/graph reference within this report:

Data Section	Data Requested	Type of Survivor	Report Reference
Demographics	Gender	Starters	Section 1.1-1.10 (Pages 12-16)
	Pregnant Women	Starters	
	Religion/Belief	Starters	
	Disability	Starters	
	Sexual Orientation	Starters	
	Ethnicity	Starters	
	Age	Starters	
	Language	Starters	
Marital status	Starters		
Community-based support services	Community Overview Statistics (no. of referrals, no. accepted into service, no. refused from service, no. declined service)	All supported Starters Non-starters	Section 3.1: Referrals and access to service (Pages 31-32) (Table 11, Figure 11).
	Children with their parents in Outreach and Community Services	Starters	Section 3.2: Children and young people service provision (Pages 32) (Table 12)
	Sex of Primary Perpetrator	Starters	Section 3.3: Sex of Perpetrator (Page 33) (Figure 12)
	Types of abuse	All supported	Section 3.4: Types of abuse disclosed (Pages 33) (Figure 13)
	Additional support needs	Starters	Section 3.5: Support Needs (Pages 34-35) (Figure 14)
	MARAC Referrals	All supported	Section 3.6: Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) Referrals (Page 36)
Data Section	Data Requested	Type of Survivor	Report Reference
Refuge-based support services	Refuge Overview Statistics (no. of referrals, no. accepted into service, no. refused from service, no. declined service, no. of leavers)	All supported Starters Leavers Non-starters	Section 2.1: Referrals and access to services (Page 17-18) (Table 6, Figure 2)



	Refusal Reasons and Reasons survivors did not accept	Non-Starters	Section 2.2: Survivors unable to be supported (Page 18-21) (Figure 3-4)
	Referral source and location	Starters	Section 2.3: Referral sources and location (Pages 21-23) (Figure 5, Table 8)
	Types of abuse	Starters	Section 2.6: Types of abuse (Page 25) (Figure 8)
	Additional support needs	Starters	Section 2.7: Additional support needs (Page 26-27) (Figure 9)
	Children & Young people	All supported	Section 2.4: Children of survivors in refuge-based support (Page 23) (Figure 6 & 7)
	Sex of Primary Perpetrator	Starters	Section 2.5: Sex of primary perpetrator (Page 25) (Table 9)
	MARAC Referrals	All supported	Section 2.8: MARAC referrals (Page 27-28)
	Tenancy payments and no recourse to public funds	Starters	Section 2.9: No Recourse to Public Funds: Refuge-based support (Page 28)
Sexual-Violence based support services	Sexual Violence Overview Statistics (no. of referrals, no. accepted into service, no. refused from service, no. declined service)	All supported Starters Non-starters	Section 4.1: Referrals and access to service (Page 37-38) (Table 13, Figure 15)
	Referral Location and source	Starters	Section 4.2: Referral sources and location (Page 38-39) (Figure 16)
	Sex of Primary Perpetrator	Starters	Section 4.3: Sex of primary perpetrator (Page 39-40) (Figure 18)
	Types of abuse	Starters	Section 4.4: Types of abuse disclosed (Page 41) (Figure 19)
	Additional support needs	Starters	Section 4.5: Support needs (Page 41-42) (Figure 20)

### Appendix 3: Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
MARAC:	A Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a victim focused risk management meeting attended by all key agencies, where survivors assessed as high risk of harm from perpetrators of domestic abuse are referred and multi-agency safety plans are agreed to reduce the risk posed by the perpetrator.
Refuge unit:	One family room within a communal or self-contained refuge.
Dispersed unit:	A family room/accommodation in a separate location to the communal or self-contained refuge. Typically, where services offer support to male survivors in addition to female survivors, they would be supported separately in dispersed units.
Move-on unit:	Temporary accommodation provided by the service away from the refuge, which has a limited stay period, and is accessed following refuge-based support and prior to independent living. 'Move-on units' are typically studio flats or bedrooms in shared houses in the community where people can live independently with the ongoing support from trained resettlement advisors.

#### Appendix 4: Regional and local authority areas

Region	Local Authority	VAWDASV Strategic Boards & sub-regional arrangements	
<b>North Wales</b>	Conwy	North Wales VAWDASV Strategic Board	
	Denbighshire		
	Flintshire		
	Gwynedd		
	Isle of Anglesey		
	Wrexham		
<b>Mid &amp; West Wales</b>	Carmarthenshire	Mid and West Wales VAWDASV Strategic Board	
	Ceredigion		
	Pembrokeshire		
	Powys		
<b>South Wales</b>	Vale of Glamorgan	Cardiff and the Vale region	South Wales VAWDASV Regional Collaborate Board
	Cardiff		
	Merthyr Tydfil Borough	Cwm Taf region	
	Rhondda Cynon Taf		
	Bridgend		
	Swansea	Western Bay region	
	Neath Port Talbot		
<b>Gwent</b>	Blaenau Gwent	Gwent VAWDASV Strategic Board	
	Caerphilly		
	Monmouthshire		
	Newport		
	Torfaen		