



Leicestershire County Council

Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment

November 2024

About SafeLives

We are SafeLives, the UK-wide charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse, for everyone and for good.

We work with organisations across the UK to transform the response to domestic abuse. We want what you would want for your best friend. We listen to survivors, putting their voices at the heart of our thinking. We look at the whole picture for each individual and family to get the right help at the right time to make families everywhere safe and well. And we challenge perpetrators to change, asking 'why doesn't he stop?' rather than 'why doesn't she leave?' This applies whatever the gender of the victim or perpetrator and whatever the nature of their relationship.

Last year alone, nearly 11,000 professionals working on the frontline received our training. Over 65,000 adults at risk of serious harm or murder and more than 85,000 children received support through dedicated multi-agency support designed by us and delivered with partners. In the last three years, over 1,000 perpetrators have been challenged and supported to change by interventions we created with partners, and that's just the start. Together we can end domestic abuse. Forever. For everyone.

Glossary

DA – Domestic Abuse

Dash – Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour-Based Violence

DHR – Domestic Homicide Review

HBV – Honour Based Violence

Idva- Independent Domestic Violence Advisor

IPV – Intimate Partner Violence

LA – Local Authorities

LPB – Local Partnership Board

Marac – Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference

MSF – Most Similar Force (Police)

NRPF – No Recourse to Public Funds

VAWG – Violence Against Women and Girls

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About this project

Context

SafeLives have been commissioned to provide support and coordination to Leicestershire County Council in carrying out the Safe Accommodation needs assessment in line with their statutory duty under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021

This report outlines our findings, following review and analysis of data provided by agencies and organisations across Leicestershire, and from hearing the voice and experiences of victims and survivors.

We are very grateful to everyone who participated in this needs assessment. Their willingness to share information and expertise helped us immensely with drawing together the detail in this report.

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Project aims and objectives

The project aims were to support the Leicestershire Domestic Abuse Local Partnership in gaining an understanding of the current landscape for safe accommodation to enable effective planning and commissioning.

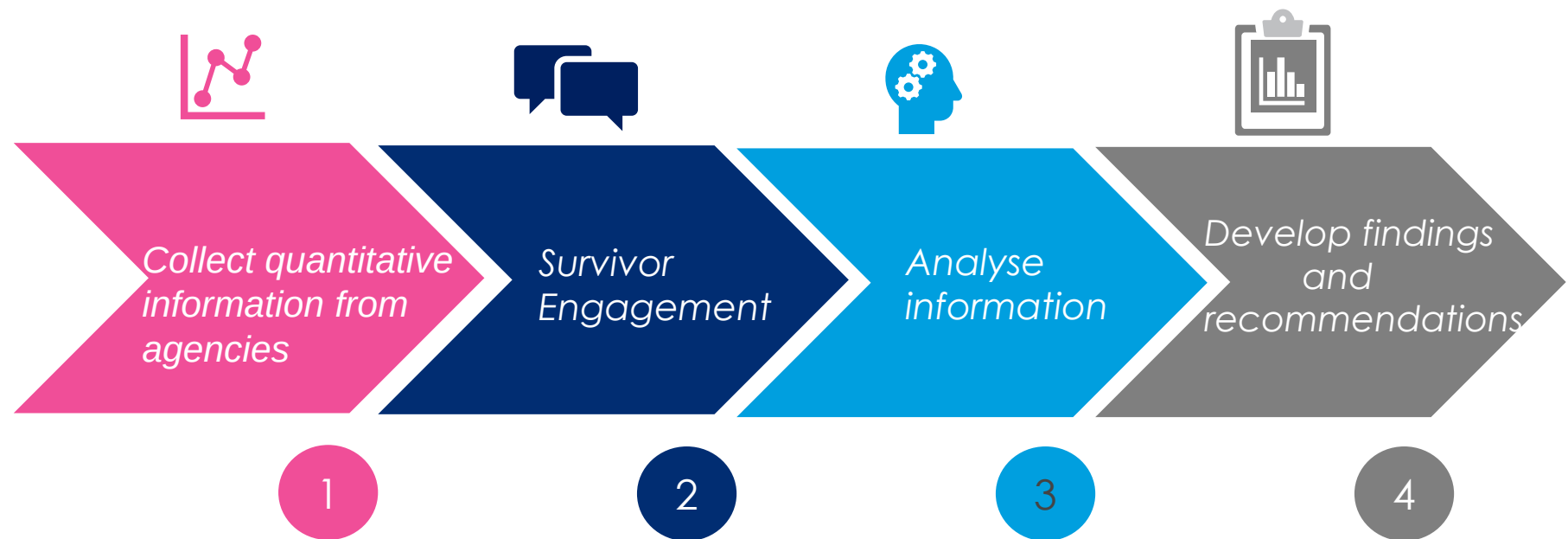
Key objectives were:

- Carry out a needs assessment of safe accommodation across Leicestershire County
- A review of safe accommodation provision
- Identify gaps and needs in safe accommodation provision
- Review and assess implementation of recommendations from the previous needs assessment

Data was collated using the MHCLG needs assessment tool. Comparative data from SafeLives national data sets was used and analysed using a number of SafeLives tools including the prevalence tool.

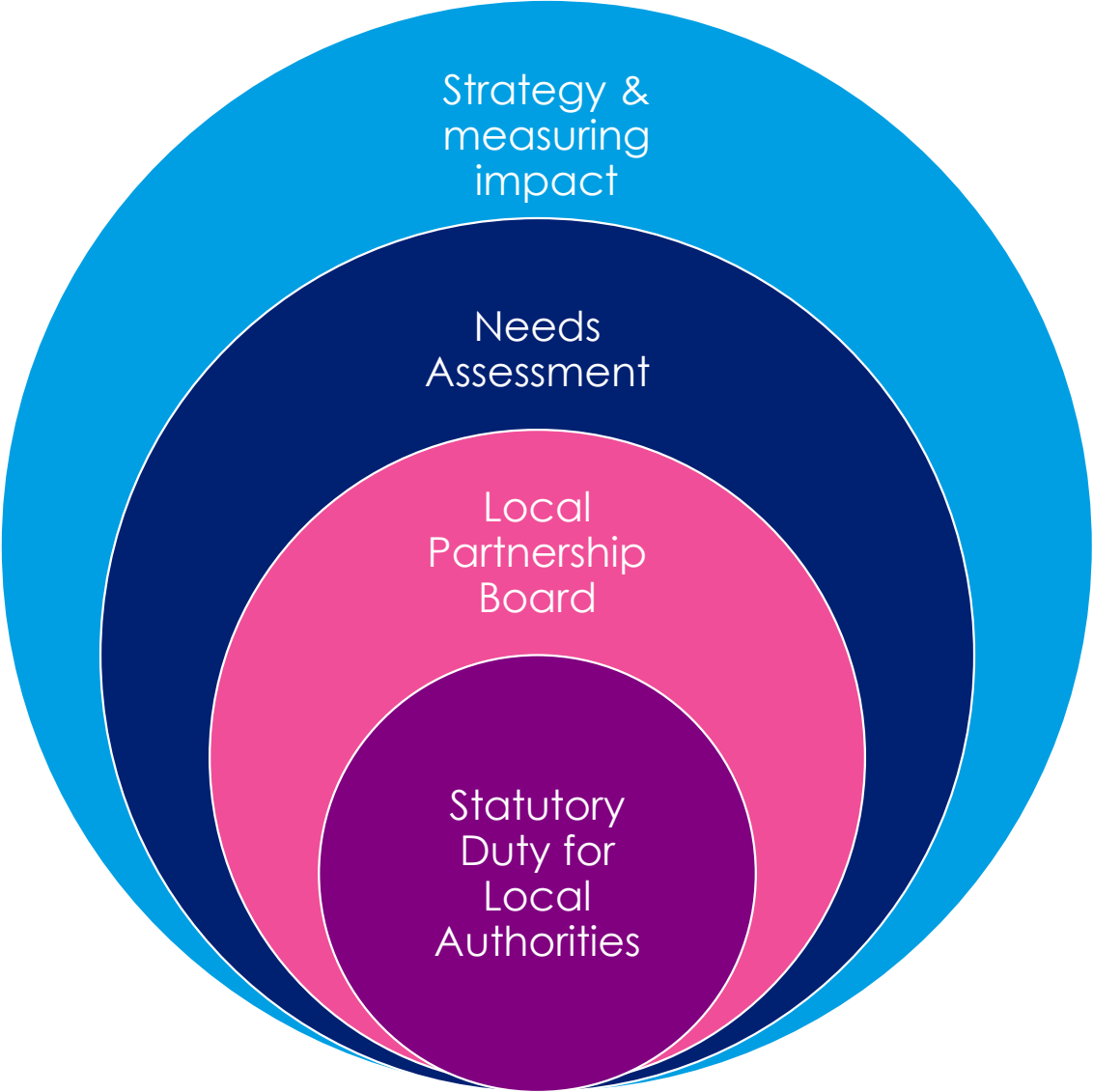
This work will enable Leicestershire County Council to gain a clearer understanding of local need in relation to safe accommodation and will help to inform their domestic abuse strategy and any subsequent commissioning.

Our Approach



A full list of agencies providing data is in Appendix A

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Statutory Duty



The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Statutory Duty



Statutory Duty for Local Authorities

Statutory duty on Tier One local authorities to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children within refuges and other safe accommodation.

A four-part statutory framework for the delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation and provides clarity over governance and accountability.

Local Authorities will be required to appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board which will carry out a governance and consultative role as it performs certain specified function.



Provide advice to Area about its functions under Section 55 of the DA Act

Core membership as set out in the DA Act and statutory guidance with Authentic Voice for both adult and child victims essential.

Responsibilities are

- Assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support for all victims in their area, including those who require cross-border support
- Develop and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their locality, having regard to the needs assessment
- Give effect to the strategy (through commissioning / de-commissioning decisions)
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy



Assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support for all victims in Leicestershire County, including those who require cross-border support

When - every three years

How - Using the template provided gather data from local sources

Who - Tier 1 LA to carry out through DA Local Partnership Boards, others who must co-operate are Tier 2 LA, DA services, refuge services

What - Mapping current provision for safe accommodation and support

- Mapping current need, who and how much need for safe accommodation and support



Develop and publish: a strategy for provision of support, using the needs assessment

Develop a domestic abuse strategy encompassing the provision of support, informed by the needs assessment

- Implement the strategy through commissioning
- Tier 1 LAs in England must send an annual report to the Secretary of State on how it is realising the strategy
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.



Local Partnership Board

Domestic Abuse Partnership Board Membership

Domestic Abuse Act 2021 sets out a core membership of the Domestic Abuse Partnership board.

Since the previous needs assessment there have been changes made to the board and its membership. The Leicestershire Local Partnership Board has joined with Rutland Council to form the Leicestershire and Rutland Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board.

Having reviewed membership of the boards, there are opportunities to strengthen. It is noted that work to include the Survivor Advisory Board within the Partnership Boards is ongoing.

It is positive to see the inclusion of a specific post to represent the interests of adult victims of domestic abuse. There are opportunities to strengthen the role of the representative of the interests of child victims of domestic abuse which currently sits with one of the local domestic abuse services.

The Echo Project will support with the strengthening of both the adult and child victim representative role, amplifying the authentic voice of victims and survivors within the partnership board.

Another positive is the inclusion of a number of domestic abuse and specialist by and for services. This shows a clear commitment to understanding the differing and intersecting needs of victims and survivors, and the vital role specialist by and for services have in this.



Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment

Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment

The Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment is a comprehensive tool that enables you to capture data covering a range of themes relating to safe accommodation.

This needs assessment will inform your strategy, not only for safe accommodation but for the domestic abuse system as a whole. It is important to view this in the context of a whole picture approach, not only doing what is necessary but thinking of the art of the possible.

Survivor voice is an essential component of this needs assessment and throughout the requirements of the Statutory Duty. By listening to the authentic, unmediated voice of victims and survivors, we truly understand the barriers, challenges and good practice they experience.

What can we learn, what are our gaps and how can we build on our success.

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Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment

Within this section we present the assessment for all victims accessing services. This is not inclusive of those accessing safe accommodation as this will be addressed further in the document.

Alongside the Tier 1 data provided by Leicestershire Children and Adult Services, the assessment utilises data submitted from Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC), Oadby & Wigston Borough Council (OWBC), North-West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC), Melton Borough Council (MBC), Harborough District Council (HDC). Blaby District Council (BDC) did provide limited data. Due to queries with the data which we were not able to resolve by the time of writing, we have been unable to use their homelessness data within the needs assessment. Their Domestic Abuse service data has been included. Charnwood Borough Council (CBC) were unable to provide a data return for this assessment.

It is likely that there are further victims about whom we have not been provided information of, and it is important to note that the figures included here only reflect those victims included in the data provided and the ones we are aware of. The data may also include duplicate counting as victims may have approached or been in contact with multiple services/agencies.

Where there are anomalies in the data, these are detailed within the relevant section of the report.

A full list of agencies who supplied data can be found in **Appendix A**

Throughout this work we have used our Prevalence Tool. These figures are estimates calculated with the site's prevalence data and have been rounded down to reflect that they are approximations. The joint prevalence figures for Area were calculated using combined data from two areas. There may be small differences between the joint prevalence figures and the combined totals of prevalence areas from the two areas due to the rounding process.

Further information regarding the Prevalence Tool can be found in the next section of this report.

Prevalence of Domestic Abuse

The Prevalence Tool

What is the prevalence tool?

The SafeLives prevalence tool estimates the prevalence of domestic abuse within local areas. This includes an estimation for the number of victims, perpetrators of abuse, and children in households with partner abuse. It also breaks down the victim estimations into visible victims only, Adult Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) victims only, and marginalised groups of people such as racially minoritised people, LGBT+ people, and disabled people.

How does it work?

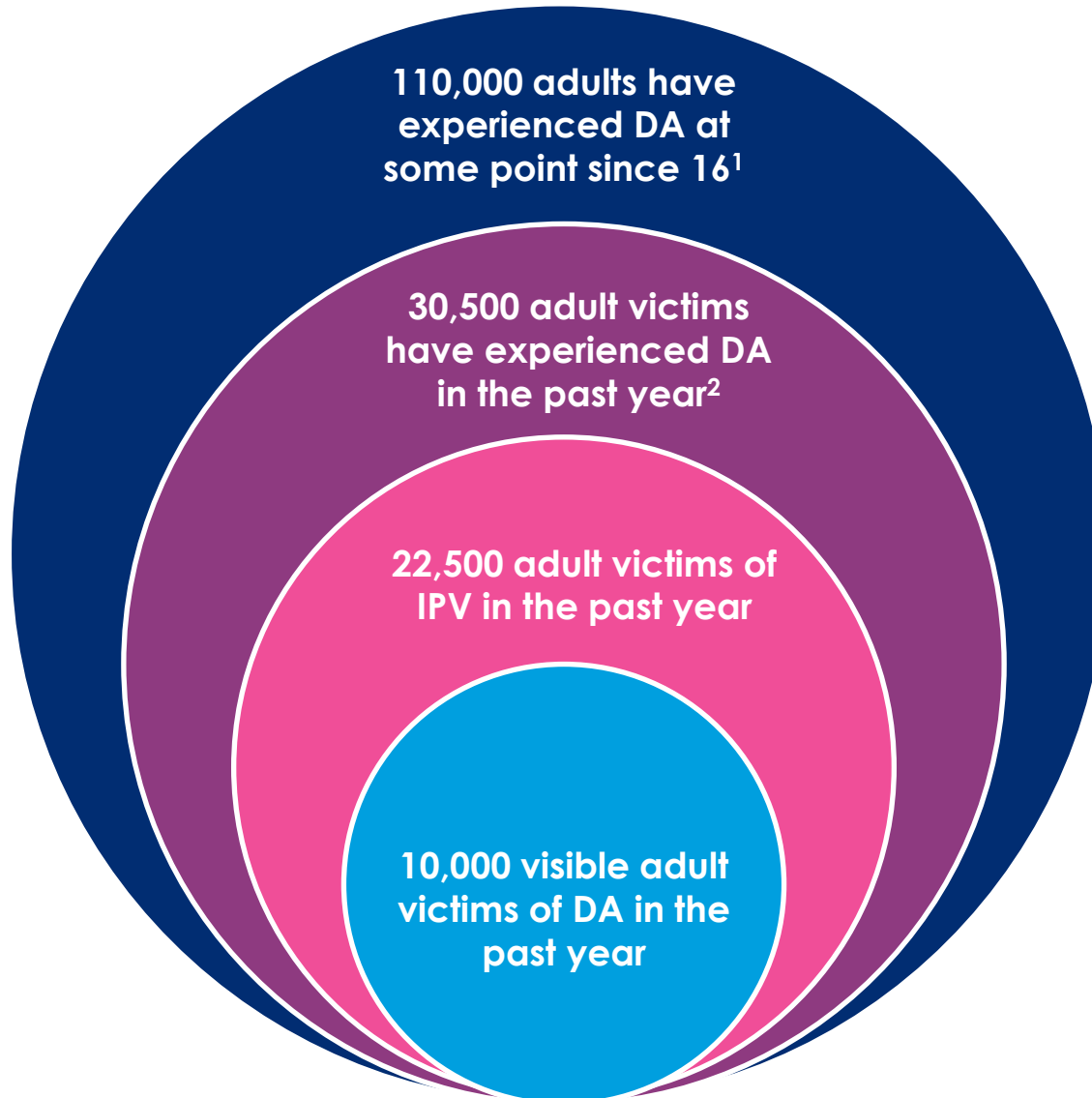
The tool calculates the figures by using several external and internal data sources for estimations of domestic abuse amongst different groups of people. This includes both 'set figures' which are consistent across all local areas, as well as 'local specific data'. The 'set figures' include data from the ONS (Office for National Statistics) including the 'Crime Survey for England and Wales' (2020) and the 'Family Resources Survey', Stonewall data, and SafeLives estimations such as the number of children experiencing abuse in their household. 'Local specific data' includes population data for each area on gender, age and ethnicity taken from the latest Census (2021) survey, as well as data on those at the highest risk of serious harm or homicide taken from the latest Marac dataset.

Please note:

The numbers provided are estimations and have been rounded down. All calculations are based on population data from the 2021 Census. The tool uses the 2020 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), we decided not to use the more recent CSEW version due to various data collection issues which means they have not been defined as national statistics.

Number of victims: Overview

Leicestershire



The SafeLives prevalence tool uses data from the Crime Survey England and Wales (CSEW) merged with local population data. It is in the ONS domestic abuse bulletin and more specifically the prevalence and trends paper. We also use Marac data to capture a true understanding of the prevalence of domestic abuse in a local area.

This details the estimated number of victims who have experienced domestic abuse (DA), not the number of victims who have accessed services. 204

¹Around 15% will have experienced both partner abuse and family abuse

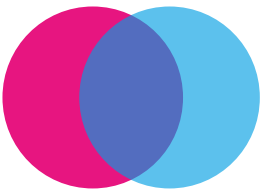
²Around 8% will have experienced both partner abuse and family abuse

Caveat: The CSEW dataset used is for the year ending in March 2020. This is due to a period of suspended data collection during Covid resulting in the March 2022 dataset which has much lower response rates and highly suppressed figures affecting the quality of estimates. CSEW data is to be updated with the July 2023 dataset when available.

Prevalence of adult victims – since the age of 16



We estimate there are **98,000** adult victims in Leicestershire who have experienced domestic abuse at **some point in their lives since the age of 16**



An estimated **15%** of these adult victims will have experienced **both partner and family abuse**

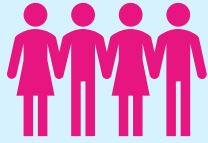


Of the total estimated adult victims **73,500 (68%)** are estimated to be **female**

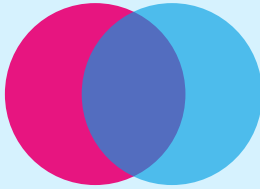


Of the total estimated adult victims **35,000 (32%)** are estimated to be **male**

Prevalence of adult victims – in the past year



We estimate there are **30,000** adult victims in Leicestershire who have experienced domestic abuse at **some point in the last year**



We estimate that around **8%** of those adult victims will have experienced **both partner and family abuse**



Of the total estimated adult victims in the past year, **20,500 (68%)** are estimated to be **female**



Of the total estimated adult victims in the past year, **9,500 (32%)** are estimated to be **male**

Caveat: Older (75+) victim prevalence rates are based on a proxy rate from the CSEW for abuse in the past year only for those aged 60-74. This is because there is no CSEW prevalence rate data for the year ending in March 2020 for those aged 75+.

The sum of females and males may not add up to the total due to rounding.



Prevalence of adult victims – in the past year – visible victims



■ Visible victims in past year ■ Non-visible victims in past year

Visible victims = the estimated number of adult victims in the local area who have experienced domestic abuse in the past year and who could be considered as wishing to access services. This is as they reported in the CSEW that they had “told other support professional or organisation”. This calculation uses a combination of Marac data to show visible high-risk victims and CSEW data for visible non-high risk victims.

Non-visible victims = the estimated number of adult victims in the local area who have experienced domestic abuse in the past year and who could be considered as not wishing to access service / not visible to services.

Caveat: Marac data recording can vary amongst local areas depending on their Marac processes, for instance some have triaging systems where not all the initial referrals are recorded. These differences will impact on the prevalence estimations for visible high-risk victims.

This shows the estimated number of **visible** adult victims in the local area in the past year. We estimate that a **third (34%) of female victims** and a **quarter (24%) of male victims** in the past year were visible. This calculation uses a combination of Marac data to show visible high-risk victims and data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) for visible non-high risk victims as they reported in the CSEW that they had “told other support professional or organisation”.

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Prevalence of adult victims – in the past year – marginalised groups



We estimate that there were **6,000 Young victims** aged 16-24¹

- Useful resource: see our [Spotlights on Young People and DA](#)



We estimate that there were **6,000 Older victims** aged 60+²

- Useful resource: see our [Spotlights on Older People and DA](#)



We estimate that there were **1,500 Black, Asian and racially minoritised victims** who have experienced domestic abuse in the past year³.

- Useful resource: see our [Spotlights on 'Honour'-based Violence and Forced marriage and DA](#)



We estimate that there were **7,500 Disabled victims** of domestic abuse in the past year

- Useful resource: see our [Spotlights on Disabled people and DA](#)



We estimate that there were **5,500 LGB+ victims** of domestic abuse in the past year⁴

- Useful resource: see our [Spotlights on LGB+ people and DA](#)

1. The CSEW only provides prevalence rates for 16-19 and 20-24 year olds, therefore an average of these two was calculated for the 18-24 group.

2. Older (75+) victim prevalence rates are based on a proxy rate from the CSEW for abuse in the past year only for those aged 60-74. This is because there is no CSEW prevalence rate data for the year ending in March 2020 for those aged 75+.

3. The CSEW does not accurately reflect the impact of domestic abuse on Black Asian and racially minoritised people, thus, we multiply the number of victims with the Black Asian and racially minoritised proportion of the area including the following: 'Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh', 'Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African', 'Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups', 'White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller', 'White: Roma', and 'Other ethnic group' (data obtained from the ONS census 2021)

4 The prevalence statistic for LGB+ people is based on the CSEW aggregate for Gay and Lesbian people. It does not include trans people as the sample size is too small

Prevalence – in the past year – partner abuse (IPV)



We estimate that there were **22,500** adult victims in the local area who have experienced partner abuse in the past year¹.



We estimate that there were **17,000 children living in a household with partner abuse** in the past year²

- Useful resource: see our [Spotlights on Parenting and DA](#) and our [Spotlights on Young People and DA](#)



We estimate that there were **18,000 people using abusive behaviours** in their intimate partner relationships in the past year in the local area



Of those **20%** are estimated to be **serial perpetrators of domestic abuse**³

1. Older (75+) victim prevalence rates are based on a proxy rate from the CSEW dataset for the year ending March 2020 for those aged 60-74 only. This is because there is no CSEW prevalence rate data for the year ending in March 2020 for those aged 75+.

2. Uses estimations of 41% of households with partner abuse having children in with an average of 1.85 children per household – this data comes from the ONS, with details in SafeLives '[A safe fund](#)' report.

3. Robinson, A.L., Clancy, A. and Hanks, S., 2014. Prevalence and characteristics of serial domestic abuse perpetrators: Multi-agency evidence from Wales.

Overview of Data

Overview 2021 – 2022

15,019



Total number of
adult & child victims

Of these 15,019 records



Age 18 - 64



Under 18



Over 65



Unknown Age

Female	76.9%
Male	19.9%
Non Binary	0.05%
Trans*	0.02%
Other	0.03%
Unknown	0.2%



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1. Those age 16/17 may be child victims whose parent/s are in DA Relationships and/or victims of IPV.
2. Adult Victims only

Overview 2022 – 2023

14,815



Total number of
adult & child victims

Of these 14,815 records



Age 18 - 64



Under 18



Over 65



Unknown Age

Female	78.1%
Male	20.3%
Non Binary	0.03%
Trans*	0.04%
Other	0.04%
Unknown	1.5%



1. Those age 16/17 may be child victims whose parent/s are in DA Relationships and/or victims of IPV.
2. Adult Victims only

Overview 2023 – 2024

16,738



Total number of
adult & child victims

Of these 16,738 records



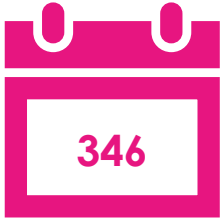
Age 18 - 64



Under 18



Over 65



Unknown Age

Female	77.3%
Male	20.6%
Non Binary	0.06%
Trans*	0.04%
Other	0.04%
Unknown	1.6%



1. Those age 16/17 may be child victims whose parent/s are in DA Relationships and/or victims of IPV.
2. Adult Victims only

Number of Victims

The SafeLives Prevalence Tool, developed in line with our research, estimates that **110,000 adults** in Leicestershire have experienced Domestic Abuse at some point in their lives since the age of 16, with around **15%** experiencing both partner and family abuse.

It also estimates that **30,500 adult victims** have experienced Domestic Abuse in the last year, with around **8%** experiencing both partner and family abuse and **17,000 children** living in a household with partner abuse in the last year.

The total number of adult and child victims identified in the data sets provided by services/agencies in Leicestershire in each of the 3 years the needs assessment covers are:



The overall number of victims has **decreased by 1.4%** from years **2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23**. However, there was a **13% increase** from years **2022 – 23 to 2023 – 24**.

There has been a significant increase in the number of victims identified by agencies since the previous needs assessment. An overall increase of **68%** from the end of the previous assessment to the end of this assessment period. There will be many reasons for this increase including improved identification of domestic abuse, improved or new ways of recording on systems, an increased number of services working with victims such as the housing link workers and more agencies contributing to this assessment.

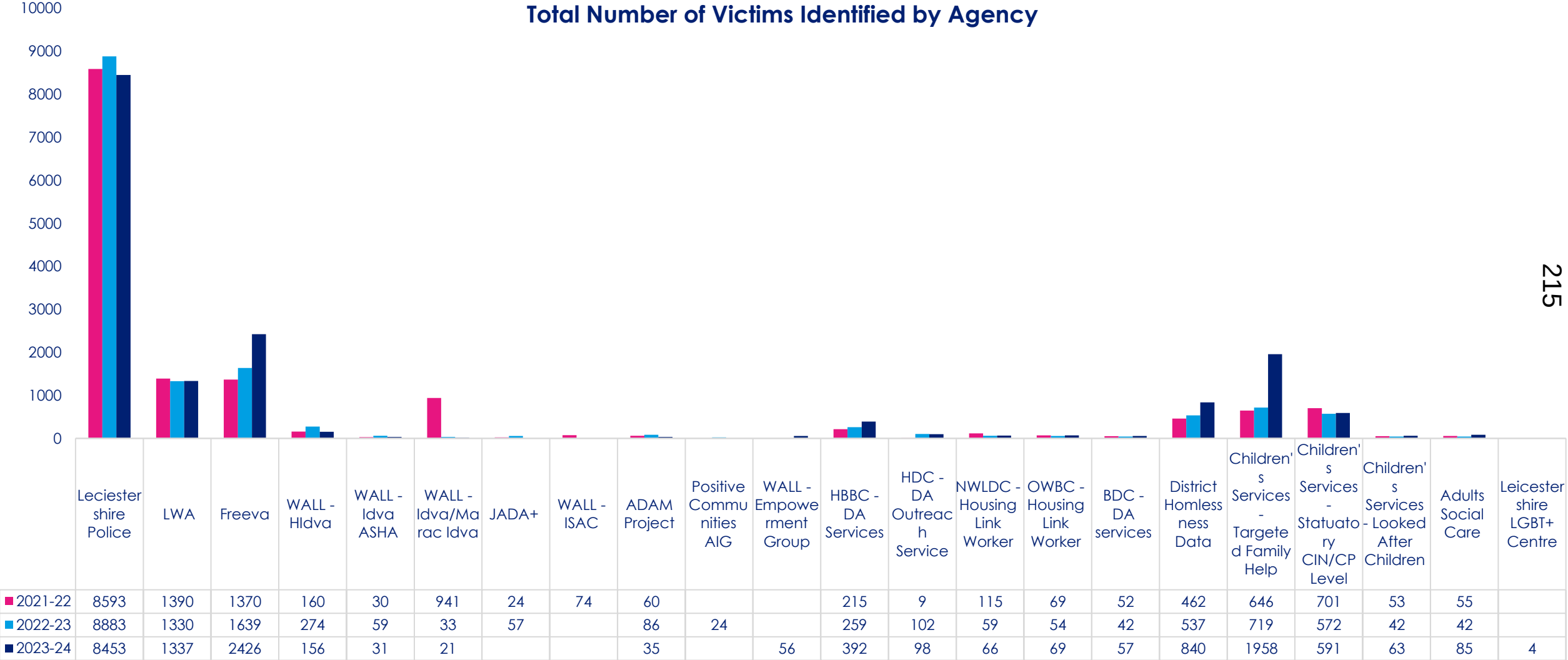
However, it should be noted that there may be an element of duplicate recording i.e. the helpline and the DALs service may both record a victim's details.

*These figures are estimates calculated with the site's prevalence data and so have been rounded down to reflect that they are approximations

Data Trends

Identification by Agency

Total Number of Victims Identified by Agency



2021-22 2022-23 2023-24



Identification by Agency

This table on the previous page details the number of victims identified broken down by agency.

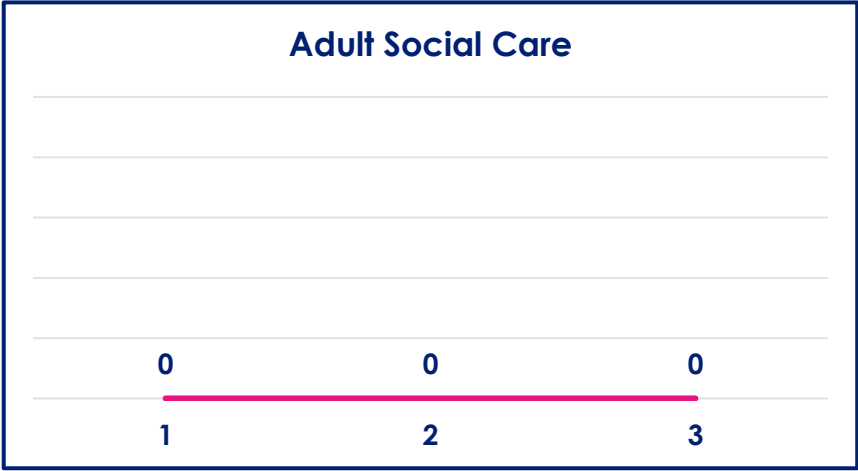
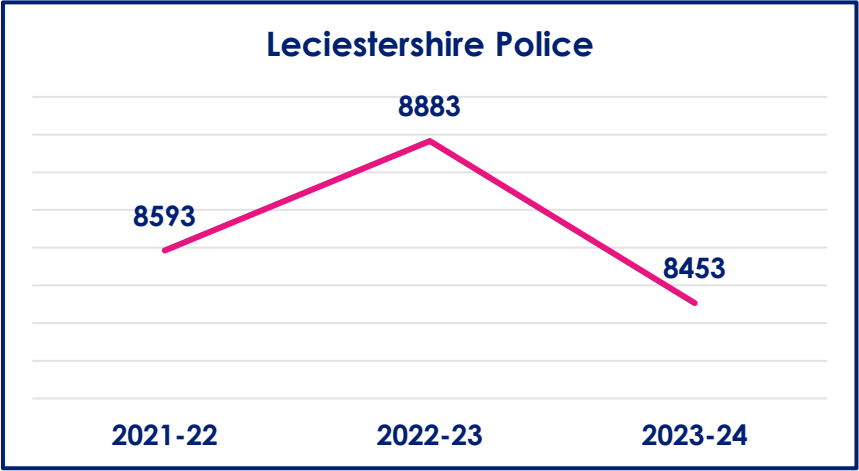
Leicestershire Police, LWA and Freeva have the highest levels of identification of victims in the first two years. Leicestershire Police, Freeva and Targeted Family Help have the highest identification for the final year.

We have been advised that a new system was implemented within Targeted Family Help in the year 2023 – 24 and therefore a new recording a collection system which may account for some of the increase.

The following section will look at the data trends for individual agencies in more detail.

Trends

Victims identified by Service



The number of victims identified by Leicestershire Police increased by **3.4%** from 2021 - 22 to 2022 – 23. It then decreased by **4.8%** in 2023 – 24, which is **1.6%** fewer victims being identified than in 2021 – 22.

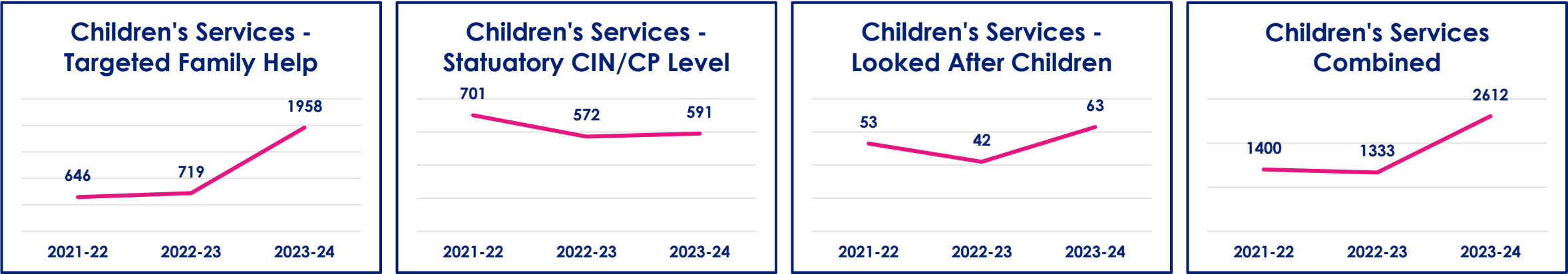
However, when we consider the previous Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment, the number of victims identified by Leicestershire Police was **6979** in 2020 – 21, meaning there has been an increase of **23.1%** from the end of the previous assessment to the first year of this assessment, and an increase **21.1%** victims being identified to the final year of this assessment.

Adult Social Care also saw a decrease in the number of victims identified by **23.6%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23. it then increased significantly by **102.4%** in 2023 – 24.

When we consider the previous Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment, the number of victims identified by Adult Social Care was **41** in 2020 – 21, meaning there has been an increase of **35.1%** from the end of the previous assessment to the first year of this assessment, before returning to a similar level in 2022 – 23, with an increase **107.3%** victims being identified to the final year of this assessment.

Trends

Victims identified by Children's Services



In the previous Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment, Children's Services provided SafeLives with their first response data (Contacts and Referrals), where the primary reason for contact is Domestic Abuse and Children's Social Care Assessments where domestic abuse is a factor. This data only provided information regarding the children identified.

Within this assessment we have been provided with data sets for victims identified by

- Targeted Family Help Service, which provides information on both the adult and child
- Statutory Child in Need and Child Protection Assessments, which provides information for only the children
- Looked after Children, which provides information for only the children

For the Targeted Family Help Service, we can see that the number of victims identified increased by **11.3%** from 2021 - 22 to 2022 – 23. It increased again by **172.3%** in 2023 – 24 with the number of children identified increasing from **363** on 2021 – 22 to **393** in 2022 – 23 and **1299** in 2023 – 24.

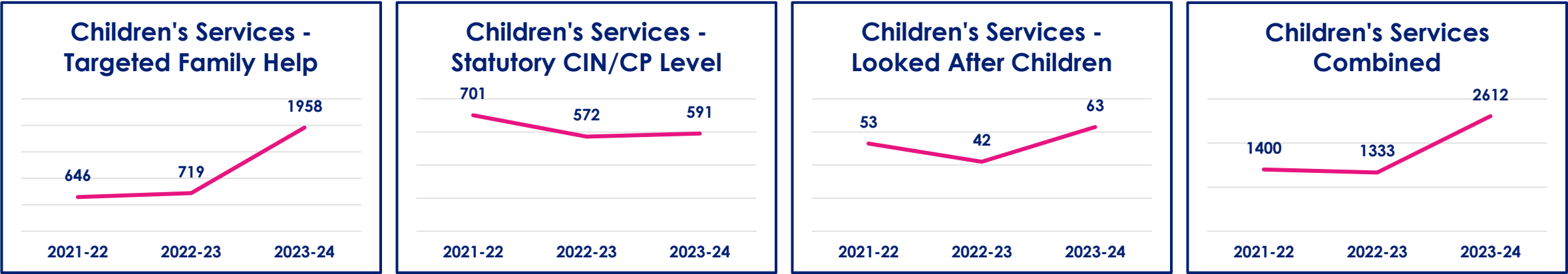
For those children receiving statutory Child in Need and Child Protection Assessments, this figure decreased from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23 by **18.4%** before increasing slightly by **3.32%**. This provides an overall decrease of **15.7%**.

For Looked after Children, there is a decrease of **20.8%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23. It then increased by **50%** in 2023 – 24.



Trends

Victims identified by Children's Services



We can see that overall there has been a significant increase of **86.6%** in the number of victims identified across the time period of this assessment, most of which can be attributed to the increase in those identified by Targeted Family Help. However, this is lower than the number identified in the previous Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment with **6754 children** identified within the first response data and **1011** Children's Social Care Assessments where domestic abuse is a factor completed in 2020 - 21. It should be noted that during that year there was a change in practice by the Children's Social Care assessment team to 'including other children in the family' as part of their case management records.

Due to the different ways of providing the data, it is difficult to fully determine how or why there is a significant difference and we would recommend exploring this further and aligning the data sets provided.

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Trends

Victims identified by Domestic Abuse Service

Service Offer

Victim's services has undergone a period of change across Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland with a new service contract starting on the 1st April 2022.

There is now a Helpline and Engagement service managed by Freeva which is the Front Door for all referrals and attend Marac, a Domestic Abuse Locality service consisting of a Complex Need service, and an Outreach service managed by LWA and the Safe Accommodation provision managed by WALL. Due to the set up and referral pathway, there may be an element of double counting.

While the traditional Idva provision ended with WALL at that time, there continues to be a small team of specialist Idvas available such as a Marac Idva, Hospital Idva and Idva (ASHA) for those from Black, Asian and Racially Minoritised communities within WALL however it should be noted that these contracts ended with WALL in September 2023. The Marac Idva and Health Idva roles transferred to Freeva and the ASHA Idva role funding ceased in 2023.

The JADA+ project provided by WALL ran during the first two years of this needs assessment however, this funding also ended in 2022 – 23.

The Adam Project is a male only support service provided by WALL.

Data Collection

LWA have provided data regarding both adult and child victims. Freeva have provided limited data regarding children (n. 6 in 2021 – 22, n. 9 in 2022 – 23 and n. 21 in 2023 – 24) and it is unclear if they relate to children who have been referred as a victim in their own relationship or as a children experiencing domestic abuse within the household. In addition, the data has not been separated by service – ie Helpline, Marac Idva, Health Idva etc where applicable.

Other than for the JADA+ project, WALL have not been able to provide data regarding children. The exception of two 16 – 17-year-olds in 2022 – 23 and six in 2023 – 24, one age 12 – 15-year-old and 5 16 – 17-year-olds. They were supported by the Health and Marac Idvas.

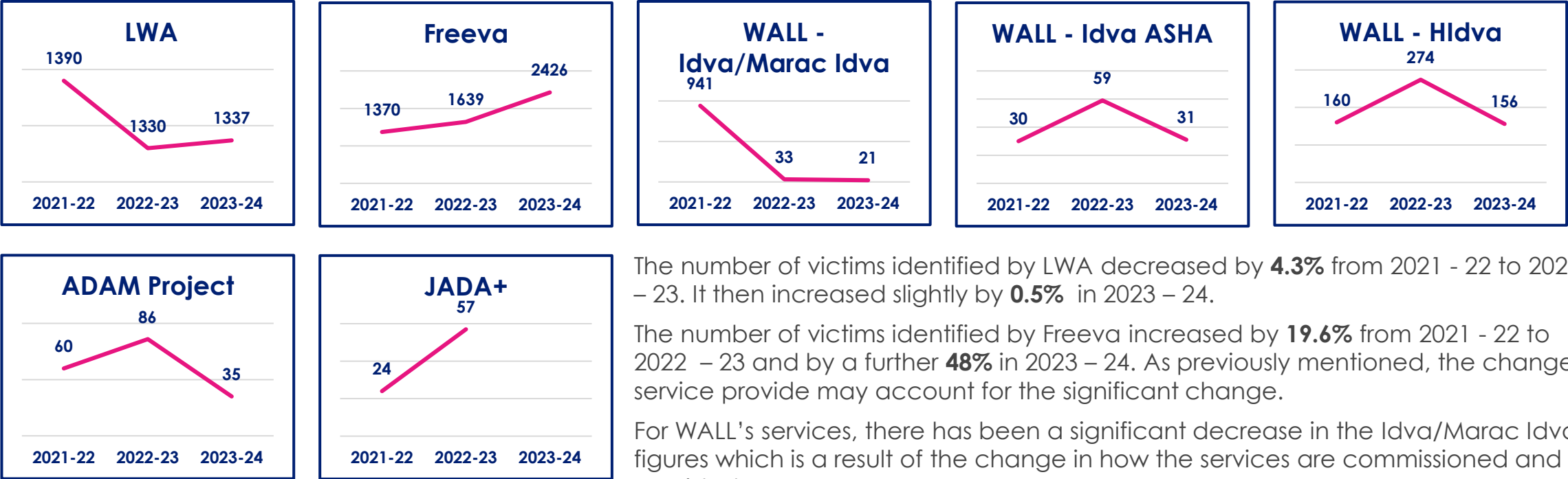
It should also be noted that all data provided by WALL **is LLR wide**, barring the District Housing Link Workers. This data is not currently broken down by locality so we cannot say, with certainty how many of the victims identified live in Leicestershire.

This is an area WALL are working to rectify and aim to be able to provide a breakdown in future years.

Due to the new service offer and ways the data is presented, again it is difficult to compare to the previous assessment.

Trends

Victims identified by Domestic Abuse Service



The number of victims identified by LWA decreased by **4.3%** from 2021 - 22 to 2022 - 23. It then increased slightly by **0.5%** in 2023 - 24.

The number of victims identified by Freeva increased by **19.6%** from 2021 - 22 to 2022 - 23 and by a further **48%** in 2023 - 24. As previously mentioned, the change in service provide may account for the significant change.

For WALL's services, there has been a significant decrease in the Idva/Marac Idva figures which is a result of the change in how the services are commissioned and provided.

For the Idva ASHA service, there was an increase of **96.7%** from 2021 - 22 to 2022 - 23. Whilst it shows a decrease in 2023 - 24, this contract ended part way through the year therefore is not a true reflection.

This is also the case for the Health Idva however we can see an increase of **71.3%** from 2021 - 22 to 2022 - 23. We know that Health plays an essential role in addressing domestic abuse and it is positive to see a Health Idva in post supporting victims in a number of sites across the LLR.

The JADA+ Project ran across the first two years of this needs assessment. Data shows that there was an increase of **137.5%** of children identified by this service before funding ended.

The ADAM Project saw an increase of **43.3%** of victims identified from 2021 - 22 to 2022 - 23. It then decreased by **59.3%** in 2023 - 24.

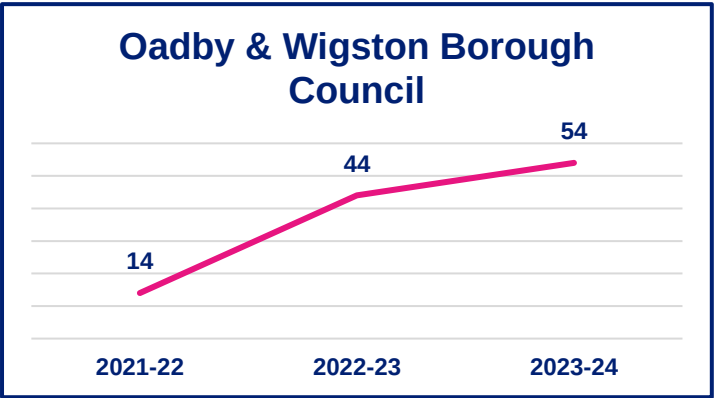
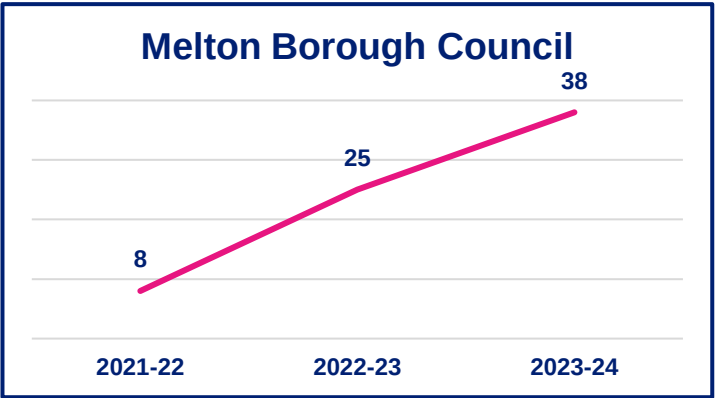
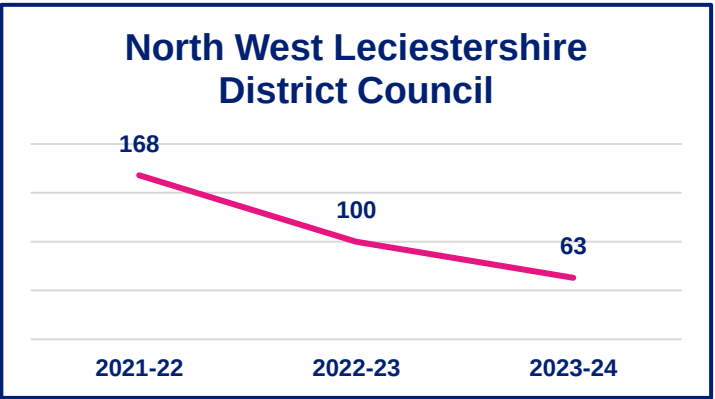
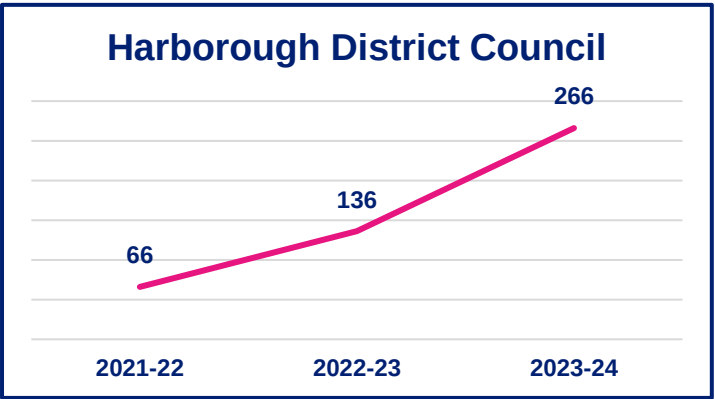
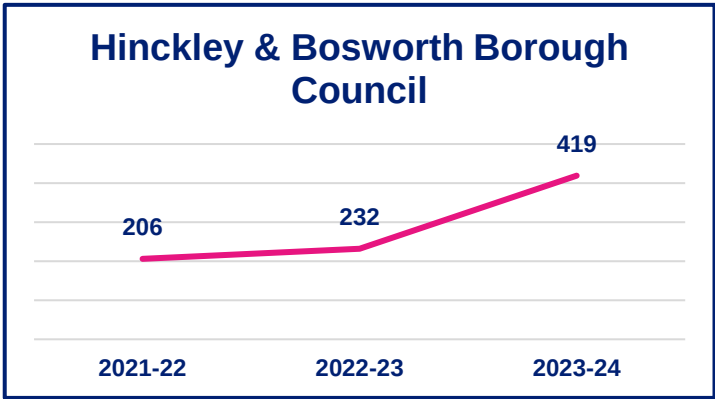


Trends

Victims identified by District Homelessness Teams

Data was provided by five of the seven districts homelessness departments. Unfortunately, Charnwood Borough Council have been unable to provide a data set for this needs assessment. Blaby District Council provided data of their domestic abuse service and not their homelessness team which is reviewed further in the report. They have however stated during partnership board meetings that they have seen a considerable increase in the number of homelessness presentations due to domestic abuse. Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and Melton Borough Council did not provide data regarding children or other members of the household included on the housing application.

Data shows that areas have seen an increase in the number of victims identified across these needs assessment with the exception being North West Leicestershire District Council.



Trends

Victims identified by District Homelessness Teams

The number of victims identified by HBBC increased by **12.6%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23 before increasing further by **80.6%** in 2023 – 23. It should be noted that the number of victims identified in the final year of the previous needs assessment was **301** therefore there has been a decrease of **31.6%** between the previous needs assessment and this one.

HDC saw an increase of **106.1%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23 with a further increase of **95.6%** the following year. The number of victims identified in the final year of the previous needs assessment was **48** resulting in an overall increased of **454.2%** in the number of victims identified from the final year of the previous assessment to the final year of this assessment.

As mentioned, NWLDC is an outlier in this area. Whilst there was an initial increase from the previous needs assessment of **330.8%**, this has steadily decreased by **40.5%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23 and then a further **37%** in 2023 – 24. However it should be noted that the number of victims identified in 2023 – 24 is still **61.5%** higher than the figure in the final year of the previous assessment.

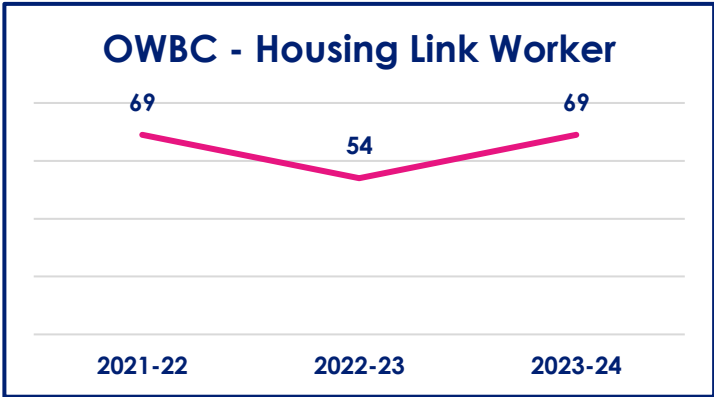
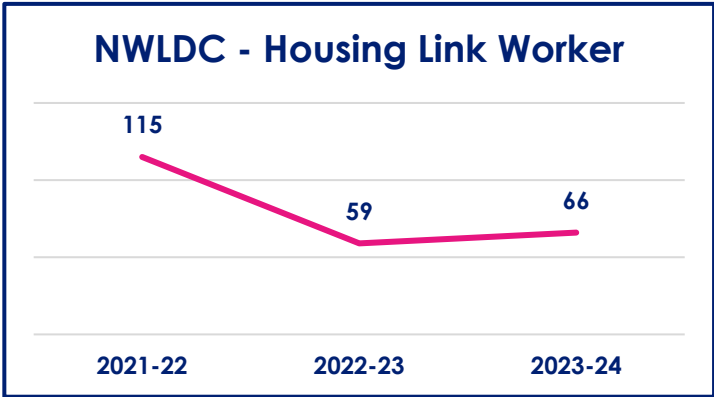
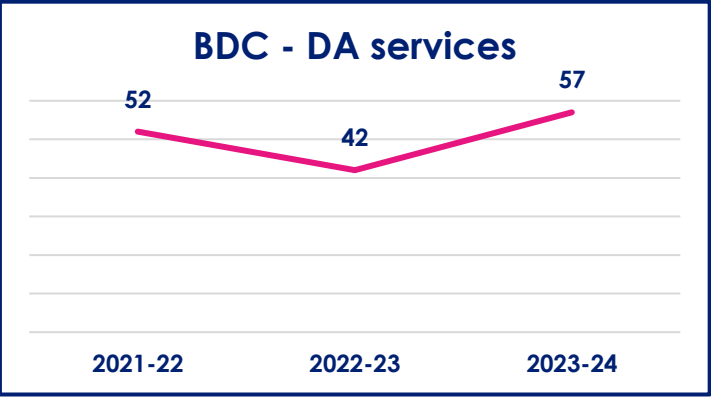
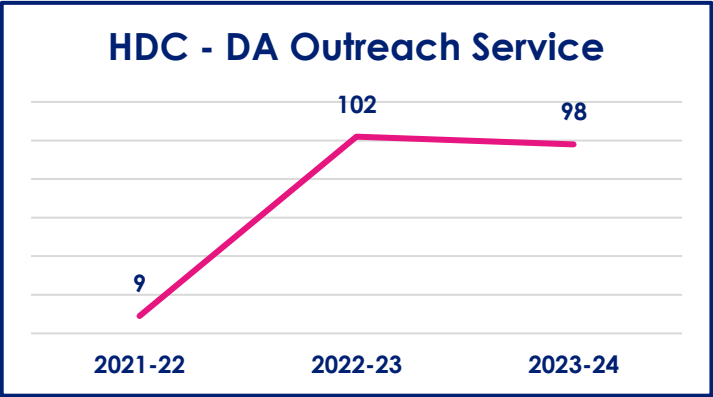
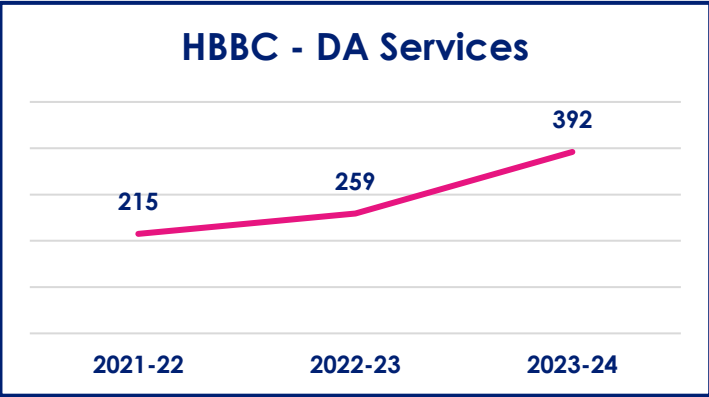
In OWBC, there was an initial decrease from the previous needs assessment of **62.2%**, the number of victims identified has increased year on year by **214.3%** and **22.7%** respectively.

Due to the low figures reported by MBC in the last needs assessment, we are unable to provide a comparison. However we can see that there has been an increase of **212.5%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23 and a further **52%** in 2023 – 24

Trends

Victims identified by District Domestic Abuse Service

Hinckley and Bosworth, Harborough and Blaby District Councils provide an in house domestic abuse service. Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and North West Leicestershire District Council have commissioned WALL to provide a Housing Link Worker who are based within their homelessness teams. These roles are funded via the funding received by Leicestershire CC from The Department for Levelling Up Communities and Housing, now renamed Ministry Housing, Communities and Local Government who allocated funding to each local authority for the delivery of the Safe Accommodation duty. Only Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council provided data regarding children.



Trends

Victims identified by District Domestic Abuse Service

The number of victims identified by HBBC increased by **20.5%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23 before increasing further by **51.4%** in 2023 – 23. In contrast to the HBBC Homelessness team, the Domestic Abuse Service saw an increase of **15% in** the number of victims identified in the final year of the previous needs assessment and the first year of this assessment

HDC saw an increase of **1033.3%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23 with a slight decrease **3.9%** in 2023 – 24. We do not have data for this service from the previous assessment.

BDC saw a decrease of **19.2%** from 2021 – 22 to 2022 – 23 before increasing in 2023 – 24 by **35.7%** however this is only **9.6%** increase from the first year of this assessment. We do not have data for this service from the previous assessment.

Again, NWLDC is an outlier in this area following a similar trend to the homelessness data. This post was created following the previous needs assessment and identified **115** victims in 2021 – 22. This decreased by **48.7%** in 2022 – 23 however did increase by **11.9%** to a number similar to the number of victims identified by the homelessness teams.

OWBC follows a similar pattern to BDC with a decrease of **21.7%**, from 2021- 22 to 2022 – 23, before increasing by the same percentage in 2023 – 24.

There are differences in the number of victims identified by the Housing Link Workers and the Homelessness teams. It would be of benefit to explore this further to understand why that may be and what steps can be taken to ensure that all victims identified by the Homelessness teams are offered the support of the Housing Link Worker and vice versa. This should be monitored on a regular basis for example at the Chief Housing Officer Group.

Marac & Police Data

Marac Cases

At Marac, the most high risk cases are discussed. SafeLives was commissioned to complete a Marac Review across Leicestershire Police and the LLR which was shared in the summer of 2022. This provided a number of recommendations including recommendations regarding referral pathways and the number of cases. We would advise that this be revisited to measure the progress of those recommendations and this data be considered in that process.

Leicestershire Police Force covers three local authority areas each with its own Marac - Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. For the purposes of this report, we will only be focusing on the Leicestershire Marac data covering April to March for years 2021 – 22, 2022 – 23 and 2023 – 24.

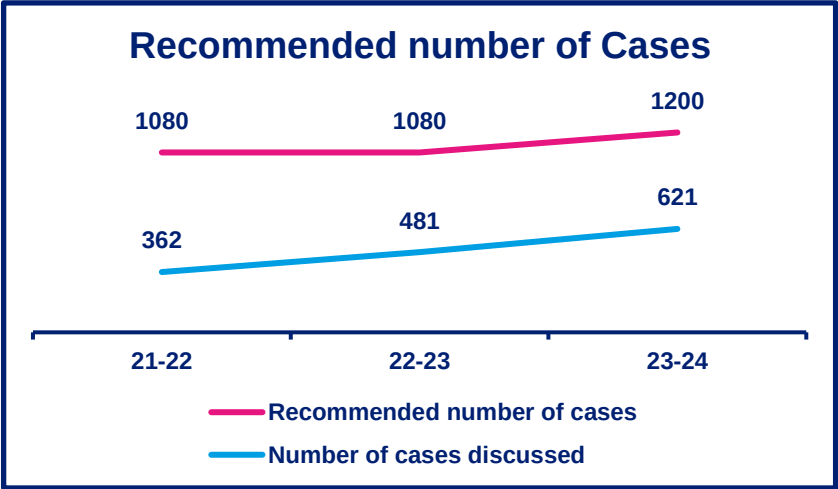
The recommended number of cases for Leicestershire is **1080** per year in **years 2021-22 and 22/23**, and **1200** in **year 23/24** based on the SafeLives recommendation of **40** cases per 10,000 adult female population.

As the adult (16+) female population recorded in the census increased between 2011 and 2021 in Leicestershire, this has resulted in an increase in the recommended number of cases for this Marac.

The table below shows the number of cases heard, inclusive of repeat cases, per year and the number of children within those households.

This will be explored further in this chapter

Year	Number of Cases	Number of Children	Recommended number of cases
2021/22	362	441	1080
2022/23	481	583	1080
2023/24	621	795	1200



Marac Data – Number of Cases

2021 - 22

	SafeLives Recommends	UK wide	MSF Group	Leicestershire Police	Leicestershire Marac
Cases per 10,000 adult female population	40	47	39	19	13
Year on Year change in number of cases		6%	4%	-13%	-7%
Repeat rate	28-40%	33%	29%	36%	36%
Police referrals	60-75%	67%	60%	68%	65%
Non police referrals	25-40%	33%	40%	32%	35%

2022 - 23

Cases per 10,000 adult female population	40	47	39	22	18
Year on Year change in number of cases		-2%	0%	20%	33%
Repeat rate	28-40%	33%	31%	33%	37%
Police referrals	60-75%	66%	60%	67%	68%
Non police referrals	25-40%	34%	40%	33%	32%

2023 - 24

Cases per 10,000 adult female population	40	46	40	27	21
Year on Year change in number of cases		-1%	9%	34%	29%
Repeat rate	28-40%	32%	30%	36%	38%
Police referrals	60-75%	64%	58%	68%	68%
Non police referrals	25-40%	36%	42%	32%	32%

Marac Data

The tables on the previous page show how the Marac in Leicestershire performs in comparison to its most similar force group and national counterparts across the time period of this assessment.

The recommended number of cases for Leicestershire is **1080** per year in **years 2021-22 and 22/23**, and **1200** in **year 23/24** based on the SafeLives recommendation of **40** cases per 10,000 adult female population.

The number of cases discussed within Leicestershire remains significantly below the recommended figure, with **13 cases** per 10,000 adult females heard in 2021 – 22, increasing slightly to **18 cases** in 2022 – 23 and increasing again to **21 cases** in 2023 – 24.

The repeat rate referrals, police referrals, and non police referrals are all in line with the recommended number of cases SafeLives recommends.

Marac Data – Equality

2021 - 22

	SafeLives Recommends	UK wide	MSF Group	Leicestershire Police	Leicestershire
Black, Asian and racially minoritised population		17.9%	14.5%	23.4%	8.6%
Black, Asian and racially minoritised cases		15.3%	10.4%	20%	8.6%
LGBT+ Cases	2.5-8.5%	1.4%	1.7%	1.9%	1.1%
Victims with disabilities	23% or above	8.5%	11.1%	14.3%	15.2%
Male Victims	5-10%	6.2%	5.5%	4.5%	4.1%

2022 - 23

Black, Asian and racially minoritised population		17.7%	14.5%	23.4%	8.6%
Black, Asian and racially minoritised cases		16%	11.3%	19.3%	9.4%
LGBT+ Cases	2.5-8.5%	1.5%	1.4%	1.8%	1.5%
Victims with disabilities	23% or above	9.1%	13.7%	32.5%	36%
Male Victims	5-10%	6.3%	5.9%	6.5%	5.6%

2023 - 24

Black, Asian and racially minoritised population		22.5%	20.9%	32.7%	13.4%
Black, Asian and racially minoritised cases		14.8%	13.2%	16%	9.7%
LGBT+ Cases	2.5-8.5%	1.7%	1.6%	1.9%	1%
Victims with disabilities	23% or above	9.4%	14%	21.8%	24.2%
Male Victims	5-10%	6.4%	6.2%	5.1%	5.6%

Marac Data – Equality

The tables on the previous page show how the Marac in Leicestershire performs in relation to marginalised groups.

We would expect referrals to Marac to be representative of the local Black, Asian and racially minoritised population. As previously stated, the updated census information has resulted in changes to, not only the recommended case figures, but also the population figures.

For the years 2021 – 22 and 2022 – 23, our research shows the Black, Asian and racially minoritised population for Leicestershire to be **8.6%**. The percentage of Marac cases heard where the victim was Black, Asian or from a racially minoritised community was **8.6% and 9.4%** respectively and in line with population data.

The population figure increased to **13.7%** in 2023 – 24 while the percentage of cases remain similar to previous years at **9.7%**. Therefore, while the figure has been increasing, it is now below the recommended figure.

The SafeLives recommendation is that **2.5% - 5.8%** of cases heard at Marac are LGBT+ victims. The highest percentage was **1.5%** in 2022 – 2023, less than half the lowest end of the recommended levels.

The recommended level of Marac cases where the victim has a disability is **23% or above**. In the previous needs assessment period, the figures were far below that figure. Therefore, it is positive to see an increase in the identification of cases where the victim has a disability and that this is being recorded appropriately with **15.2%** of cases being heard in 2021 – 22 and **36%** and **24.2%** in subsequent years. We will discuss this further in the disability section of this report.

For male victims, the lowest number of cases was in 2021- 22 with **4.1%**, before increasing to **5.6%** in 2022 – 23 and remaining the same the following year which is within the recommended range.

Police Data

2021/22



	Leicestershire Police	East Midlands	MSF1	MSF2	England and Wales
DA Crimes & Incidents	21,641	102,251	20,781	21,402	1,500,369
Crimes & Incidents Per 1000 population	20	21	18	18	25
DA Crimes	15,481	68,702	15,397	12,829	910,980
Crimes per 1000	14	14	13	11	15
% of all crimes recorded	15%	17%	15%	17%	17%

2022/23



DA Crimes & Incidents	24,145	109,177	21,438	20,850	1,453,867
Crimes & Incidents Per 1000 population	22	22	19	17	24
DA Crimes	16,927	72,157	16,255	12,565	889,918
Crimes per 1000	15	15	14	10	15
% of all crimes recorded	16%	17%	15%	16%	16%

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Police Data

The tables above show a comparison of the number of incidents and crimes reported across Leicestershire Police force wide, two Most Similar Forces and across the East Midlands and England and Wales.

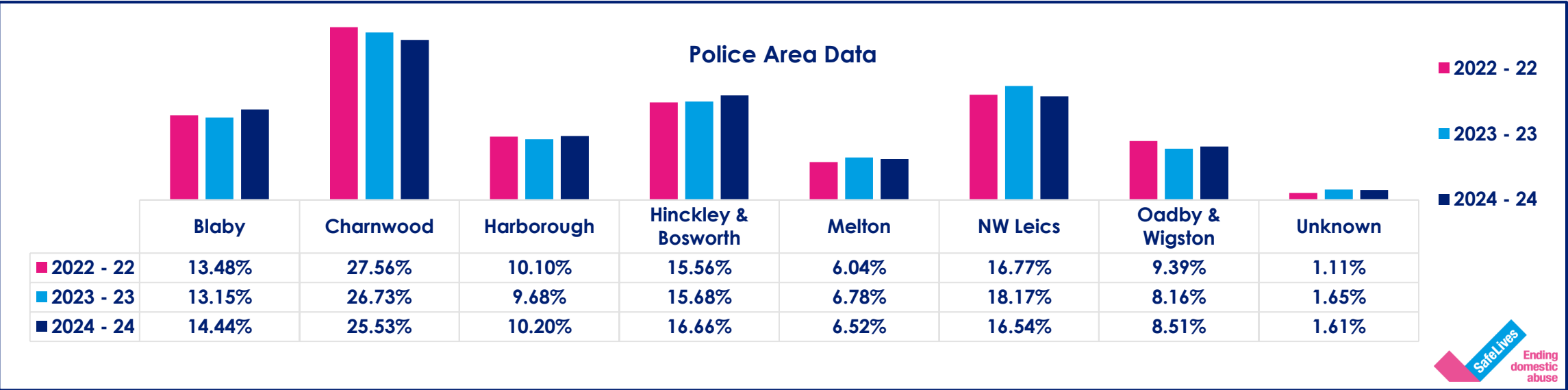
The comparison data is not currently available for the 2023 – 2024 period, however we know that across Leicestershire Police there were **8453 domestic abuse victims identified**

Leicestershire Police domestic abuse crimes and incidents is **20** per 1000 population in 2021/22 and **22** per 1000 population in 2022/23. This is higher than the two MSF areas (2021/22, **18 and 18**, 2022/23 **19 and 17**) and in line with the regional rate. However, this is lower than the national rate of domestic abuse crimes and incidences at **25** per 1000 population in 2021/22, reducing to **24** per 1000 population in 2022/23.

There has been an increase of **11.5%** in the number of domestic abuse related incidents and crimes recorded by Leicestershire Police from 2021/22 – 2022/23, and an increase of **9.3%** in domestic abuse crimes from years 2021/22 to 2022/23.

In terms of location, Charnwood has the highest number of victims identified by the police across all three years which is the same as the previous needs assessment. However, this has decreased year on year with Hinckley and Bosworth seeing the opposite and increasing year on year. The lowest number of reported victims are in Melton followed by Oadby and Wigston.

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Domestic Homicides:

21/22

- North-West Leicestershire
- Hinckley & Bosworth

22/23

- Charnwood

23/24

- Melton

In the three-year period that the needs assessment covers there were four domestic homicides across Leicestershire County Council.

The DHRs that occurred in North-West Leicestershire, Charnwood, and Melton are still currently ongoing and therefore these will not be discussed in the report.

However, the homicide that occurred in Hinckley & Bosworth was undertaken by a joint Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and falls under Blaby and Hinckley & Bosworth CSP. This is discussed on the following slide.

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Domestic Homicide Reviews

Blaby and Hinckley & Bosworth 2021: The DHR concluded that there were no professional missteps or omissions identified that may have contributed to the death of the victim, and noted there was insufficient evidence to indicate that domestic abuse was a factor in the homicide.

Recommendations from the report included the following;

- To ensure the Carer's Strategy refresh that was presented at Leicestershire County Council Cabinet in 2022 is making timely and sufficient progress to ensure carers get the assessment and support they need.
- To ensure all agencies have up to date training on domestic abuse in accordance with the new Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and this remains effective for workforces.

SafeLives agrees with the recommendations and would ensure that relevant domestic abuse training includes information on supporting carers and making sure they are included within risk assessments, in line with our Whole Picture Strategy.

However, SafeLives would also recommend more could have been done to understand whether domestic abuse was a factor throughout this homicide. We know from previous DHRs on older people¹ that the potential for violence in relationships increases when an intimate partner/family member is acting as a carer for the other. In this instance, the victim had previously been harmed during a self-harm incident from 'Bob', and no further questioning from staff around domestic abuse, or other support occurred. Support could have been implemented to help the victim deal with the health struggles Bob was having, and create a safety plan around this.

We also know from the Safe Later Lives report² that older people have extra barriers to disclosing domestic abuse such as a generational understanding of domestic abuse, longstanding abuse occurring, and systems not being accessible for older people. Therefore, agencies need to consider this when enquiring about domestic abuse and seeing warning signs. Further training on ensuring services are accessible to older people, and recognising signs in older people would be beneficial.

We can see there is a rise in numbers of older people in the population within Leicestershire County Council and therefore a deeper understanding of the dynamics of domestic abuse in older relationships is essential.

1. <https://safelives.org.uk/news-views/what-domestic-homicide-reviews-tell-us-about-the-abuse-of-older-people/>
2. <https://safelives.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Safe-Later-Lives-Older-people-and-domestic-abuse-Spotlight.pdf>

Demographic Data

Population

During the previous needs assessment, Census Data was used from the 2011 Census. Following the 2021 Census we have used this data set within this needs assessment.

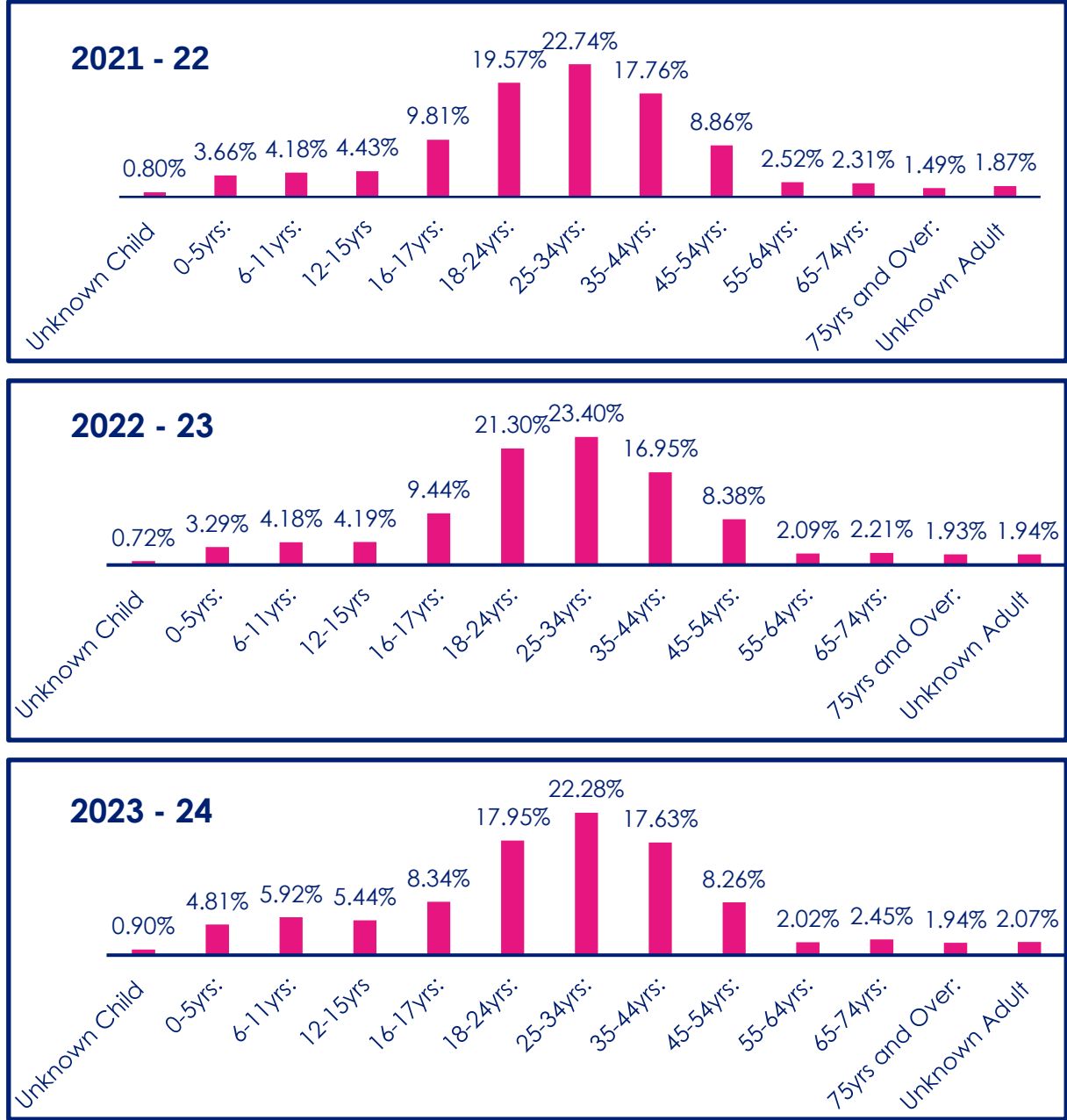
There have been significant changes within the composition of the population in all districts across Leicestershire. All have seen an increase in the overall population ranging from **2.7%** in Oadby and Wigston to **14.3%** in Harborough, which is the largest increase in the East Midlands.

In terms of age, the most significant change has been in the **over 65 age group**. Harborough has seen the second highest increase in the over 65 population in England with **38.5%**. The other districts, baring Oadby and Wigston at **13%**, have all seen an increase of between **25% and 31.4%** compared to a **20.1%** increase in England overall.

For the **under 15 age range**, Charnwood is the district with the highest increase of 10.2% with Melton having the lowest at **3.6%** compared to **5%** in England overall. For the **15 – 64 age range**, all have seen an increasing baring Oadby and Wigston who have seen a decrease of **1.7%** compare to **3.6%** in England overall. These increases range from **1.7% in** Melton to **10.1%** in Harborough.

These changes will have an impact on the range of needs and therefore services required by victims and survivors across Leicestershire.

Age



There has been an improvement with the collection of age data with the level of unknown falling from **5.6%** at the end of the previous assessment to **2.07%** at the end of this assessment.

The age profile of identified victims in Leicestershire remained broadly consistent across all three years, with **almost a quarter** of all identified victims falling within the 25–34-year-old age bracket. This is consistent with the previous needs assessment.

There have however been changes in the age of victims identified from the previous assessment.

There has been a decrease in the 35 – 44 and 45 – 56-year-old age ranges from **20.3% to 17.63%** and **14.1% to 8.26%** respectively, from the start of the last assessment to the final year of this assessment.

As per the previous slide the 2021 census shows that there has been a significant increase in the older population in Leicestershire ranging from **13%** in Oadby and Wigston to **38.5%** in Harborough¹

SafeLives' Prevalence Tool estimates there **are 6,000** victims aged over 60 who will have experienced domestic abuse in the last year in Leicestershire. However, we can see that **735** victims aged over 65 were identified in 2023 – 24, accounting for **5.89%** of adult victims and **4.39%** of all victims.

Our Spotlight on Older People and Domestic abuse shows that those over 60 experience domestic abuse for much longer, on average **12.9 years** compared to the national average of **4.5 years**, with **25%** experiencing abuse for between **20 and 50 years**.²

1. [Oadby and Wigston population change, Census 2021 – ONS](#)
2. [Spotlight #1: Older people and domestic abuse | Safelives](#)

Ending domestic abuse

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Age – Children and Young People

Using the prevalence tool, it is estimated that **6000** young victims aged 16 - 24 will have experienced domestic abuse in the last year within their own intimate partner relationships.

There has been a significant increase in the number of victims identified aged 16 – 24 from the previous needs assessment.

Previously between **2% and 2.8%** of all victims identified were aged 16 – 17 compared to a range of **8.34% to 9.81%**

There is a higher proportion of 18 – 24-year-olds identified during this period with a range of **17.95% to 21.30%** of all victims in that age range. This is compared to a range of **11.6% to 13.2%** previously.

The 16 – 24-year-old age group accounts for over a quarter of all victims in all three years of this assessment.

It should be noted that the data provided for the needs assessment for those age 16/17 may be child victims whose parent/s are in DA Relationships and/or victims of IPV in their own relationships.

At Marac, **10** cases were heard where the victim was 16/17 in 2023 - 24 in Leicestershire. A reduction from the previous two years of **17** in 2021 - 22 and **15** in 2022 – 23 .

The prevalence tool estimates that there are 17,000 children (under 18) living in a household with partner abuse in the past year in Leicestershire.

The total number of child victims identified in the Leicestershire in each of the 3 years the needs assessment covers are:



It should be noted that a number of agencies do not capture data regarding children.

Barring children aged 16 and 17, children aged 6 – 11 years old have the highest prevalence of identification.

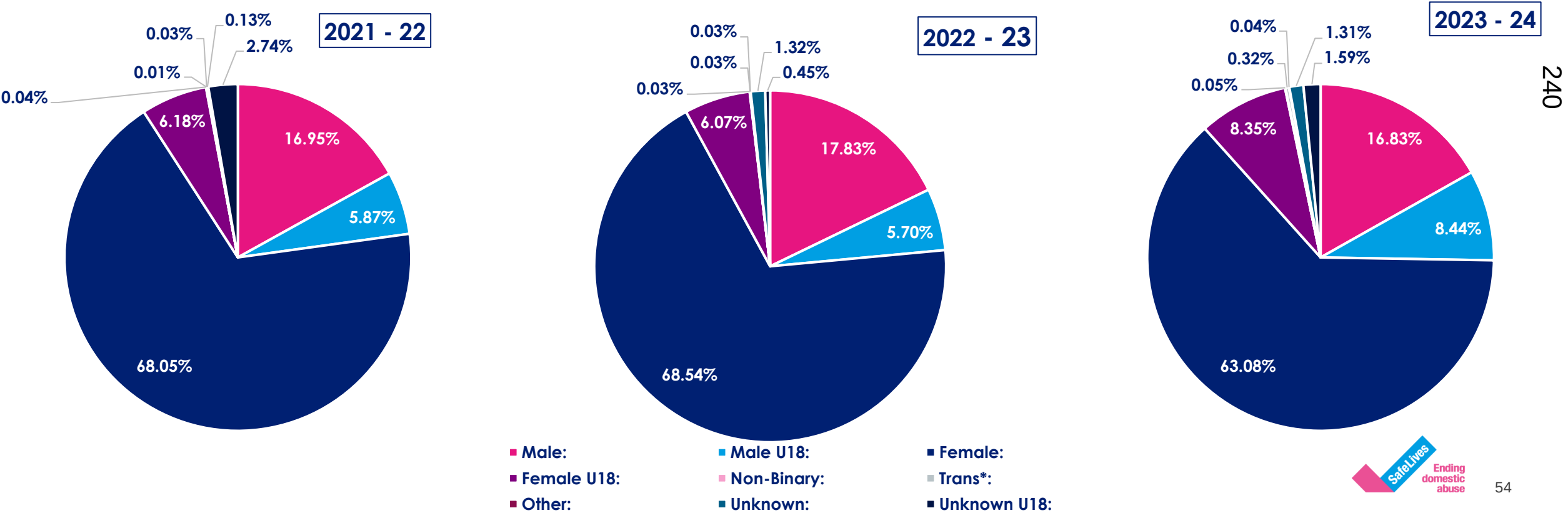
Children account for around a quarter of all identified victims ranging from 22.88% in 2021 – 22 to 25.41% in 2023 – 24 compared to 19.2% at the end of the previous assessment. This highlights the importance of the commissioning and sustainability of specialist children's provision, for those living in households where abuse is taking place and for those experiencing abuse within their own relationships.

Gender Identity

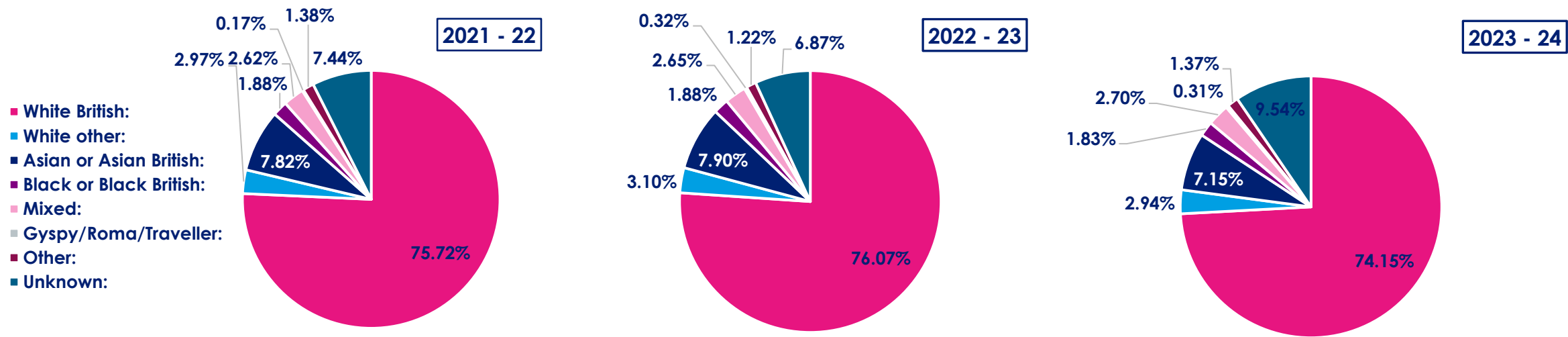
The gender of victims in Leicestershire also remained fairly consistent across the three years with the highest number of identified victims recorded as being adult female. Similarly to the age data, there has been an improvement with the data capture. The number of all victims with their gender identity recorded as unknown in the final year of the previous assessment was **7.35%** and has reduced to **2.87%** in 2021 – 22, **1.77%** in 2022 – 23 and **2.9%** in 2023 – 24.

Fewer than 1% of victims were recorded as identifying as non-binary, transgender or other, combined across all three years.

Marac data shows that **4.1%** of all victims discussed in were male in 2021 - 22, increasing to **5.6%** in 2022 – 23 and 2023 - 24. All falling within the SafeLives recommended 5-10% range. It is noted that Freeva now also employ a specialist male worker role.



Ethnicity



This is another area where there has been significant improvement with the data collection. In the previous needs assessment, the level of unknown was as high as **80.2%** with the lowest figure being **39%**.

Within this assessment, the number of victims whose ethnicity is unknown is **7.44%** in 2021 – 22, **6.87%** in 2022 – 23 and **9.54%** in 2023 – 24.

Across all three years, White British is the most prevalent group with approximately a quarter of all victims identifying as White British.

ONS data suggests that **16.36%** of individuals in Leicestershire are Black, Asian or from a racially minoritised community. The data provided by agencies is in line with this with **16.84%** of victims identified as Black, Asian or from a racially minoritised community in 2021 – 22, **17.07%** in 2022 – 23 and **16.30%** in 2023 – 24.

In 2023 - 24, **9.6%** of Marac in Leicestershire were identified as relating to those who were Black, Asian or from a racially minoritised community. In previous years, referrals had been in line and slightly over the recorded Black, Asian and racially minoritised community population data however with the updated census data, we can see that Marac cases are below the population figure.

It is positive that those from minoritised communities are being identified. Leicestershire GATE works with those from the Gypsy Roma Traveller community and is funded by the county. It is noted that dedicated specialist By & For safe accommodation provision has been commissioned also. However, further specialist support for those residing in the county from other minoritised communities needs a focus.

Ethnicity

Our research shows that for Intimate Partner Violence only, we would estimate a total of **1500 Black, Asian and Racially Minoritised** adult victims per year. This does not include child domestic abuse victims or victims who experience abuse from non-intimate partners such as parents, siblings, HBV etc.

In the 2023 - 24 year the data submitted recorded **2729 Black, Asian and Racially Minoritised** adult and child victims accessing services.

The HALT (Homicide Abuse Learning Together) group carried out research into Domestic Homicide Reviews and Black and Minoritised Victims and Perpetrators.¹

One of the key themes of this research is the Invisibility of Race and Culture. It showed that many agencies did not collect data regarding a person's ethnicity, highlighting that poor data collection has wider impact regarding accessibility of services to Black, Asian and Racially Minoritised victims.

One DHR included in the research noted -

"several agencies had no details of ethnicity, nationality or religion as these were not recorded at the point of referral. It is a core principle of good practice to ensure agencies know the background of those using their services; otherwise they have no information to consider in what they might need to adapt to improve access"

Where ethnicity is recorded, it is not always fully understood, acknowledged or recognised as a significant factor within the experience of Domestic Abuse.

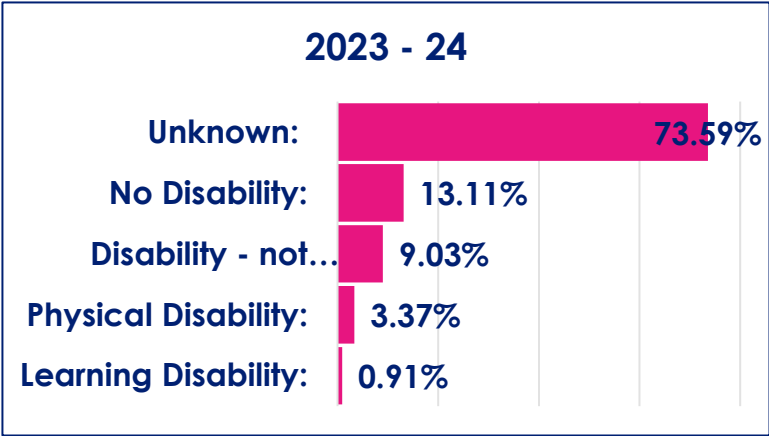
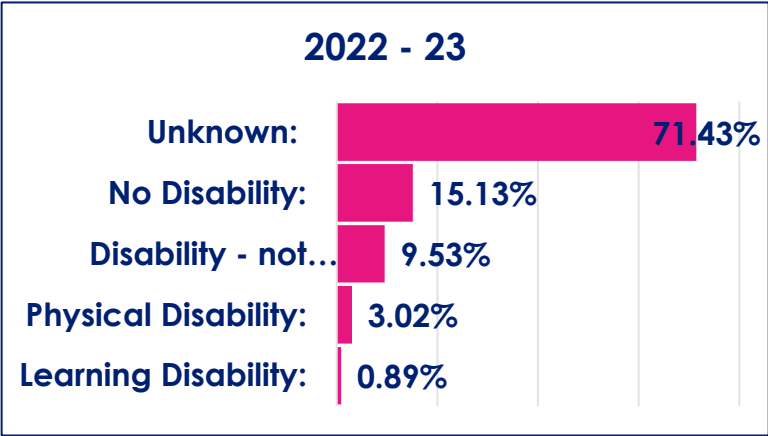
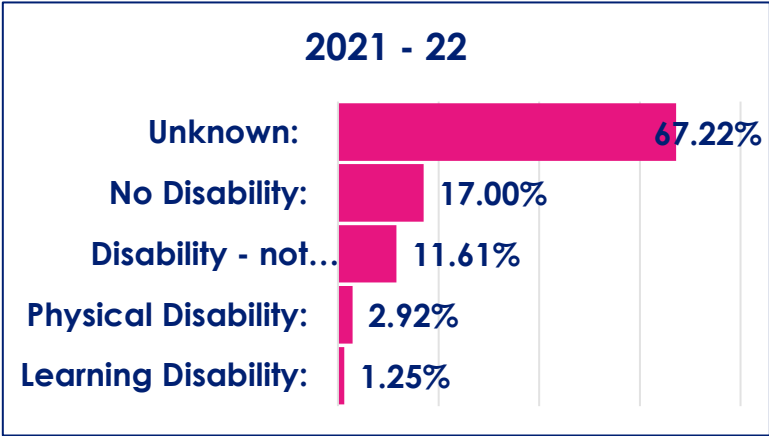
Other themes include

- Perception of Services; with the DHRs reporting that victims had received negative experiences of seeking help and that there was a lack of awareness of UK laws, culture, available support and misleading information by perpetrators influencing a victim's perception of services.
- Stereotypes and culturalisation of Domestic Abuse including the uncritical acceptance and normalisation and culturalisation of Domestic Abuse in minoritised communities.
- Interpreters and communication, with friends, children and even the perpetrator being used as an interpreter for the victim, and professional interpreters being inconsistently used meaning the victims voice and views were not heard. There is also an example of a victim having to provide an account of a serious sexual assault to a male GP, male Police Officer and male medical examiner with no interpreter support.
- DHR recommendations with around half of the DHRs including recommendations regarding ethnicity/culture such as – enhanced risk assessment predominantly focusing on HBV/Forced Marriage, raising awareness of domestic abuse, staff training and using independent interpreters

This research shows that it is imperative that a person's ethnicity and identity is fully captured, acknowledged and understood.

[1. An analysis of minoritisation in domestic homicide reviews in England and Wales - Khatidja Chantler, et al., 2022 \(sagepub.com\)](#)

Disability



Whilst there is a high level of unknown regarding disability, it should be noted that only Leicestershire Police, the Targeted Family Help service and two of the Districts did not provide and/or capture disability data. While there have been improvements with data collection regarding disability, there are areas to strengthen. This should be an area of priority for those agencies.

It should also be noted that the number of disabilities identified may be higher in some agencies than the number of victims identified as some victims identify as having more than one disability. Within the “disability not defined” category, some agencies have captured mental health condition or cognitive impairment, some have included sensory disabilities within physical disabilities and others within disability not defined. It would be of benefit to have a collective decision on the categories of disabilities so there is consistency across the board.

Using the SafeLives prevalence tool, we estimate that there were **7,500 Disabled victims** of domestic abuse in the past year, The numbers identified are significantly below this.

In 2021 – 22 **2404** victims were recorded as having a disability with **2057** in 2022 – 23 and **2299** in 2023 – 24. This is in contrast to the Marac data where we have seen an increase in the identification of cases being heard where the victim has been identified as having a disability.

If a victim's disability is not recorded and acknowledged, not all risks can be identified and therefore subsequent action plans and support cannot be specific to that person's needs and family circumstances.

Disability

People with Disabilities in Partner Relationships



SAFE have created a power and control wheel for those with disabilities in partner relationship which highlights the additional barriers and challenges a disabled person may face.¹

SafeLives Spotlight on Disabled People and Domestic Abuse² has found that disabled victims of domestic abuse also suffer more severe and frequent abuse over longer periods of time than non-disabled victims. SafeLives' data reveals that disabled victims typically endure abuse for an average of 3.3 years before accessing support, compared to 2.3 years for non-disabled victims. Even after receiving support, disabled victims were 8% more likely than non-disabled victims to continue to experience abuse. For one in five (20%) this ongoing abuse was physical and for 7% it was sexual.

This is in line with Public Health England's (2015)³ report that **disabled people**:

- experience disproportionately higher rates of domestic abuse.
- experience domestic abuse for longer periods of time, and more severe and frequent abuse than non-disabled people.
- encounter differing dynamics of domestic abuse, which may include more severe coercion, control or abuse from carers.

We also know that women with learning disabilities and/or autism are three times more likely to experience domestic abuse than their non-disabled peers.⁴

SafeLives have also undertaken research, in partnership with the Vision Foundation regarding the impact of domestic abuse on those who are visually impaired. **One in 12 visually impaired people** in the UK is believed to be a victim or survivor of domestic abuse, meaning that **188,000** of the 2.19 million blind and partially sighted people living in this country have experience of domestic abuse. The report highlighted the additional barriers and abuse faced by those who are visually impaired⁵

Sexual Identity of Victims Year on Year comparison:

The data regarding sexual identity is limited with a minimum of **73.7%** victims' sexual identity unknown. This has decreased from a minimum of **89.3%** of victims in the previous assessment.

According to research more than **one in four** gay men and lesbian women and more than **one in three** bisexual people report at least one form of domestic abuse since the age of 16¹

It should be noted that sexual identity is not captured by Leicestershire Police which accounts for a significant number of the unknown figure. For other agencies, the information recorded is sporadic.

The way in which the data is captured, groups Lesbian Women and Gay Men together, with the figures showing in:

- 2021 - 22 **42** Lesbian / Gay, **94** Bisexual and **12** Other Sexual Identity victims recorded;
- 2022 - 23 **60** Lesbian / Gay, **95** Bisexual and **9** Other Sexual Identity victims recorded;
- 2023 - 24 **56** Lesbian / Gay, **110** Bisexual and **5** Other Sexual Identity victims recorded.



Our research shows that for Intimate Partner Violence only, we would estimate a total of **5,500 LGB+** adult victims per year, significantly higher than the recorded numbers.

At Marac in 2021 - 22 **1.1%** of cases related to an individual who identified as LGBT+ in Leicestershire, this increased to **1.5% in 2022 – 23** before decreasing to **1%** in 2023 – 24.

All of these figures fall below the recommended SafeLives recommended figures of between **2.5% and 5.8%**.

National data suggests that LGBT+ victims of abuse are more likely than heterosexual individuals to experience abuse from multiple partners, are almost twice as likely to have attempted suicide, are more than twice as likely to have self-harmed and are more than twice as likely to have experienced historic abuse from a family member¹. Therefore it is vital that the sexual identity of domestic abuse victims are recorded and understood in order to provide appropriate support.

The Leicestershire LGBT Centre has been commissioned by Leicestershire County Council to provide domestic abuse counselling support. They also provide social groups, drop in sessions, and outreach services in each of the districts.

¹. [Recognise and Respond](#): Strengthening advocacy for LGBT+ survivors of domestic abuse

Socio-economic Characteristics

Data regarding socio-economic characteristics is limited, other than employment status and household structure, which are recorded by some agencies. This has improved from the last needs assessment with the level of unknown reducing from 92.7% in the final year of the previous assessment for household structure/family make up to 79% in the final year of this assessment.

Although limited data is currently captured by local agencies about socio economic characteristics, these can have a significant impact on victims' ability to access appropriate services when they need them, for example:



Marital status: divorce and matrimonial rights to a home



Family make up: needs of a single person and those with children



Income: a persons income and expenditure can impact their eligibility for social housing



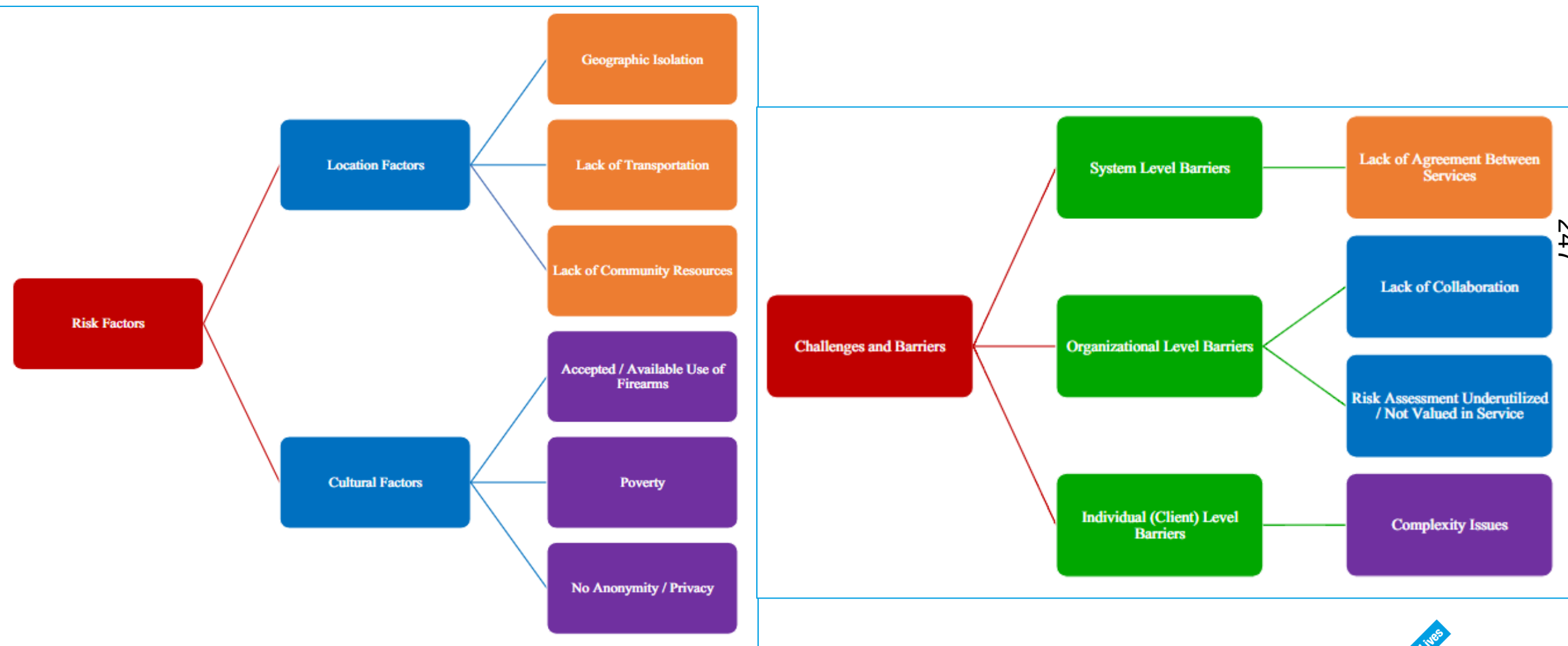
Benefits: a victim seeking safe accommodation may experience delays in claiming benefit, resulting in arrears. In addition, the impact due to the change of circumstance affecting benefits

All these characteristics represent the whole person and a whole family, it is, therefore, important to capture this information to ensure victims get the right support at the right time.

Rural Areas

There are many areas of Leciestershire which are classed as rural areas.

Challenges in Risk Assessment with Rural Domestic Violence Victims: Implications for Practice, shared in the Journal for Family Violence, Youngson et al highlights the unique risk factors and barriers of victims experiencing DA in rural locations.



Rural v Urban

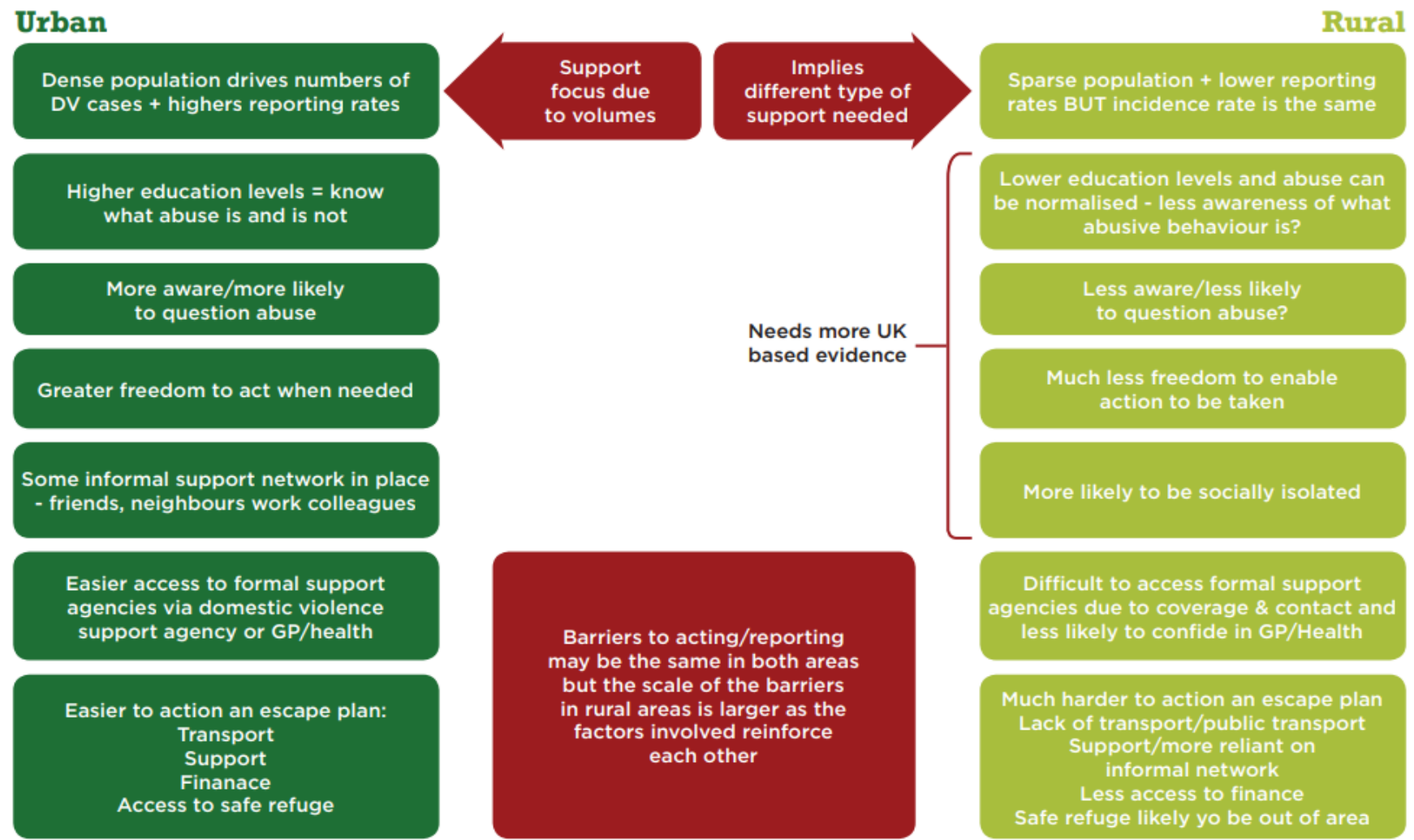


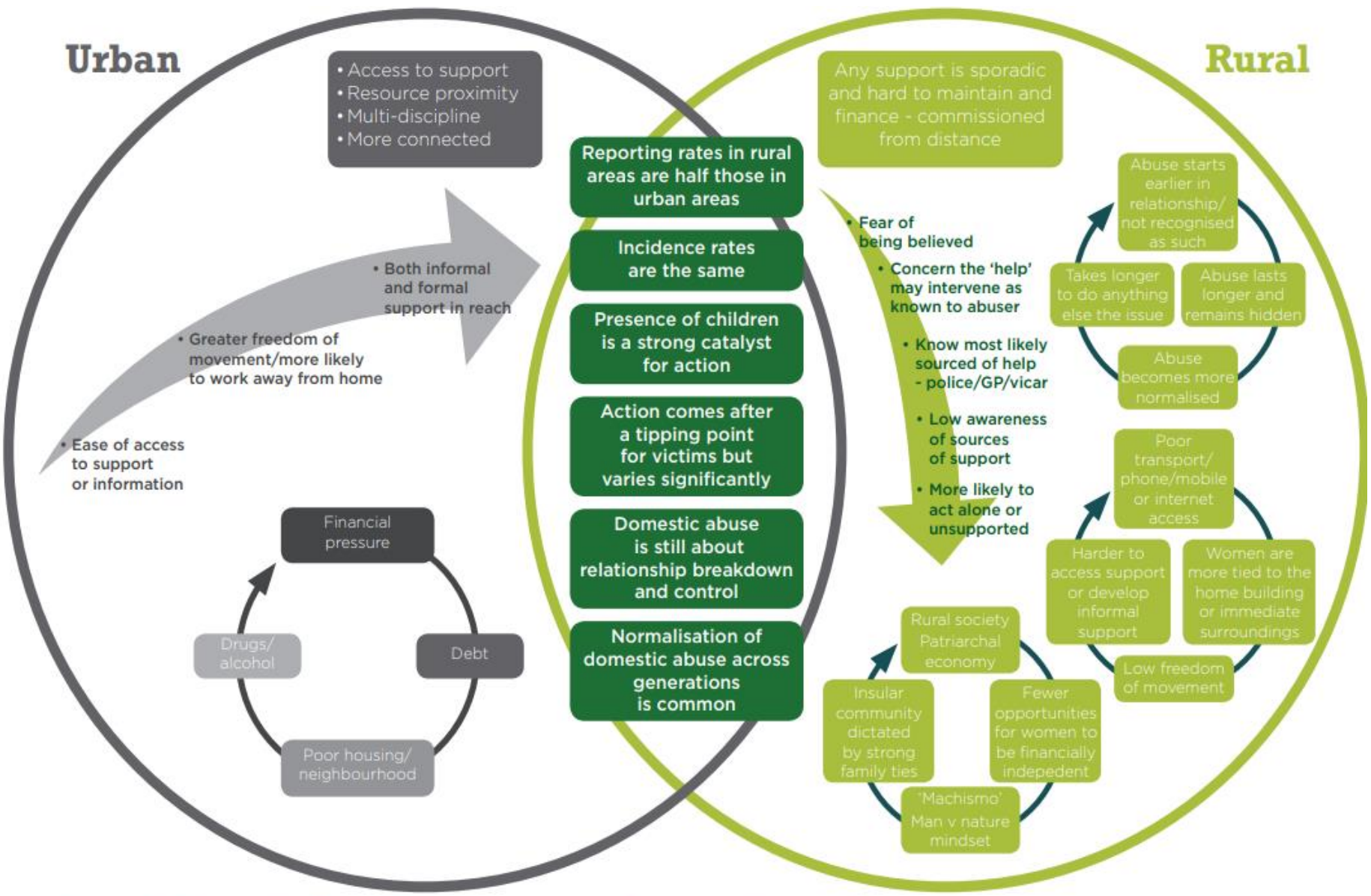
Figure 3: Differences noted between Urban and Rural areas for Domestic Abuse

A consortium of OPCC areas commissioned the National Rural Crime Network to conduct research into Domestic Abuse in Rural Areas – Captive and Controlled¹. A key part of this research was to understand whether there is a difference in the nature and patterns of domestic abuse between those in rural areas compared to urban areas. The table opposite highlights those potential differences, which have been simplified to assist with research.

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1. [Captive & Controlled - Domestic Abuse in Rural Areas - National Rural Crime Network](#)

Rural v Urban



The **dark green** section highlights the drivers of domestic abuse. Whilst there are similarities, it is shown within this research that the scale of barriers faced by rural victims is significantly greater than those in urban areas. This can be due to geographic, cultural and societal differences in addition to isolation having an impact on the ability to report abuse.

We can see within the **grey** circle the factors impacting domestic abuse rates and barriers to action for those in urban areas.

The **green** circle shows the factors impacting domestic abuse rates and barriers to action for those in rural areas. Whilst not all will be present in each case, this highlights the additional barriers to disclosure and support. Not only the practical barriers such as lack of transport and support services, but the cultural and social barriers including a lack of awareness of domestic abuse and a fear of not being believed.

Rural v Urban

Captive and Controlled Domestic Abuse in Rural Areas Key Findings - National Rural Crime Network

The **Captive and Controlled** report detailed **10 Key Findings**:

1. Abuse lasts, on average, 25% longer in the most rural areas
2. The policing response is largely inadequate
3. The more rural the setting, the higher the risk of harm
4. Rurality and isolation are deliberately used as weapons by abusers
5. Close-knit rural communities facilitate abuse
6. Traditional, patriarchal communities control and subjugate women
7. Support services are scarce – less available, less visible and less effective
8. Retreating rural resources make help and escape harder
9. The short-term, often hand-to-mouth funding model has created competing and fragmented service provision
10. An endemic data bias against rural communities leads to serious gaps in response and support

It is important to consider these findings when commissioning services within rural areas and communities to ensure appropriate access to services.



Safe Accommodation Provision

What is Safe Accommodation?

Refuge Accommodation - A refuge offers single gender or single sex accommodation and domestic abuse support which is tied to that accommodation. The address will not be publicly available. Victims, including their children, will have access to a planned programme of therapeutic and practical support from staff. Accommodation may be in shared or self-contained housing, but in both cases the service will enable peer support from other refuge residents.

Specialist safe accommodation - dedicated specialist support to victims with relevant protected characteristics and/or complex needs such as specialist refuges for Black, Asian and racially minoritised, LGBT+, and disabled victims and their children.

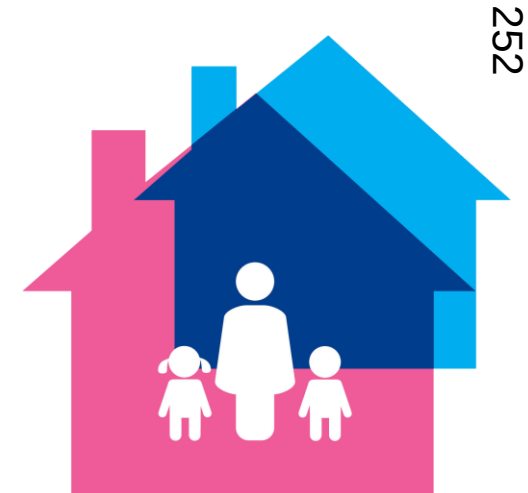
Dispersed accommodation – Safe self-contained accommodation with the same level of specialist domestic abuse support as provided within a refuge but which may be more suitable for victims who are unable to stay in a refuge.

Sanctuary Schemes – may also be called Target Hardening scheme. A survivor centred initiative which aims to enable a victim to remain in their own home by installing additional security to the property and perimeter alongside specialist domestic abuse support.

Move on and/or second stage accommodation – Accommodation temporarily housing victims, who no longer require the intensive support provided in a refuge, but still require a lower level of domestic abuse specific support before they move to fully independent and permanent accommodation. May include support accommodation schemes.

Other forms of domestic abuse emergency accommodation – A safe place with support given victims an opportunity to spend a temporary period of time to consider and make decisions in an environment which is self-contained and safe.

Safe accommodation is not generic temporary accommodation which is not solely dedicated to providing a safe place to stay for victims of domestic abuse. It is important to note that those experiencing Domestic Abuse may well be in standard temporary accommodation but may not have been identified as such or may have been placed in this accommodation due to Homelessness Duty.



Safe Accommodation Provision

Service	Provider	Commissioner	No of Units	Referral Pathway
Refuge	Women's Aid Leicestershire(WALL)	Leicestershire County Council	7 units in Hinckley and Bosworth	Via the local helpline, self-referrals, national helpline, professionals, other domestic abuse support services, Women's Aid online referral route.
Dispersed Accommodation	Women's Aid Leicestershire(WALL)	Leicestershire County Council	9 units in Charnwood 2 units in Hinckley and Bosworth	Via the local helpline, self-referrals, national helpline, professionals, other domestic abuse support services, Women's Aid online referral route.
Specialist dispersed property for male victims	Women's Aid Leicestershire(WALL)	Leicestershire County Council	1 units in Hinckley and Bosworth	Via the local helpline, self-referrals, national helpline, professionals, other domestic abuse support services, Women's Aid online referral route.
Specialist refuge accommodation for Black Asian and Racially Minoritised Women	Panahghar (Commenced in July 2024)	Leicestershire County Council	6 units in Charnwood	Via Panahghar's helpline service

As of July 2024, there are currently **25** safe accommodation spaces in Leicestershire which are situated in two districts, Hinckley and Bosworth and Charnwood. It should be noted that there are a further **8** dispersed safe accommodation spaces within Rutland which are jointly funding by the partnership board.

This is an increase of **4** spaces from the previous assessment however if we include the spaces within Rutland, there is an increase of **12** spaces.

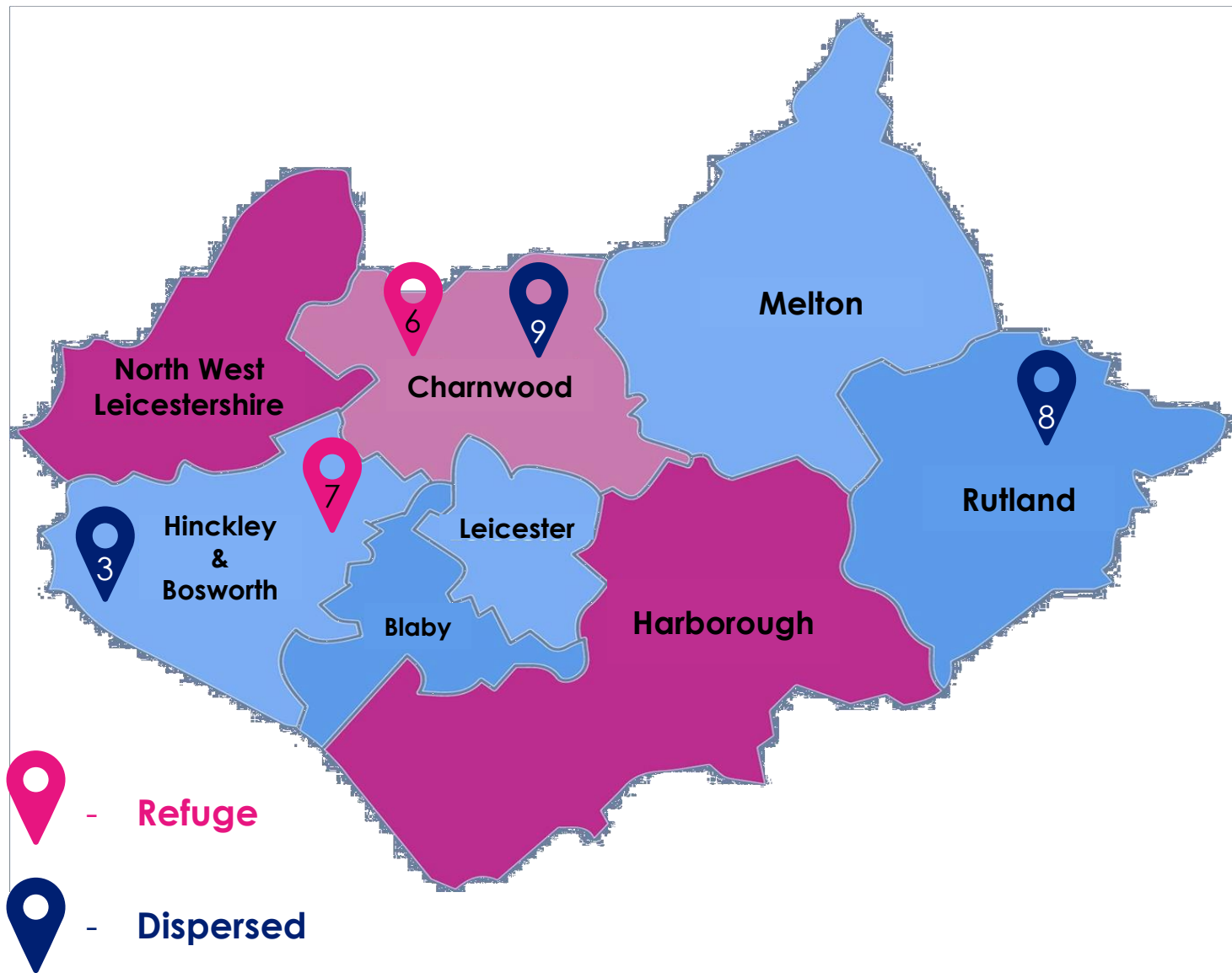
It is noted that not all districts have safe accommodation however victims can access these services regardless of their location as well of those in Rutland.

The Council of Europe¹ recommendation is 1 family place per 10,000 population. The population of Leicestershire according to the 2021 census is 712,300 therefore the recommended number is **71** spaces.

¹ [1. Final Activity Report \(coe.int\)](https://www.coe.int/en/turkey/1-Final-Activity-Report-coe.int/)



Safe Accommodation Provision - Map



This map illustrates where the current safe accommodation provision is located across Area.

As mentioned on the previous slide, safe accommodation is only available in two districts, three if you include the Rutland dispersed properties.

Many would have to travel a minimum of 30 minutes by car to access safe accommodation, with some being over an hours away by car. When using public transport this could take much longer.

Consideration should be given to the location of safe accommodation, how appropriate this might be for victims, thinking about their support network, culture, employment and children's school.

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Safe Accommodation Provision

Within the previous needs assessment, there was a sanctuary scheme offer available. This was funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. This funding has now ended and there is no sanctuary scheme available in Leicestershire.

The Sanctuary Scheme is a victim/survivor centred initiative which aims to enable households at risk of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes, when it is safe to do so and if they chose to, by installing additional security to the property and perimeter (Sanctuary) and support. It also forms part of the whole housing approach to domestic abuse.

Consideration should be given to reinstating the sanctuary scheme as an option of safe accommodation for victims and their families. This will provide choice for victims, allowing them to remain at home and within their support networks when it is safe to do so. It will enable more victims to be safely supported and may reduce the need for refuge or dispersed accommodation for the victim.



Safe Accommodation Referrals

Referrals to Safe Accommodation – Refuge & Dispersed Accommodation

WALL manages the majority of the refuge and dispersed accommodation across Leicestershire with Panahghar managing the specialist accommodation for Black, Asian and racially minoritised communities.

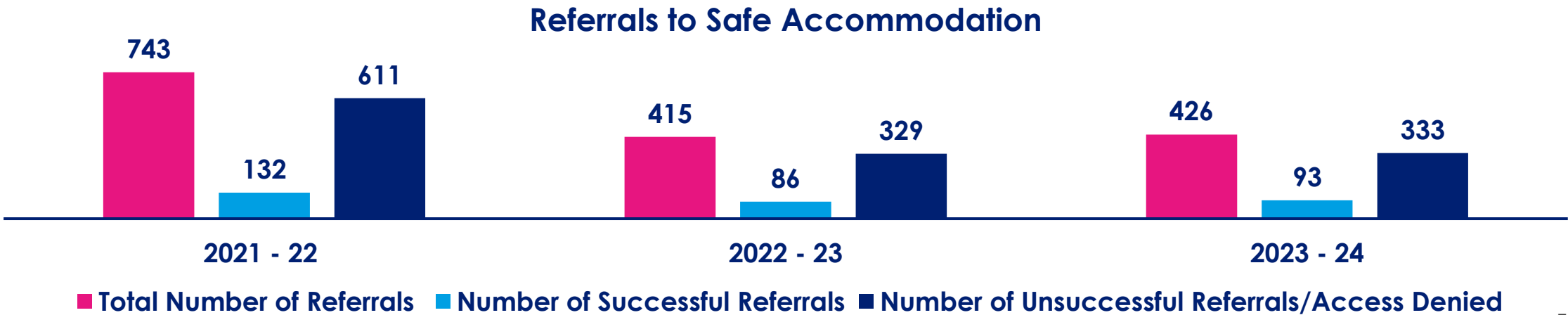
Panaghar's service contract commenced in July 2024 however due to delays with housing benefit they have been unable to take referrals until October 2024. Due to the contract commencement date, Panaghar's service is not included in the data set for this needs assessment. It is positive to see that this service has been commissioned and implemented in Leicestershire.

It must be noted that the data provided by WALL for their safe accommodation provision is **LLR wide** so covers all referrals into safe accommodation across the LLR area. This data cannot be broken down into those accessing the Leicestershire accommodation only. Referrals to the service can be made by professionals and self referrals via the helpline, website and by contacting the team directly.

Limited data is available regarding referrals to safe accommodation. WALL have identified this as an area for improvement.

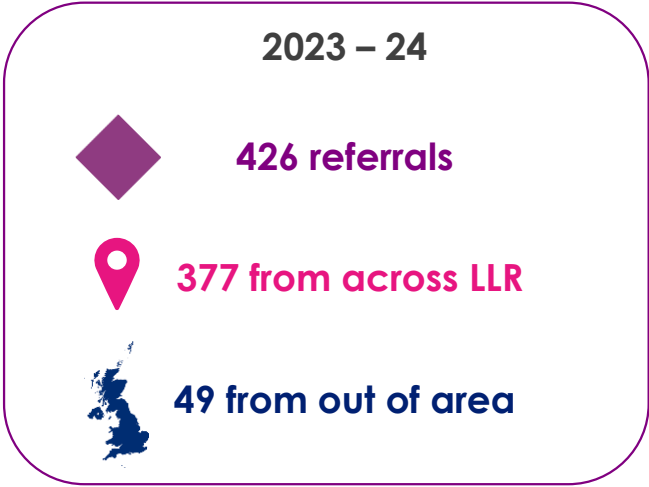
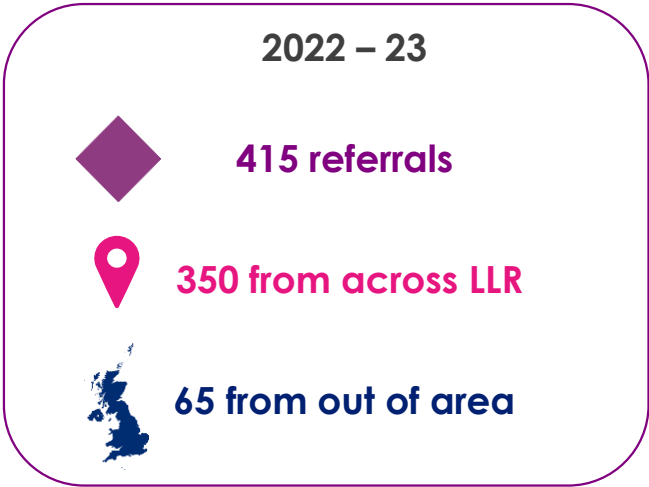
The data shows that there has been a **44.1%** decrease in referrals in to safe accommodation from 2021 – 22 before increasing slightly in 2023 – 24 by **2.65%**. WALL have advised that for 2023 – 24 175 referrals were for clients who have been referred into organisation for support before. Of these 175 referrals , 94 clients had been previously referred to refuge and assessed.

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Referrals to Safe Accommodation – Refuge & Dispersed Accommodation

We know that many victims will have to move out of area to a new local authority to access safe accommodation. WALL accepted a number of referrals over the period of this needs assessments from victims out of area. Data regarding area is not available for 2021 – 22.



WALL have advised that for the 2022 – 23 and 2023 – 24, a large proportion of referrals were for those within Leicester City. In 2023 – 24, 253 referrals were for those within Leicester.

For those who were referred from out of area, the top areas are detailed in the table below.

2021 – 22	Nottingham – 9	Chesterfield – 3		
2022 – 23	Derbyshire – 15	Birmingham – 10	Nottingham – 9	Northampton - 5
2023 - 24	Nottingham – 19	Derbyshire – 19	Birmingham – 13	Northampton - 8

Denied Access to Service

Not all victims who are referred to Safe Accommodation services will be able to access them for a number of reasons. In 2021 – 22 **82.2%** of referrals were denied access, **79.2%** in 2022 – 23 and **78.1%** in 2023 – 24.

Data is limited regarding denied access to service.

In **2022 – 23** the most common reason for being denied access is 'no space or capacity'.

For **2023 – 24** the most common reasons are

- Client does not require support/declined refuge
- No capacity/space available
- Area identified as being unsafe.

We can see that 'no space/capacity to support' is cited in both years. It has been highlighted that the number of safe accommodation spaces available in Leicestershire is below the recommended figure of 71.

Regarding the 'client does not require support/declined refuge', there may be some relevance in the location of safe accommodation as discussed earlier in this report. This was highlighted in the previous assessment as there was a high proportion of denied access due to 'client does not want support'. Consideration should be given to providing safe accommodation within all districts.

Consideration should be given to alternative forms of safe accommodation which may be more suited to those who cannot access a refuge, such as a Housing First scheme, where wraparound support for complex and additional needs can be provided or properties with adaptations for those who have a disability or care and support needs include children.

Consideration should also be given to perpetrator management as set out in the Domestic Abuse Draft Statutory Guidance Framework, which could enable victims and children to remain in their homes and communities, reducing disruption and trauma already experienced

Denied Access to Service

In addition to the previous slide, there are many other barriers to accessing safe accommodation including socio economic factors.

Where a victim needs to access safe accommodation and they are claiming Universal Credit, they are able to make a claim for Housing Benefit to cover the cost of safe accommodation.

However, if their income is over a certain amount, they would not be eligible for Housing Benefit and therefore would have to cover the cost of provision themselves.

For those on certain benefits, assistance can be sought to cover the cost of both safe accommodation and their main home. Again, if your income is over a certain amount, you would not be eligible for this and would have to cover the cost of both.

As a result, many cannot afford safe accommodation costs and either remain in their home or seek alternatives such as staying with family. Sadly, this is a national issue and not specific to Leicestershire.

There are additional challenges for those with NRPF or insecure immigration status.

We know that many who are denied access to safe accommodation will access temporary accommodation. We do not have data regarding this from the districts. This is an area for further exploration to gain a greater understanding of those accessing temporary accommodation due to domestic abuse.

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Safe Accommodation Data

Safe Accommodation 2021 - 22

The diagrams below illustrates the demographic data provided for victims who have accessed refuge & dispersed provision in 2021 – 22



175 Victims Supported

- 172 - Female Victims
- 3 - Male Victims



Sexual Identity

- 162 - Heterosexual
- 3 - Gay/lesbian
- 6 - Bisexual
- 4 - prefer not to say

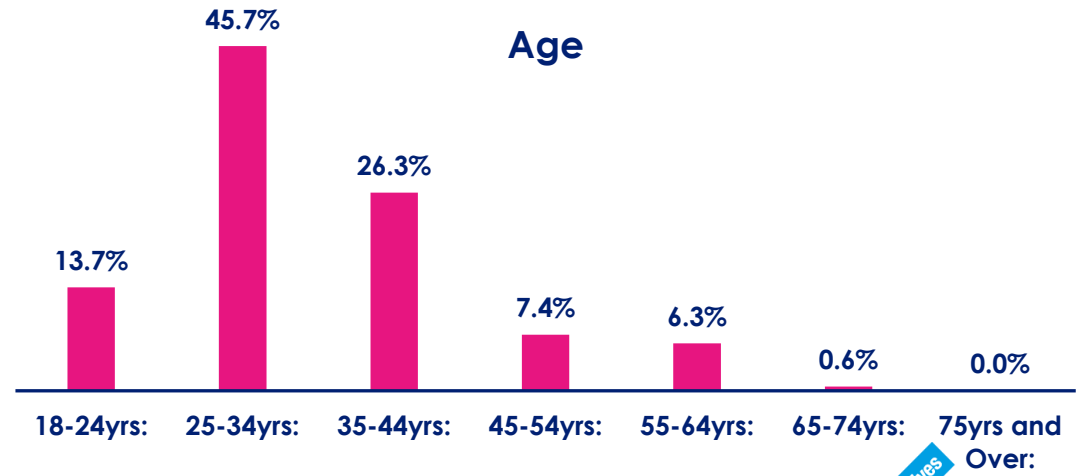
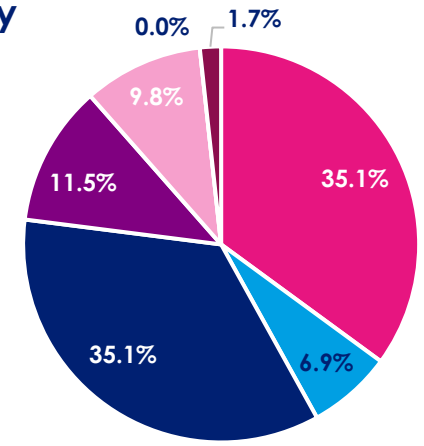


Family Composition

- 48 - single victims without children
- 127 - victims with children

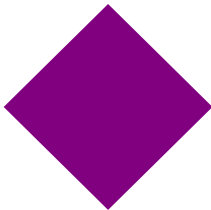
- White British:
- White Other
- Asian or Asian British:
- Black or Black British:
- Mixed:
- Gypsy/Roma/Traveller:
- Other Isolated/Marginalised community/Prefer Not to Say:

Ethnicity



Safe Accommodation 2021 – 22

Below is the demographic data provided for victims who have accessed refuge & dispersed provision in 2021 – 22

	Disability 15 - Physical disability 5 - Learning disability 2 - Visual impairment 1 - Speech impairment or communication difficulties 53 - Mental Health issue 15 - Other long term health conditions		Honor Based Violence 9 - experienced HBV 1 - experienced Forced Marriage
			Immigration Status 22 - Family Visa 1 - Work/Student/Visit Visa 4 - Indefinite leave to remain
	Additional Needs 174 - Homeless 1 - Alcohol misuse 17 - Drug misuse 38 - Legal Support 107 - Financial support 22 - Translator required		Housing prior to Safe Accommodation 2 - Private/Owner Occupier 8 - Private Renter 34 - Social Housing 77 - Temporary 54 - Other
			Employment 32 - Employed/Self Employed 90 - Unemployed 52 - Unknown

Safe Accommodation 2022 - 23

The diagrams below illustrates the demographic data provided for victims who have accessed refuge & dispersed provision in 2022 – 23



86 Victims Supported

- 85 - Female Victims
- 1 - Male Victims



Sexual Identity

- 78 - Heterosexual
- 1 - Gay/lesbian
- 6 - Bisexual
- 1 - prefer not to say

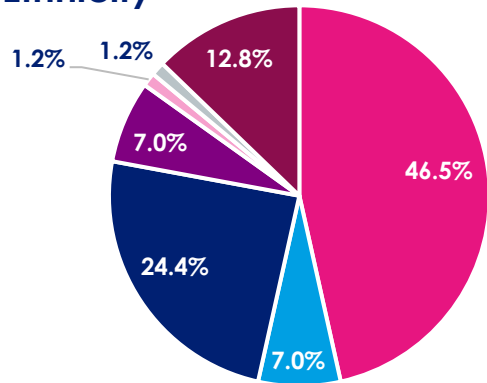


Family Composition

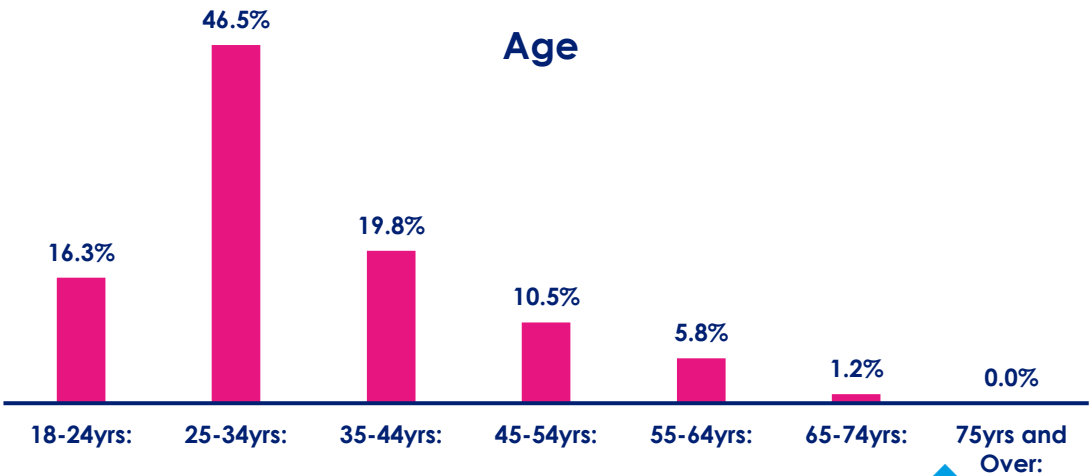
- 25 - single victims without children
- 61 - victims with children

- White British:
- White Other
- Asian or Asian British:
- Black or Black British:
- Mixed:
- Gypsy/Roma/Traveller:
- Other Isolated/Marginalised community/Prefer Not to Say:

Ethnicity



Age



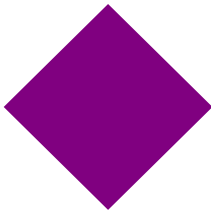
Safe Accommodation 2022 – 23

Below is the demographic data provided for victims who have accessed refuge & dispersed provision in 2021 – 22



Disability

- 20- Physical disability
- 3 - Learning disability
- 1 - Deaf/hearing impairment
- 18 - Mental Health issue
- 41 - Other long term health conditions



Honor Based Violence

- 5 - experienced HBV
- 1 - experienced Forced Marriage



Immigration Status

- 1 - Work/Student/Visit Visa
- 4 - Limited leave to remain
- 15 Other/unknown/prefer not to say



Additional Needs

- 86 - Homeless
- 2 - Alcohol misuse
- 4 - Drug misuse
- 1 - Offending history



Housing prior to Safe Accommodation

- 2 - Private/Owner Occupier
- 5 - Private Renter
- 23 - Social Housing
- 31 - Temporary
- 25 - Other supported housing



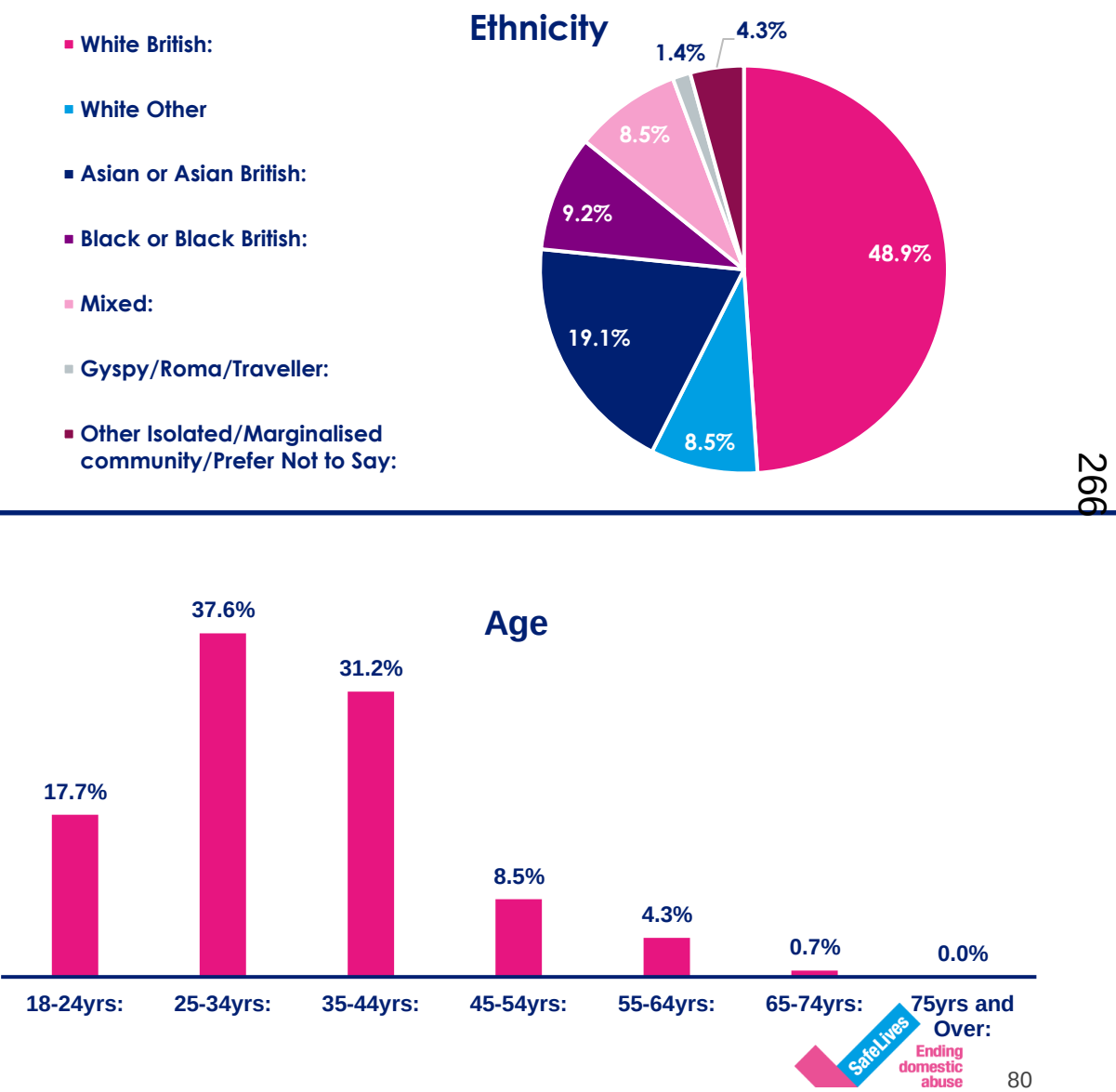
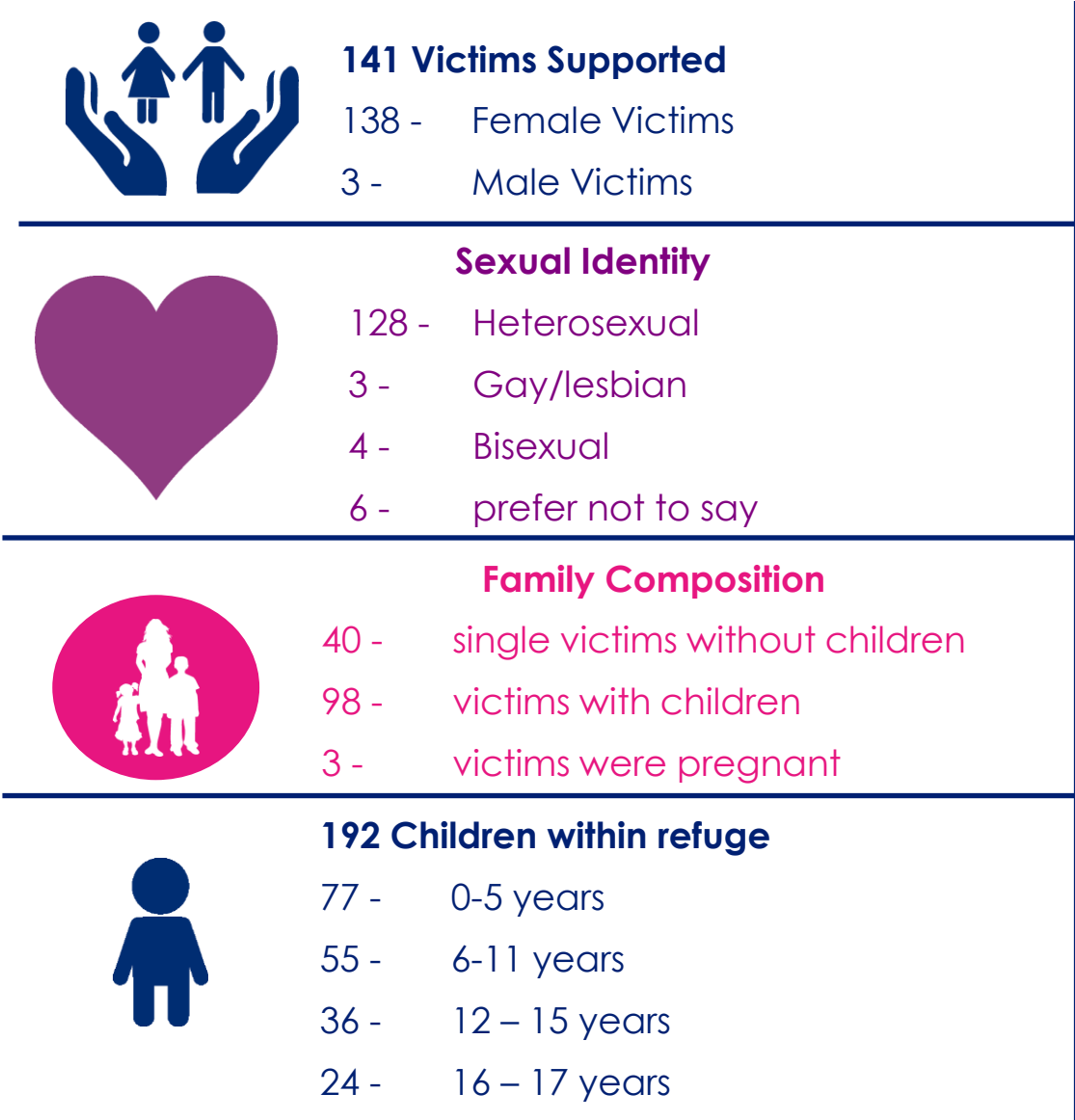
Employment

- 8 - Employed/Self Employed
- 78 - Unemployed



Safe Accommodation 2023 - 24

The diagrams below illustrates the demographic data provided for victims who have accessed refuge & dispersed provision in 2023 – 24



Safe Accommodation 2022 – 23

Below is the demographic data provided for victims who have accessed refuge & dispersed provision in 2021 – 22

Disability



- 28 - Physical disability
- 6 - Learning disability
- 2 - Deaf/hearing impairment
- 8 - Sensory impairment
- 60 - Mental Health issue
- 1 - Neuro divergent
- 9 - Other long term health conditions

Additional Needs



- 141 - Homeless
- 3 - Alcohol misuse
- 2 - Drug misuse
- 82 - Legal support
- 106 - Financial Support
- 17 - Translator required

Honor Based Violence



- 4 - experienced HBV
- 3 - experienced Forced Marriage

Immigration Status



- 1 - Work/Student/Visit Visa
- 3 - Asylum seeker
- 10 - Indefinite leave to remain
- 3 - Limited leave to remain
- 15 - Other/unknown/prefer not to say

Housing prior to Safe Accommodation



- 2 - Private/Owner Occupier
- 1 - Private Renter
- 35 - Social Housing
- 86 - Temporary
- 1 - Other supported housing
- 16 - Other

Employment



- 23 - Employed/Self Employed
- 75 - Unemployed
- 43 - Unknown

Safe Accommodation

As previously stated, the data provided by WALL is LLR wide and not Leicestershire specific. Our analysis of the data cannot be fully attributed to Leicestershire due to this. WALL have advised that a significant number of referrals are from those residing in Leicester.

This is an area for improvement for future data collection and needs assessments.

The data provided shows that the most prevalent age range across all three years is the **25 – 34 years**. There is an increase in the **35 – 44 years** in 2023 – 24. This is in keeping with the overall identified victim figures.

We do not have any data regarding the ages of children except for 2023 – 24. That data shows that while there is a spread across the age ranges, the highest proportion of children are age **0 – 5 years** at **40.1%**.

Children are victims of domestic abuse in their own right. It is important that support is available in age appropriate formats. Support in accessing schools, nurseries and other provision such as play groups is also of benefit.

With regard to ethnicity, the data changes across the three years. As a caveat we know there are a significant number of referrals from Leicester which has a higher Black, Asian and racially minoritised community population (66.8%).

In 2021 – 22, **35.1%** of victims identified as White British and Asian or Asian British. In 2022 – 23 the number of victims identifying as White British increased to **46.5%** with Asian or Asian British decreasing to **24.4%** before decreasing again to **19.1%** in 2023 – 24.

There are a number of victims who accessed refuge accommodation who had a disability with physical disabilities and mental health needs being the most identified. Accessibility to safe accommodation for those with disability is key. This is a key area for all to consider especially when we consider the ageing population of the area.

The data shows that a high proportion of victims within the service required financial and legal support. The data records all victims accessing safe accommodation as homeless. We would assume that to mean, support with homelessness is required rather than a person being 'street homeless'. Clarification around this would be of benefit.

Safe Accommodation

WALL have stated that

'It has been identified that the support needs for clients has increased. With us as a service having to ensure that our team are trained to enable us to provide an effective service to anyone seeking refuge. With this in mind, this also reflects the lack of funds available to services such as ours to enable us to provide additional team members (Staff) to provide the level of support required by those accessing refuge. This being a national concern and not one expressed within just this area. Taking into account the volume of referrals received alone by ourselves, this highlights the demand and need for refuge within this area. And the increase in those needing to seek refuge and a safe environment away from harm. Looking at those that WALL have not been able to accommodate due to no spaces being available this outlines the demand for refuge.'

Supported Housing: National Statement of Expectations

The National Statement of Expectations (NSE) was developed in collaboration between the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) with input from local councils and the supported housing sector. Together, they are committed to seeing delivery of good quality supported housing which meets residents' needs and represents good value for money.

The NSE provides a mechanism for establishing the vision for accommodation standards, quality, and value for money. The NSE is not a statutory requirement, and to date there has been no definitive set of guidelines on what should reasonably be expected from the accommodation element of supported housing. However, it is hoped that organisations involved in the provision of supported housing will use, adopt, and find the principles and examples of best practice helpful.

In supported housing, accommodation is provided alongside support, supervision, or care to help people live as independently as possible in the community, including for people fleeing domestic abuse with their children.

In order to deliver the ambitions of the NSE local authorities should work alongside providers and local delivery partners to:

- Assess local demand and plan effectively
- Ensure safe and good quality supported housing
- Ensure supported housing provides good value for money

Women's Aid Annual Audit 2021

The annual audit presents information on the provision and usage of domestic abuse services (both accommodation and community support services) in England, mainly focusing on the financial year 2019/20. This year the report also includes a section on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Key findings from the audit included:

- It is estimated (based on the On Track data collection) that 10,592 women and 12,710 children were supported by a refuge in 2019 - 20.
- 3,935 refuge spaces in England, falling short of the number of spaces recommended by the Council of Europe by 1,694, which represents a 30% shortfall^[1].
- It is estimated that a total of 24,748 referrals were received by refuges. This means that 57% of all referrals received for refuge were rejected. The main reason for rejection was a lack of space or capacity with 18% of all referrals received rejected for this reason, this also equates to 32% of all rejected referrals being rejected due to lack of space or capacity.
- Only 26% of refuges commissioned by local authorities indicated that the funding covered all aspects of the support staff costs.
- 63% of women in refuge services had children and 6% were pregnant
- 88% of service users had experienced emotional abuse, 67% had experienced jealous or controlling behaviour.
- 49% of service users in a refuge had support needs around mental health
- 48% of service users in a refuge reported feeling depressed or having suicidal thoughts because of the abuse.
- 26% of women at refuge services have a disability; most common were mental health disabilities, 7% had a physical disability.
- Of service users who were not British nationals, just over half (54.5%) were able to access public funds.
- Only 4% of vacancies posted on Routes to Support^[2] could consider women who had no recourse to public funds.
- Under half of refuge vacancies can accommodate a woman with two children and less than one in five for a woman with three children.

These statistics highlight that nationally there are barriers for some women to enter refuge.

This includes women who are NRPF and who are a parent and who are likely to have mental health needs requiring sufficient therapeutic support. We also know that people with a disability are more likely to experience domestic abuse. The small percentage of women in refuge with a physical disability, is likely not reflective of demand from this group and impacted by the availability of accessible accommodation.

Whole Housing Approach

SafeLives supports the DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance) Whole Housing Approach which aims to improve the housing options and outcomes for all experiencing domestic abuse. It suggests a range of housing options or specialist initiatives to give victims and survivors the choice to relocate or remain in their existing property and for agencies to work together collaboratively.

This diagram shows the model and it's 12 parts. The lighter circles represent the temporary accommodation settings and tenure types with the darker circles representing the housing options and specialist initiatives to support victims to either relocate or remain in their home.

Further information available here
<https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/what-we-do/whole-housing-approach-housing-toolkit/>





Survivor Voice

Survivor Voice

“We’ve walked through fire to get our voices back; we’re not going to give them up now.” Ursula, Pioneer

SafeLives are committed to placing people with lived experience at the heart of all we do, valuing internal and external survivors’ experience as an asset.

Working together, we can aggregate and amplify survivors’ voices and interweave authenticity and independence throughout all our work. By listening and responding to views that are different to our own, professionals and survivors can critically assess and address challenges together. To do this authentically we support survivors to tell their truth and speak with an unmediated voice.

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Case Studies

The needs assessment also requires a review of case studies to understand a victim's journey, support required, received, and the outcome.

22 case studies have been provided and analysis of these is below:



1 case was an OOA referral



2 victims were pregnant

12 victims had children – 9 victims had more than one child

1 victim was transgender

2 victims had step-children



14 victims were unable to access refuge accommodation due to their circumstances

1 victim was asked to leave refuge accommodation

1 victim's case was closed as housing would not consider a different location



1 victim was already residing in refuge through WALL

2 victims were accepted into refuge

8 victims were housed in temporary accommodation

Case Studies

Of the 14 victims that were unable to access refuge, three stated they did not wish to change their children's schools, one stated they could not move away for work reasons, five stated they did not want to move out of area, or the location of the refuge was too far away, one declined due to the perpetrator being bailed away from the property, and one declined stating the refuge was not suitable for kids. One case also declined due to not being able to bring pets.



- 3 were not eligible due to pregnancy, the victim being on bail, and the victim previously assaulting staff.
- 1 victim was asked to leave refuge due to a breach in contract and no further information is provided on follow up housing.
- 1 victim declined refuge due to being in a different location and was told that housing would not consider another area. There is no further information on why this occurred.
- 1 victim was housed in supported accommodation that was not DA specific.
- 1 victim went on to live with family due to the location of refuge.



Those who were trying to access safe accommodation but could not be placed somewhere straight away were placed in hotels, hostels and Bed & Breakfasts. Of the four who were placed in those, two then went on to access safe accommodation, whilst the other two remained on priority banding waiting housing. Time periods of being in temporary accommodation lasted up to 7 months. Eight cases accessed temporary accommodation and of these, three were still in temporary accommodation, three were rehoused into their own properties, one returned to live at the perpetrator's address, and one went on to refuge. Those that remain in temporary accommodation are on priority banding for their own accommodation. Six cases were rehoused straightaway through social housing or through CSC. Two cases were currently residing in refuge looking for onwards accommodation.

Case Studies



Of the cases where children were present and looking to flee with the victim, nine out of the 12 cases were referred for Early Help/CSC support or already had this support in place. Two cases there was no record of referring or accessing support for the children. In one case the child was residing with the perpetrator however a safeguarding referral was completed to the relevant area on behalf of the victim.



When considering support needs for victims who were seeking safe accommodation, 37% of cases had mental health needs. Of these a referral was made to counselling/therapy services in six cases and three were receiving emotional support from DA agencies already. Two cases had substance misuse needs, and one was referred for specialist support. Two cases needed support with injunctions and both cases were referred to NCDV for this. Six cases needed support with finances in which support was given around benefits.

58% of cases were referred for specialist DA support, 29% were already engaging with DA services, and 8% received no support regarding domestic abuse.

These cases demonstrate the varying needs of victims seeking safe accommodation, and that no single model of accommodation-based support will be able to meet these needs. Leicestershire County Council should review their options for safe accommodation and seek to design an offer that can cater for the complexity and variety of needs victims of domestic abuse present with.

Survivor Voice

SafeLives spoke to 2 survivors of domestic abuse to understand their experience of Safe Accommodation

Although SafeLives managed to gather the voices of two survivors, there were difficulties in collecting more voices from around the county.

Survivor voice is key to understanding victims needs and how we can improve services to best support them. Survivors are at the heart and start of everything we do at SafeLives, and we are looking to continue this in Leicestershire with Echo Project.

Echo Project seeks to embed survivor voice into the design and delivery of policies and services that intend to meet their needs. The Authentic Voice Coordinators within Leicestershire will continue to gather voices and therefore support in understanding the needs of survivors for all aspects of domestic abuse including housing.

Both survivors however spoke about further training needed within the area to fully understand the complexities and dynamics of an abusive relationship. It was thought there was a lack of understanding regarding the impacts of domestic abuse on personal lives, and the housing system needs to have a more human approach alongside understanding to ensure survivor needs are met.

We can see from the case studies that accessing safe accommodation can be difficult, but having a better understanding of the dynamics of abusive relationships and being more human can have positive impacts on survivors being heard, and feel they are in control of their own lives when deciding to leave.



2 interviews with
2 women



Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion and Recommendations

We have, throughout this report, using SafeLives recognised best practice guidelines, in conjunction with tools such as our prevalence tool, made recommendations regarding the expected levels of services reach and provision. We recommend that these are considered as part of Leicestershire's Domestic Abuse commissioning strategy.

Local Partnership Board

Since the previous needs assessment The Leicestershire and Rutland DA Local Partnership Board has been established which meets quarterly. There have been a number of changes to the board ensuring compliance with the statutory guidance including the inclusion of many by and for services. It is chaired by the Lead Member for Safer Communities within Leicestershire County Council.

An area for development is the child victim representative role.

The Echo Project will support the strengthening, embedding and amplifying of authentic adult and child voice within the Local Partnership Board.

This can only be done with the support of the board and its partners to work collaboratively with the Echo team and local survivors.

- All agencies and partners to engage with the Echo Project to ensure authentic voice is at the centre of Leicestershire's Domestic Abuse Strategic

Conclusion and Recommendations

Data collection

Leicestershire Partnership Board used the previous needs assessment to highlight the need for collecting appropriate data, particularly in ethnicity, sexual identity, gender identity and socio economic status.

There have been significant improvements in the level and accuracy of the data collected compared to the previous needs assessment particularly around age, gender and ethnicity.

Disability and sexual identity recording is still limited. Regarding disability, this is not captured by Leicestershire Police, the Targeted Family Help service and two of the Districts. Research shows that disabled victims of domestic abuse also suffer more severe and frequent abuse over longer periods of time than non-disabled victims.

Whilst there has been a decrease in the level of unknown for sexual identity, almost three quarter of victims' sexual identity is unknown.

Research shows that those in LGBT+ relationships face additional barriers to reporting and accessing services.

It is important to ensure that this information is asked and captured in order to fully understand the demographics and intersecting needs of victims and survivors within Leicestershire.

There were challenges in the collection and the consistency of data provided including districts being unable to provide any data.

Many of the District Homelessness Teams collect age related data on all members of the household but will only capture further demographic data on the lead applicant. This could account for some of the unknown figure. Within Children's Social Care statutory assessments, only the child's data is captured; whereas WALL and a number of the District Domestic Abuse Services only capture the adult victim data.

Many agencies do not collect information regarding socio economic characteristics.

A concern is that by not capturing the demographic data of the whole family, we cannot understand the needs of the whole family and provide appropriate support.

As stated WALL are not able to separate their data into locality at present and are working towards a solution for this.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Data collection

- There is a continued need for a consistent approach to collecting data across Leicestershire This will provide a clear understanding of victim's characteristics, areas of multiple disadvantage and complex needs, which will in turn, inform a comprehensive strategy for domestic abuse and ensure that services delivered can meet identified needs
- The recording of disability data is a priority for Leicestershire Police, Targeted Family Help, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and North West Leicestershire District Council
- Data collection regarding all members of the family to be considered in order to provide a whole family approach

Conclusion and Recommendations Review

Provision of support and capacity of commissioned services

Victim's services have undergone a period of change across Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland with a new service contract starting on the 1st April 2022.

There is now a Helpline and Engagement service managed by Freeva. This is the Front Door for all referrals, and they also provide the Marac Idva. There is also a Domestic Abuse Locality service consisting of a Complex Need service; an Outreach service managed by LWA; and the Safe Accommodation provision managed by WALL.

A number of new services have been commissioned which commenced in 2024. As such their data is not captured within the timeframe of this needs assessment.

The services are

- Specialist dispersed property for male victims
- Specialist refuge accommodation for Black Asian and Racially Minoritised Women

WALL have also expanded their dispersed refuge accommodation to include refuge for those with larger families, clients with pets, and male victims.

There are currently 25 safe accommodation spaces across Leicestershire against a recommended figure of 71 and the lack of space is the one of the highest reasons for denied access. This was also a theme within the case audits.

Safe Accommodation is only available in two districts, limiting options for victims needing accommodation. Location has been cited as a reason for victims not wanting to enter refuge.

Since the previous needs assessment, Leicestershire have found it difficult to secure dispersed accommodation in other districts due to the lack of housing available.

The lack of a sanctuary scheme is a cause for concern as this limits the options available to victims. It does not enable them to stay in their own home where it is safe to do so. In turn, this can have an impact on the number of referrals to refuge and the increasing need as there is not alternative.

Conclusion and Recommendations Review

Provision of Support and capacity of commissioned services continued

- Increase the number of safe accommodation with the aim to reach the recommended figure of 71
- Consideration should be given to the location of safe accommodation and the range of safe accommodation commissioned to ensure accessibility to all victims. This may include adapted properties, provision for older people in line with the aging population, larger properties and Housing First Schemes with wrap around support for complex and additional needs
- The reintroduction of the Sanctuary Scheme to enable victims and survivors to remain in their own homes with support where safe to do so

Conclusion and Recommendations

Housing and Homelessness

Whilst we do not have data regarding temporary accommodation, we know many victims are access alternative temporary accommodation rather than safe accommodation. Within Leicestershire, alternative temporary accommodation options include a hotel or Bed and Breakfast.

These options are not safe accommodation and can be traumatic for victims and their families, especially those with children, disabilities and/or additional needs. This highlights the importance of the need for a range of safe accommodation options.

In the previous needs assessment, we highlighted the importance of considering those who are street homeless and hidden homeless. This is an area which is a focus of the District Chief Housing Officer Group.

Work had commenced during the previous needs assessment regarding a dedicated domestic abuse specialist within the Housing Options and Homelessness service in all districts. Each district received funding to employ a 'Housing Link Worker' to create links between Domestic Abuse services and housing. Most districts have recruited with an employee in post. The consistency of support offered is unclear and it would be of benefit for the districts and the link workers to come together to ensure best practice across the county.

- Review of housing and allocations policies to ensure consistency across areas
- Ensure Homelessness and Housing Options teams are fully aware of the Safe Accommodation and support options for victims

Conclusion and Recommendations

Children

There are a high proportion of child victims aged 6 - 11 in Leicestershire with children accounting for around a quarter of all identified victims ranging from 22.88% in 2021 – 22 to 25.41% in 2023 – 24 which suggests that children are experiencing trauma at a very early, crucial stage of their development and continues through their childhood. Prevention and early identification need to remain a priority as well as continuing therapeutic support for child victims

There has been a significant increase in victims identified aged 16 – 17 ranging from **8.34% to 9.81%** of all identified victims across the three years. It should be noted that the data provided for the needs assessment for those age 16/17 may be child victims whose parent/s are in domestic abuse relationships and/or victims of IPV in their own relationships.

This highlights the importance of the commissioning and sustainability of specialist children's provision, for those living in households where abuse is taking place and for those experiencing abuse within their own relationships. It is currently unclear what provision and support offer is available to children in Leicestershire.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises that children in abusive households are victims. As stated previously, not all agencies are collecting data regarding children. It is imperative that all data around children is captured. This is to ensure that the needs of the child are assessed, understood and met by providing appropriate support and services for the whole family and linked in with other relevant strategies.

It is noted from the refuge demographic data that there are a significant number of children within the service but limited information regarding their needs and outcomes.

- Specialist children's provision to be commissioned for those within safe accommodation and the wider community
- Specialist children and young peoples' provision for those experiencing domestic abuse within their own relationship. This is an area for consideration for those within safe accommodation, as well as in the community
- Children's provision to be tailored to a child's needs, identity, and culture

Conclusion and Recommendations

Performance Monitoring

It was previously recommended that the Local Partnership Board complete dip sampling and case audits on those accessing safe accommodation on a quarterly basis. Whilst it is noted that individual providers are completing these, it would be of benefit for the Local Partnership Board to review these on a regular basis to quality assure.

No Recourse to Public Funds

WALL have highlighted that immigration status can be a barrier for victims accessing safe accommodation. In the previous needs assessment we recommended that staff be aware of the Destitution Domestic Violence (DDV) Concession scheme for those who have been granted leave to enter as a spouse or partner of a British person.

We do not have an update regarding this and would recommend that this be an area which is explored to ensure the intersecting needs of victims are being met.



Appendix A

Data Submissions

Data was supplied by the following agencies –

- Leicestershire Police
- LWA
- Freeva
- WALL
- Adam Project
- Hinckley & Bosworth DA service
- Harborough DA service
- Blaby DA service
- North West Leicestershire Housing Link Worker
- Oadby & Wigston Housing Link Worker
- Children's Services
- Adult Social Care
- Leicestershire LGBT+ Centre
- Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
- Oadby & Wigston Borough Council
- North West Leicestershire District Council
- Melton Borough Council
- Harborough District Council
- Blaby District Council

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