



For women and children.
Against domestic violence.



Annual Report and Financial Statements 2016-2017

Company Number: 1412276. Charity Number: 277424. Homes and Communities Agency number: 4730

Domestic violence in the UK

- One woman in four will experience domestic violence during her lifetime.
- Two women are killed by a partner or former partner each week in England and Wales alone.
- The police receive a domestic violence related call every 30 seconds.
- 20% of children in the UK have lived with an adult perpetrating domestic violence.
- 62% of children in households where domestic violence is happening are also directly harmed.

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No models or library stock photographs have been used.

Names and identifying details have been changed throughout this report, in order to protect the anonymity of Refuge's clients.

2016-2017 at a glance

- **Refuge gave life-saving and life-changing support to almost 15,000 women and children.**
- **417,778 individuals visited the 'Get Help' pages of Refuge's website.**
- **The National Domestic Violence Helpline, run by Refuge and Women's Aid, received 86,125 calls.**
- **Refuge grew the number of women, children and men it supports in its services on any given day by almost 30%, to 4,772.**
- **An independent study found that for every £1 spent on Refuge's specialist services, a woman, her children and society receive a social reward equivalent to £4.94.**
- **Refuge used its resources and expertise to support more victims of modern slavery and human trafficking than ever before.**

A message from Sandra Horley CBE, chief executive

This has been an historic year for Refuge. In November 2016, we marked 45 years since the charity opened the world's first refuge for abused women in Chiswick, West London.

This milestone was an opportunity to celebrate how much Refuge has achieved – something we did at a wonderful reception in the House of Lords in November, addressed by Home Secretary Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP. When I joined Refuge in 1983, 150 women and children slept head to toe in a dilapidated eight-bedroom house. At the end of 2016-17, Refuge is providing life-saving and life-changing support to almost 4,800¹ women and children on any given day. This represents a phenomenal growth of 29% in 12 months.

The difficult financial climate in which Refuge operates makes this growth even more impressive. At the beginning of the year, approximately 80% of Refuge's service contracts were due for renewal. We feared for our future and readied ourselves for the challenge. Thankfully, Refuge exceeded all expectations. At year-end, Refuge had not only protected all the contracts for which it bid, but gained new service contracts, too. We even opened Refuge's biggest independent domestic violence advocacy service to date, in Hertfordshire, in October 2016.

Refuge is now co-ordinating the local response to domestic violence across whole areas, ensuring each survivor receives the same high-quality, specialist support. And across the country, Refuge has increased the number of women it is supporting who have experienced broader forms of gender-based violence. Of particular note is the significant number of modern slavery survivors now turning to Refuge's services. Despite the hidden nature of this horrific crime, Refuge's skilled grassroots outreach work means we are able to reach even the most marginalised clients. Refuge's staff speak 44 languages. This year, we have supported women of 52 different nationalities.

The spread of Refuge's services is also changing. Since 2014-15, Refuge has seen the number of women using its community outreach and floating support services increase by more than 100%. Refuges offer a unique form of support



and will never be obsolete. Indeed, some women have no choice but to access community based support due to a national shortage of refuge accommodation. But there are also many others who do not want, or are not ready, to move into a refuge. For these women, Refuge's community-based services offer a vital lifeline.

Refuge's specialist independent advocacy services, which support women and young people at the highest risk of harm or homicide – often through the criminal and civil justice systems – continue to go from strength to strength. Today, of the women who use Refuge's services, the greatest number access independent advocacy services.

Refuge's increased capacity in the community means we have forged even stronger relationships with statutory services in the areas in which we operate. This has been an important factor in the 68% increase in referrals to Refuge's services over this year. Our partnership work with schools and colleges also means we are supporting more young people than ever before – a 14% increase in women aged under 18 over the last 12 months.

¹Figure correct at year end, March 31 2017

In addition, the ‘Get Help Now’ pages of Refuge’s dedicated website provided support and information to 417,778 people this year – an increase of 15% on 2015-16. For women who have been systematically isolated by their perpetrators, Refuge’s website may be the first step towards recognising their abuse and seeking help. It lets them know they are not alone and that what they are experiencing is not their fault.

Refuge’s continued success is made possible by the dedication of its 243 members of staff and 68 volunteers; but also by the extensive outcomes data Refuge holds, which demonstrates the positive impact of our services. One of this year’s highlights was an independent analysis of Refuge’s ‘social return on investment’, conducted by NEF Consulting, which found that for every £1 invested in Refuge’s services, a woman, her family and society at large receives a social reward equivalent to £4.94.

Behind the numbers are real lives and real stories. The women and children we support are at the heart of everything we do. Refuge’s ‘dedication to its clients’ was recognised when The Charity Times magazine named us ‘Charity of the Year’ in 2016, an accolade we were delighted to receive.

I am proud that Refuge is now providing such a diverse base of services to more women than ever before. But life-saving provision alone is not enough. Refuge wants to live in a world where violence against women and children no longer exists. In order to achieve this goal, Refuge adopts a ‘Three P’ strategy – **provision, protection** and **prevention**.

Refuge **provides** high-quality services for women and children who have experienced violence; **protects** women by advocating for a strong criminal justice response to perpetrators; and **prevents** future violence through education, training and awareness-raising.

When it comes to protection, Refuge ensures women’s voices are heard at the highest levels. This year we have influenced improvements to the criminal justice system, challenged changes to housing benefit and campaigned for funding for specialist refuges. In February, Prime Minister Theresa May announced her intention to create a new Domestic Violence and Abuse Act, which could provide the step change needed to give victims the protection they

deserve. Refuge is working closely with the Government to ensure the needs of women and children remain at the centre of this process.

Preventing future violence is fundamental to Refuge’s mission. From regularly speaking out on television, radio and in newspapers, to running national, award-winning campaigns, Refuge is dedicated to educating the public on domestic violence and letting more women know there is support available.

It is also critical to educate those most likely to come into contact with women and children in crisis. By training frontline professionals – like police officers, social workers and healthcare staff – across entire regions, Refuge promotes a coordinated community response to gender-based violence and helps to ensure no woman or child falls through the cracks.

As we look towards 2017-18, Refuge will continue to build on its expertise and expand its services. None of Refuge’s work would be possible without the support of our staff, trustees, patrons, loyal partners and donors. I am enormously grateful to them; together, we will work to create a world where violence against women and children is no longer tolerated or ignored.

Sandra Horley

Right: Women in one of Refuge’s safe houses.



Provision

Supporting women and children through specialist services



One of Refuge’s expert practitioners supports a woman in her office.

Refuge is the largest provider of specialist services in England for women and children escaping domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence.

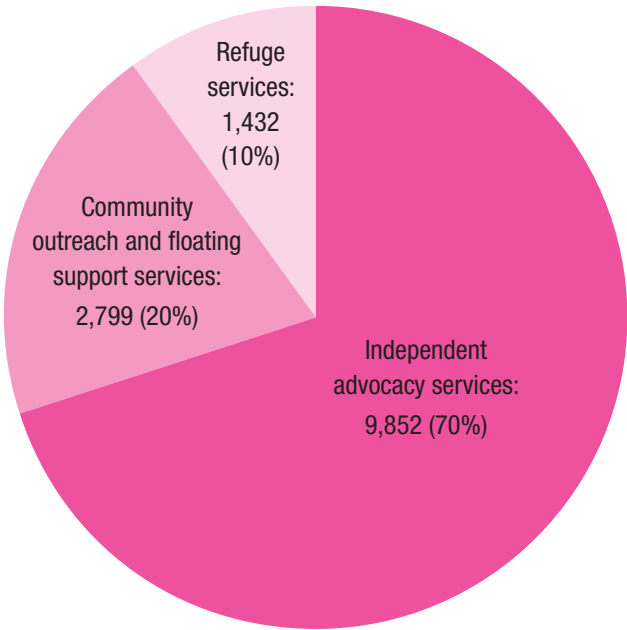
- In 2016-17
- Refuge provided life-saving and life-changing support to 6,559 women, 8,265 children and 269 men, across 53 local authority areas.
 - 94% of women asked said they felt safer at the point of leaving Refuge’s services.
 - 92% said their quality of life had improved.
 - 73% reported an end to all physical violence.
 - More than half a million people accessed support on Refuge’s website.
 - The National Domestic Violence Helpline, run in partnership between Refuge and Women’s Aid, received 86,125 calls.

On any given day, Refuge’s national network of specialist services support almost 4,800 women and children escaping all forms of gender-based violence.

Every woman who comes to Refuge’s services has her own unique needs. She may have been beaten, raped and terrorised by her husband for decades, or forced into prostitution by her partner. She may have been trafficked into this country, made to marry against her will, or forced to work as a servant for her parents-in-law. Perhaps she experienced female genital mutilation (FGM) as a young girl and is now worried her daughter is at risk. Maybe she has come to Refuge because her husband does not like the way she dresses and has threatened to ‘shame her’ by posting sexual photographs online, or because she has been groomed by older men.

Whatever a woman has been through, Refuge will empower her to keep herself and her children safe and build a new future for her family. Refuge does not believe that ‘one size fits all’. Instead, our expert staff tailor their support according to each woman’s goals. Refuge’s specialist services, which operate across 53 local authority areas, comprise:

- A national network of 38 refuges, spread across 21 local authority areas, which can provide safe accommodation and specialist support to 340 women and their children at any one time.
- 20 community outreach services, which provide support to women – including those still living with their perpetrators – in discreet, safe locations within their communities.
- 17 independent domestic, sexual and gender-based violence advocacy services, which specialise in supporting women through the criminal and civil justice systems. These include Refuge’s dedicated sexual violence service in Thames Valley, which covers 18 local authority areas across three counties, home to around two million people.
- Single point of access services, which serve as ‘one stop shop’ services in which anyone who has experienced any form of gender-based violence across entire areas can access all the specialist support they need in one place, through one phone number.
- A network of culturally specific, multilingual services, including: refuges for women and children of Asian, African and Caribbean descent; an advocacy service for clients of Eastern European descent and community outreach services for clients of Vietnamese descent.
- Specialist youth workers, who provide support to young people experiencing all forms of gender-based violence.
- Child support workers, who provide emotional and practical support for children and their mothers across our services, as well as organising play and educational activities.
- Early intervention workers, who provide tailored, age-appropriate support to children experiencing or witnessing gender-based violence.
- The Freephone, 24-Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline, run in partnership between Refuge and Women’s Aid, which receives an average of 236 calls per day.
- A website, www.refuge.org.uk, offering support and information to women who may be experiencing abuse, which had more than half a million visitors this year.



Total number of women and children supported by each service type *

“I want to thank you with all my heart. You were an anchor to me – someone that helped me feel protected and safe, someone that was there throughout the worst, always supporting me, always understanding me without judgment. Not even my family were able to do that. I know I wouldn’t have made it without your support. You made this painful journey bearable.”

*Including long-term and short-term support; not including those supported via the National Domestic Violence Helpline or the Refuge website

Refuge saved the State £5.9 million

across the health and criminal justice systems in one year.

Protecting and growing specialist services

At the beginning of this financial year, many of Refuge's services faced an uncertain future, due to pressure on local authority spending which had traditionally formed a significant portion of Refuge's funding support. With 80% of our service contracts up for renewal, Refuge took a proactive approach to maintaining and growing its services. At year end, not only had Refuge managed to retain all of its existing service contracts – it had expanded current services and grown new ones.

Refuge worked hard to find supplementary funding streams from central Government, Police and Crime Commissioners and Clinical Commissioning Groups – as well as increasing its fundraising targets. For example, when the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) allocated £20 million of funding for refuges, Refuge – working with some of its local authority partners – submitted ten bids. Nine of those bids were successful, generating additional funding of over £800,000 for our existing services.

Refuge also presented funders with its extensive outcomes data and new 'social return on investment' score, independently calculated by New Economics Foundation (NEF) Consulting in June 2016. NEF found that for every £1 invested in Refuge's services, women, their children and society at large received a reward equivalent to £4.94. NEF Consulting also concluded that over a period of just one year Refuge saved the State £5.9 million across the health and criminal justice systems.

As well as opening new services in Waltham Forest and Hertfordshire, funds secured will enable us to expand our services in Warwickshire and Cambridgeshire. The new contract in Warwickshire increases refuge spaces in the county significantly and now includes, and protects, our refuge in Stratford, which Refuge had self-funded for a number of years.



Residents in one of Refuge's safe houses.

Refuge services

It is essential that abused women and children have a safe place to go, where their specific needs are both understood and addressed – a place of refuge.

The women who arrive at our refuges are some of our highest risk clients. They are fleeing for their lives; research shows that women are at the greatest risk of homicide at the point of separation or soon after leaving a violent partner.

- 74% of women in our refuges said their perpetrator controlled every aspect of their lives.
- 50% had experienced threats to kill; 48% had been strangled, choked or suffocated.
- Almost 9% arrived with a small baby.

The support and protection afforded by refuges is unique; as well as providing a safe roof over a woman's head, expert staff provide the building blocks she needs to begin a new life, free from fear. That might mean supporting a woman to report her abuser to the police, find a new home or return to education or work. These vital interventions take place in regular, one-to-one key work sessions between refuge workers and women.

More than half of residents in our refuges are children.

They come through our doors having fled terrifying situations, sometimes in the middle of the night. Refuge staff ensure they feel safe, welcome and secure. Refuge also employs specialist child support workers, who enable our young refuge residents to process and begin to move on from their experiences.

Whatever a woman and her children need, refuge staff tailor their support and empower them to reach their goals. At the point of leaving our refuges, 94% of women asked reported feeling safer than when they arrived. 94% said their quality of life had improved.

What support do refuges offer?

Emotional support

Domestic violence can chip away at a woman's confidence. She may feel she has no control over her life. Even if there is no physical violence, perpetrators use many other techniques to manipulate their victims carefully and purposefully. The grinding impact of emotional abuse leaves a woman feeling incredibly isolated. Often, coming to Refuge is the first time a woman realises that she is not alone, and that what she has experienced is not her fault. Refuges offer vital peer support – meeting other women who have been through similar experiences, and survived, gives women hope for their future.

“When I arrived at the refuge I was broken, traumatised and very upset. I was scared of coming to a new place I didn't know. Before I came, I was supported over the phone and the words of comfort I got made me make the decision to leave. The emotional support was overwhelming. It was beyond my expectations.

“I can honestly say that if you guys were not here I don't know what would have happened. There are still days when I look back and feel lonely and emotional but the staff always pick me up. They have given me strength and built my self-confidence. I am discovering myself again.

“Refuge has been my family. I thank my family at Refuge for being here for me. I thank everyone with sincerity, gratitude and heart-felt thanks.”

Practical support

Women often arrive at our refuges with little more than the clothes they are standing in. Others have no money or have problems relating to their immigration status. Perpetrators often tell their partners that they will be deported if they go to the police, or that they could never survive on their own because they cannot secure a job or claim benefits.

This was Deepa's experience – a woman who stayed in one of our refuges in the Midlands. Deepa had been brought to the UK six months previously on a spousal visa, and had experienced physical and financial abuse at the hands of her husband.

In order to live independently from her husband, Deepa had to apply for 'leave to remain' in the UK – a complicated and intimidating process. Refuge supported Deepa every step of the way; her keyworker at the refuge secured expert legal advice, attended meetings with her and advocated on her behalf to ensure her needs were listened to and prioritised. Refuge also liaised with local agencies including the police and health service to secure the evidence needed to prove the violence she had endured, and supported Deepa to write her personal statement to the Home Office. Deepa's application was successful. She is now studying to sit exams so she can return to work. Deepa says:

“Living in a refuge made me breathe again. I can shower whenever I want. I can eat whatever I like. I feel there is somebody there to take care of me.”

Economic empowerment

Restricting women's access to money is a common method of control for perpetrators of domestic violence. Any woman can experience economic abuse, regardless of her socio-economic background.

Empowering women to take back control of their finances is a critical part of the work refuge staff do. They support women to access the welfare benefits to which they are entitled, assist them in returning to employment, and work in partnership with local banks, Job Centres and charities to ensure they are able to separate themselves financially from their abusers and regain economic independence.

For example, in Hounslow this year, all refuge staff have been trained in CV writing; now they are able to share these skills with residents in house meetings and one-to-one sessions. One woman – who arrived with no access to money and had never had a CV before – was assisted by her key worker to write one. She was then supported to approach local shops and cafes with her CV, and send it out to recruitment agencies. Now, the woman has a permanent job and has regained her independence.



A family explores its new surroundings.

Housing and resettlement

Once a woman has settled into a refuge, it can feel daunting to move out and begin living independently. Refuge staff support women at every stage. They advocate on women's behalf to secure suitable housing from the local authority – then they help women turn their houses into homes, sourcing furniture and white goods, often from local charities and recycling schemes.

Due to the serious shortage of social housing – particularly in London – often the only properties available are in the private rental sector. Private landlords require rent upfront, which would be impossible for most of the women we support due to the financial abuse they have experienced.

Yet working with local authorities, our refuge staff in London recently secured funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government, allowing them to give women up to £3,000 to secure private rented accommodation. So far, the scheme has helped 13 women in London move into a new, safe home, six of whom had children.

Refuge staff also build relationships with lettings agencies and landlords willing to accept tenants without a deposit. In Hackney, this has led to three women moving into safe, privately rented homes who would not otherwise have been able to afford to.

Health and wellbeing

A woman may arrive at a refuge with chronic health problems that have gone untreated, due to her isolation or her fear that her abuse may be uncovered by a medical professional. 33% also arrive with injuries from a recent incident.

Through close relationships with local GP surgeries, hospitals and midwives, Refuge staff empower women to address their health needs, and those of their children. Safety is paramount: in one of our Cambridgeshire refuges, a member of staff recently trained the local GP on safeguarding patients who had experienced domestic violence, from not calling their names aloud in the waiting room to ensuring no correspondence is sent to their old home addresses. One woman had not accessed any health services for a decade; her husband was a doctor and she was terrified he would find out where she was. Only after weeks of encouragement from Refuge, and staff liaising with a local surgery on her behalf, did she feel confident enough to access the care she needed.

Domestic violence also takes a serious toll on women's mental health. An estimated three women a week commit suicide because of domestic violence in England and Wales.² In 2016-17, 26% of women who responded to a mental health screening measure on arrival at our refuges had made plans to end their own lives. Refuge workers support women to access specialist mental health services; and the peer support offered by fellow residents is invaluable.

² Walby, S. (2004) The Cost of Domestic Violence

Support for children

- 733 children stayed in our refuges in 2016-17; their average age was five-and-a-half.
- Across all its services, Refuge has given long-term support to 5,685 children.
- 89% of women who asked for support to protect their children around issues of child contact achieved their goals.

It is estimated that one in five children in the UK has been exposed to domestic abuse. Sixty-two per cent of children living in households where domestic violence occurs are directly harmed by the perpetrator – but for the remaining 38%, the impacts can still be severe. Exposure to violence may affect children’s development, learning, behaviour, relationships and psychological wellbeing. But with expert support, children can overcome the impacts of abuse and go on to live safe and happy lives.

When children come to our refuges, making sure they feel safe and welcome in their new surroundings is a critical first step. Thanks to Refuge’s partnership with the Buddy Bag Foundation many of the children receive ‘buddy bags’ when they arrive – backpacks full of toys and useful items to help them settle in. This year, one of our Sussex refuges benefitted from a brand new ‘Bright Space’, funded by the Bright Horizons Foundation. Now the refuge has a special area for the children, decorated in bright colours and packed full of toys and games.

All of our young refuge residents have benefitted from generous ticket donations from local theme parks, via the Merlin’s Magic Wand Children’s Charity. In one of our Warwickshire refuges, the children and their mothers were given free passes to family-friendly, educational attractions around the local area.

In Derby, staff hold events in the refuges to celebrate cultural festivals, providing another opportunity for the children to socialise and grow in confidence. At Diwali, they arranged an arts and crafts session where children and their mothers made cards. At Christmas time, every child received Christmas presents, thanks to the generosity of Refuge’s corporate partners and individual donors.



Our refuges provide a welcoming environment for children, including outdoor and indoor play areas.

Child support workers

Refuge has fundraised to provide dedicated child support workers to work across its refuges in London and Cambridgeshire, as well as in its ‘one-stop shop’ services including the Gaia Centre and Redbridge Violence Against Women and Girls service.

Working together with health visitors, schools and other staff members, Refuge’s child support workers give children the chance to establish secure routines, build confidence and begin to recover from the impacts of abuse. By offering childcare when mothers meet with their solicitors or other agencies, they ensure children are protected from hearing and reliving the traumatic details of the violence they have experienced. Instead, children are encouraged to describe their own thoughts, feelings and fears, so they can begin to process what has happened in their families.

Child support workers devise and deliver a range of stimulating one-to-one, group, and mother-and-child play activities, including arts and crafts, story time, cooking and gardening, homework and reading clubs. They also help families to integrate into the local area by securing school and nursery places and supporting women to access wider community resources. In one of our Southwark refuges, the child support worker organised for a librarian to visit once a month and read with the children and parents, as well as lend and exchange books.

In one of our culturally-specific refuges for African and Caribbean women and children, the child support worker organised for staff from the local children’s centre to hold closed play sessions for families who had recently arrived at the refuge. Once the women had met the play worker, it was much easier for them to join the sessions with other parents at the children’s centre. For women with no existing support network in the area, this was crucial for building their confidence and reducing their isolation.

Child support workers also make referrals to appropriate specialist services for children experiencing developmental delay, or source support for those with additional needs such as speech therapy. In one of our London refuges, refuge worker Ali developed a partnership with a local centre for children with special educational needs, after a new resident arrived with an autistic son. Here, Ali describes what happened:

Sian and Benji’s story

When she arrived at the refuge, Sian was struggling to cope with her son, Benji. Benji is autistic and could not communicate verbally. He had only recently been diagnosed and, because Sian had been so isolated by her perpetrator, she did not know how she could support him and what help was available. I knew it would make a huge difference to both of them to receive expert support, so I contacted a local special education needs service.

The staff there helped Sian understand Benji’s behaviours and improve his communication. They began attending regular coffee mornings together and Benji received speech and language therapy. Together, we were also able to secure one-to-one support for Benji at school.

Most important, Sian now understands how to support and comfort Benji. She feels much more empowered and confident in her abilities as a parent.”



A young refuge resident.

Early intervention workers

Early intervention work with children and teenagers is crucial; as well as supporting young people at the point of crisis, Refuge’s early intervention workers aim to increase long-term safety and reduce the risk of violence into the future.

This year, Refuge’s gender-based violence service in Lambeth, the Gaia Centre, extended its early intervention services. Funded by the local Clinical Commissioning Group, the extended service supports boys and girls aged between 11 and 17 years who have been impacted by domestic violence. They may have witnessed their fathers abusing their mothers, or been directly abused themselves.

Meeting with an early intervention worker may be the first time a young person has been given an opportunity to discuss their feelings; they may even have tried to speak to agencies and been disbelieved, or dismissed. As well as building trust, increasing confidence and providing emotional support to young people, an early intervention worker might provide support around friendships, work in partnership with schools to increase children’s attendance and participation, or refer children on to specialist counselling.



Many of Refuge's services are wheelchair accessible.

SPOTLIGHT ON: Refuge supporting all women, whatever their needs

Many women who use Refuge's services have complex needs. Experiencing abuse takes its toll on women and children; unravelling the psychological impacts takes time and skilled help. But some women face particular barriers to accessing support, due to their specific, additional complex needs. Across its services, Refuge is dedicated to breaking down these barriers and supporting all women.

Substance misuse

Around 15% of women who arrive at Refuge's services have issues around drug misuse, and 6% around alcohol misuse. Drinking or taking drugs may have been a mechanism for coping with the abuse; or women may have been coerced into substance misuse by the perpetrator. Working in partnership with specialist addiction services, our staff give them the non-judgmental, emotional support they need to recognise the reasons behind their addiction, and work with them to build a new life for themselves and their children.

"When I met Annie (my refuge keyworker), I had just escaped soul-destroying bullying. My confidence and nerves were shattered. My drinking at that time was through the roof. Annie supported me by helping me engage with the alcohol services. She saw me in some terrible states, but never once did I feel judged by her. I only experienced help and understanding.

"Without my even realising it, Annie immediately began to rebuild me, through empathy and understanding. When I was ready, she began to work through what had happened to me, and explain more about domestic violence. Never once did she turn me away when I needed to talk through my feelings or any other issue that had arisen.

"Annie has a lovely calm, healing influence that always shined through. I am now pleased to say that I am living independently and have been sober for nearly six months. All of this has been greatly aided by Annie's help and constant support."

Disabled women

Research shows that disabled women are twice as likely to experience gender-based violence than non-disabled women. They are also less likely to seek support. Disabled women frequently face additional barriers in accessing services. A woman's abuser might have used her disability to further control and isolate her; he may even have been her designated carer.

In 2016-17, 1,322 women in Refuge's services self-identified as having a disability. Refuge is dedicated to meeting the diverse needs of women, whatever their abilities. We work to remove the potential barriers faced by disabled clients and tailor our support to fit their individual needs. This includes running accessible services (indeed, Refuge is currently building two new family units of accessible refuge accommodation, having secured funding from the DCLG, working in partnership with Southwark Council), but it also goes far beyond that. It means all Refuge staff are empowered to work flexibly and make adaptations for each woman who arrives at our services. Perhaps she has a heart condition which means she cannot go upstairs, or a sensory impairment which means particular noises or colours are not appropriate. Whatever is required, Refuge staff create an environment for each woman in which she can be empowered to achieve her specific goals.



Refuge's community outreach workers meet women in discreet and safe locations.

Community outreach services

- Refuge's community outreach services supported 2,526 women, children and men in 2016-17.
- On exit, 92% of the clients we asked said they felt safer than they did upon arrival.
- 84% of the outcomes requested by clients were achieved.

Not every woman wants or needs to go to a refuge. We also provide essential support to women in the community via outreach and floating support services, including those who are unable to leave their perpetrators. For example, Refuge now runs community programmes across London, Warrington, Warwickshire, Cambridgeshire, Derby and Shropshire.

Leaving an abusive partner is a process. Refuge's expert outreach workers give women practical and emotional support while they make decisions about their future, and help them to keep safe.

Abused women are systematically isolated by their perpetrators. Often, they keep the abuse they are experiencing a secret from family and friends. In these circumstances, it can be very difficult for women to seek help; by operating discreet services in the community, Refuge reaches women who might not otherwise have found support.

For example, Refuge's floating support worker in West London attends a 'one stop shop' run by the local authority. "When I meet women for the first time at a drop-in, sometimes they just want to talk. They do not necessarily identify themselves as experiencing domestic violence", she explains. "Last week, I listened to a woman explain what was happening in her home. I let her know that I was there to support her, whatever she decided to do. I received a text from her a couple of days later saying she felt so much lighter – like she had left all of her "baggage" in the corner of my office. It is not about whether a woman leaves her perpetrator straight away or stays. It is about her knowing that she has options; she is not trapped and powerless. Refuge being there, in a woman's community, empowers her."

Once a woman is in the service, an outreach worker will meet her anywhere she feels comfortable and safe. That might be a local library or café, her child's school or her GP's office. Meeting a Refuge worker outside the home gives a woman a new space, disassociated from her perpetrator, in which she can begin to process her experiences.

If a woman cannot leave the home she shares with her perpetrator – because she is too terrified to leave, or perhaps due to financial or mobility issues – Refuge's staff will adapt their support to suit her needs. In a recent case, one Refuge outreach worker, Nousha, met a woman in her home because she was agoraphobic, carrying out on-going risk assessments and



Refuge will meet a woman wherever she feels comfortable and safe – it might be a local park, library or community centre.

working with her mother to ensure she could visit without the perpetrator's knowledge. After two months of intensive emotional support, the woman was able to meet her key worker at the end of her street and walk to the shops together – a small step, but a transformative one for the client.

As well as providing women with emotional and practical support, outreach workers also maintain close relationships with statutory agencies in the local area. They will attend case conferences and child protection meetings with social services, ensuring the wishes of their clients are represented. Here, one Refuge outreach worker, Giuliana, explains the approach she takes when supporting a woman.

“Once I have established that a woman is safe, we talk about the thing she is most worried about. It might be that she has an elderly mother in the next room whom she doesn't want to leave behind, or she fears her children might be removed if she goes to the police. Safety is not just about going to refuge or staying at home; Refuge always asks, what does safety mean for her? She might want the children to go to school the next day as usual, or to stay living close by her family or friends.

“Outreach work is a way of maintaining continuity for the woman and her children, whilst keeping them safe. We can do things like arrange for the locks to be changed, or for a non-molestation order to be put in place, or for there to be a police flag on the property. We will phone the school and explain

who can and cannot pick the children up. I phoned a woman's employer recently and insured they respected and fulfilled her wish to be moved to a different branch of the chain she worked for, so she was safe at work.

“Whatever the woman needs, Refuge will support her. It is all about what she is feeling, her wishes and her dignity. When I begin to hear women say “I want this” or “I need that”, my hearts fills up. Over time, I see women begin to take control of their lives. They have been subordinated for so many years, not permitted to acknowledge their needs. We are able to build their confidence. We support them to see that they deserve more. We empower them to take back control over their lives.”

Elizabeth, who used one of Refuge's outreach services in London, describes what our specialist support meant to her:

“Nobody has done more for me in my entire life. Karen gave me the language I needed to describe what I had been through. It's like she's given me a secure base to start from. Ultimately she has moved my thinking into a space where I can recover at my own pace and in my own way. Now, my children and I are happy. It sounds dramatic, but my Karen saved my life. I really feel that with every fibre of my being. I find it really moving that there is someone out there, without whom I probably wouldn't be here; without whom my kids wouldn't have a mum.”

Independent domestic, sexual and gender-based violence advocacy services

In 2016-17:

- Refuge now has a 50-strong team of independent advocates, including 32 trained independent sexual violence advocates (ISVAs), 10 independent gender-based violence advocates (IGVAs) and six specialist youth advocates.
- In 2016-17, our independent advocacy services supported 2,762 women, 3,793 children and 89 men.
- 114 clients were supported by Refuge's specialist youth advocates.
- Of the women who wanted to make a statement about their abuse to the police, 90% were supported to do so.
- Where Refuge supported a woman through to the conclusion of a court case, 74% ended in guilty verdicts.

Refuge's independent advocates support all survivors of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, including those at the highest risk of serious harm or homicide. Refuge provides its advocacy services – known as independent domestic violence advocates (IDVAs), independent sexual violence advocates (ISVAs) and independent gender-based violence advocates (IGVAs) – to women, men and young people.

In 2016-17, the number of clients supported in Refuge's independent advocacy services has gone up by 43%, including those receiving short-term support. Refuge also opened its largest advocacy service to date in Hertfordshire. Here, the new 16-strong team provides tailored support to women experiencing all forms of gender-based violence across the county. Since October 2016, our Hertfordshire IDVAs alone have given support to 435 women, 13 men and their 710 children.

Supporting women through the justice system

Empowering victims of violence to pursue justice forms a large part of independent advocates' work. The criminal and civil justice systems can be intimidating and isolating; Refuge's independent advocates act as a woman's eyes and ears, ensuring she is kept up to date with everything that is happening. IDVAs, ISVAs and IGVAs will support a woman at every stage of the process, including: reporting her perpetrator to the police; making a statement; obtaining civil orders, such as non-molestation orders to keep the perpetrator away from her; arranging pre-trial visits so a woman is more at ease when she gives evidence and obtaining special measures in court so that she does not have to come face to face with her abuser.

“Thank you for everything you have done for me. You have been my rock; I cannot thank you enough for being there for me and guiding me through these past weeks. I will forever be grateful to you.”

“My IGVA was a great support to me during my perpetrator's trial. I had been terrified about attending; I was worried I would crumble. But my IGVA reassured me, took me to a pre-trial visit and supported me on the day.”

“I have found the support from my IDVA amazing. I could not have asked for anyone better. My IDVA really understood me and calmed me down when I was feeling lost. When we would speak I would feel relaxed, and as though my worries were taken away.”

“I will never forget you,
you have helped me a lot.
You are like an angel.
I have wings I never
knew I had. You showed
me how to use them.
Thanks to you, I am free.
I can fly and see the
world. Life is wonderful.
Thank you.”

Refuge service user

Working with other agencies

Independent advocates also perform critical work in partnership with other agencies. They attend MARACs (multi-agency risk assessment conferences) – meetings in which professionals, including from the police and social services, make plans to keep a woman at risk of death or serious harm safe. In these meetings, independent advocates provide a voice for the woman, ensuring her needs and wishes are taken into account.

Refuge also deploys independent advocates in police stations, hospitals and other community locations so they can provide immediate assistance to women in those settings, and give guidance to the professionals alongside whom they are working.

Indeed, training is an integral part of independent advocates' workload. Refuge trains staff from agencies likely to come into contact with women experiencing gender-based violence on spotting the signs of abuse, how to respond appropriately, and how to refer to specialist services. In doing so, Refuge promotes a coordinated community response to women and children in crisis, as well as increasing the number of referrals it receives.

Health settings can provide critical opportunities to protect abused women. Since opening the new Hertfordshire IDVA service, Refuge has more than doubled the number of advocates working in health locations across the county. The Hertfordshire team has delivered 20 training sessions to local health professionals since October 2016. This included presenting to 90 professionals at the Hertfordshire public health conference and training 40 midwives, educating them on how domestic violence might present in their patients and how best to ask pregnant women whether they are experiencing abuse. Following the success of the training, Refuge will present to midwives on a monthly rolling basis as part of their safeguarding training. This outreach work is proving effective; to date, the service has received 70 referrals from health professionals.

In Warrington, two Refuge IDVAs now work within the local hospital. As well as providing immediate support to women, they deliver training to staff including midwives, nurses, healthcare assistants and those working in the Accident and Emergency and Minor Injuries departments. Over the year, the Warrington advocates have trained 174 healthcare staff. 86% said they would now feel confident enough to ask a patient about domestic abuse.

Refuge service manager, Samantha, tells Rosa's story:

Rosa came to hospital with bruising and scratch marks across her body. The doctor who saw Rosa had recently received training from Refuge; thanks to the doctor's sensitive enquiries, Rosa felt safe enough to disclose that her husband had assaulted her. The doctor explained how Refuge could support Rosa and, with her permission, made a referral to our service.

As a result of the partnership between Refuge and the hospital, Rosa received the protection she needed. A Refuge IDVA came to the ward immediately and risk-assessed Rosa. She was terrified of returning home and decided she wanted to go into a refuge with her children. As a temporary measure the hospital team found her a safe room in which to sit, while the IDVA looked for a bed space in a refuge. Once she had found a suitable refuge with spare rooms for Rosa and her children, the IDVA provided Rosa – who had arrived at the hospital with nothing but the clothes she was wearing – with emergency food, clothing and toiletries. The IDVA also liaised with the refuge worker to ensure the family would be met at the station before being taken to the safe accommodation.



Refuge's dedicated website on its Thames Valley sexual violence service provides critical information for anybody affected by rape or sexual assault.

Support for women who have experienced sexual violence

All of Refuge's staff are trained to support survivors of rape, sexual assault and sexual exploitation. However, Refuge also has 32 specialist ISVAs – members of staff specially trained to support victims of sexual violence – located across its services.

ISVAs give clients the opportunity to discuss the impacts of the abuse they have experienced (which may be recent or historical) and the space to consider their options, without judgment. If a client chooses to report incidents to the police, a Refuge ISVA will support and guide them through the process. If they do not want to report to the police, Refuge can support them to record forensic evidence that could be used later to bring charges, should they so wish.

Shannon was sexually abused as a child and was also sexually abused by her husband. As well as giving her intensive emotional support, one of Refuge's ISVAs guided Shannon through the process of reporting her historic abuse to the police, and through separating from her husband. Shannon says:

"I had never talked about what I had experienced. I knew that it would be like opening Pandora's box and I was scared, but my ISVA made me feel safe and supported. My husband had always told me that it was me - that I was mad. My ISVA believed in me. Some days I think I can't carry on so I phone my ISVA. She gives me encouragement, then I can dig deeper and I can carry on."

The Thames Valley Independent Sexual Violence Advisory service, which opened in July 2015, is Refuge's largest dedicated sexual violence service. The team works across 18 local authorities in three counties – yet despite this scope, there are no waiting lists. Refuge's ISVAs offer support to every single referral within 24 hours.

In 2016-17, a total of 459 clients were supported by the Thames Valley team, including 69 supported by the specialist youth advocacy team. The high number of referrals to the service is testament to the important awareness-raising work staff have undertaken this year, including briefing University of Oxford staff

on how to support students and refer them on to Refuge and attending local music festivals to provide immediate support to anyone disclosing sexual violence.

Funded by the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Refuge also coordinates all referrals from the police across the region and works closely with specially trained officers to ensure women get the protection they need.

Support for young people

Refuge has six specialist youth advocates located across the country, embedded within its advocacy, outreach and one-stop-shop services. These workers support young women who have experienced – or who are at risk of experiencing – all forms of gender-based violence.

Many of the cases referred to our youth advocates involve child sexual exploitation. Refuge's youth advocates see technology frequently used to abuse teenage girls – through the non-consensual sharing of private images, for example. The pervasive use of technology amongst young people means the abuse they experience impacts on every aspect of their lives. One of our youth advocates explains:

"With children and young people, the impacts of the abuse they experience seep everywhere – school, home, their relationships with friends. The emotional support we give is therefore very broad – it covers everything from information about sexual health and consent, to what a positive friendship looks like, to the safe use of technology. We encourage our young clients to consider what they want from their relationships. In addition to our safeguarding work, we do a lot of work around self-esteem."

A key part of our youth advocates' work is raising awareness of gender-based violence, so that girls and boys can spot when they may be at risk and know how to seek support. Youth advocates understand how difficult it can be for young people to access support, particularly when they may not realise that what they are experiencing is abuse. They actively reach out to potential clients, forging relationships with local schools and colleges, sexual health advisory services and youth offending teams, and make themselves visible in the local community.

For example, one of our youth advocates recently took part in an event at a local school, where a play was staged which covered issues of sexual exploitation. After the performance, our worker was on hand to offer immediate support to any pupils who needed it.

Refuge's youth advocates also work hard to ensure local agencies know they are there to offer specialist support. In Warrington, Refuge co-facilitated a conference for local youth workers, where we gave a talk about the service and how best to support young people who disclose abuse. Thanks to these strong local connections, the Warrington youth advocate saw a 50% increase in referrals between September and December 2016.



One of Refuge's specialist Vietnamese workers meets her client.

Supporting diverse communities on their own terms

In 2016-17:

- 35% of Refuge clients self-identified as being from Black, Asian, or minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Refuge supported women of 52 different nationalities.
- Our specialist culturally specific services supported 233 women and their 255 children.
- Refuge staff spoke 44 different languages.

Refuge recognises that all women have different needs, some of which may relate to their ethnic background or identity. Women from minority ethnic backgrounds may also face additional barriers to accessing support. Cultural and community pressures may make it more difficult for some women to leave an abusive partner. Others may have been trafficked into the UK or forced into marriage. It can also be difficult for a woman to access a mainstream service in which her language is not spoken. Some women may prefer to access support – in a refuge setting, for example – with women from the same ethnic background,

believing they may better understand their specific needs and experiences.

Refuge continues to adapt all of its services to best support the diverse range of women who use them. Our culturally specific services include: refuges for African, Caribbean and Asian women and children; community outreach services for Vietnamese women, men and children and for Asian women and children; and an independent advocacy service for Eastern European women, men and children.

Refuge's team of expert staff and volunteers, working across all of our services nationally, speak 44 languages, including Romanian, Polish, Vietnamese, Urdu, Sylheti, Hindi, Yoruba, Igbo, Arabic, Swahili and British Sign Language.

Vietnamese outreach service

Refuge has run specialist services for Vietnamese women since 1994. Today, Refuge's innovative Vietnamese outreach service runs across three London boroughs.

Refuge's specialist outreach workers provide expert support with safety planning, including securing non-molestation

orders and supporting women to report to the police. A large number of women referred to this service have insecure immigration status or no recourse to public funds. They are therefore prevented from claiming welfare benefits or seeking employment. In addition, many have been trafficked. Refuge supports women to access immigration solicitors and apply for leave to remain in the UK.

Whatever a woman's needs – from accessing medical help or safe accommodation, to taking English language classes – Refuge's Vietnamese service provides confidential, non-judgmental support in her own language.

Almost all of our Vietnamese clients access the service thanks to information shared by word of mouth. Our workers ensure information about the service is visible in Vietnamese shops, local pharmacies and health centres. This year, they have also raised awareness of the service by presenting to local mental health and housing services, and by building relationships with specialist migrant charities. Through this grassroots outreach work, Refuge ensures it reaches as many women as possible. Although Refuge's Vietnamese service is based in London, it receives calls from as far away as Skegness – simply because there is no other culturally-specific gender-based violence service for Vietnamese women and children in the UK.

Eastern European Advocacy Service (EEAS)

Refuge provides culturally-specific support to women, children and men of Eastern European descent across West London.

Women who enter our EEAS service are often at high risk of serious harm. In 2016-17, almost 60% had received threats to kill. Furthermore, in 27 cases, the woman had been experiencing abuse for over ten years. This demonstrates the particular barriers to accessing support Eastern European women face. Women's immigration status and their ability to access benefits is a major concern – often perpetrators have used the threat of deportation to prevent women going to the police, and women have little or no information about their rights and entitlements in the UK. Many women also tell Refuge they feel pressurised by families to make their relationships work, especially where children are involved.

Receiving support from an independent advocate who understands an individual's culture and speaks her language is

invaluable. When exiting the service, 100% of our clients told us they felt safer than when they entered.

Refuge's EEAS is unique in this country. It receives regular requests to share its unparalleled expertise around domestic violence experienced by Eastern European women. The service's pioneering 'domestic violence champions' programme – which trained volunteers from Polish, Romanian and Lithuanian communities to spot the signs of domestic violence and support those experiencing it to access help – continues to drive referrals to the service.

This year, Hounslow Council commissioned the service to run an awareness-raising workshop for Albanian women. This was in response to the tragic case of an Albanian woman murdered by her husband in the borough in 2015. Refuge partnered with a local charity to run the workshop, enabling our staff to reach out to women from the Albanian, Macedonian, Kosovan and Gorani community. All attending participants rated the workshop as 'excellent' or 'very good', and reported an increase in their understanding of domestic violence and how women can seek support.

"It is the only service that went the extra mile to provide all the support I needed. The staff have been acting like they were my own family. They have put themselves in my shoes in order to understand how I feel and what I'm going through, so they can give me the best support. It is a service that is needed by all women who are victims of domestic violence."

Anastasia, 39, from Poland

"My advocate should be a role model for social services because this is the type of support that all women should receive. She has the knowledge of a police officer, a social worker, a solicitor and even more. She is the only one fighting for me and my rights. I will be forever grateful."

Mariya, 27, from Lithuania

You are the only person who is there for me even though I don't have money. My solicitor, my social worker – everyone else – let me down."

Ani, 32, from Romania

"I was one step away from killing myself. Without my advocate, I would have been lost. Thank you."

Elen, 50, from Poland



Some women may prefer to stay in a refuge with women from the same ethnic background.

Culturally specific refuges

Refuge runs culturally specific refuges for Asian, African and Caribbean women in London and the Midlands. This year, they have provided safe accommodation and specialist support to 91 women and their 71 children.

Staff in the refuges originate from the same communities as the residents and understand their cultural identity. This means they understand the women's fears, the pressures created by community or family expectations and the intervention of church and religion.

Each refuge is adapted to fit the needs of its residents, with facilities including prayer rooms and specially equipped kitchens that cater for dietary requirements. Women in the refuges also speak of their relief at knowing they will not be judged for their behaviour, immigration status, religion, practices and dress. They know they will not encounter prejudice or racism in the refuge, and will be empowered to challenge the structural inequality they may face when trying to access protection or resources.



Support for survivors of different forms of gender-based violence

In Refuge's services in 2016-17:

- 64 women had sought support following **forced marriage**.
- 130 women and three men were escaping so-called **'honour'- based violence**.
- 33 women and three men had experienced forms of **human trafficking** or modern **slavery**.
- 26 disclosed they had experienced **female genital mutilation**.
- 891 women and 18 men had experienced **rape** or sexual assault by a current or former partner.
- 197 women and eight men had been raped or **sexually assaulted** by strangers or acquaintances.
- 38 women needed support following **prostitution**.
- 13 women were being **stalked** by a stranger and 664 by a current or former partner.

Women's experiences of gender-based violence often overlap and cannot be neatly categorised. A woman may come to our service because she has been beaten by her husband – yet as Refuge gains her trust, she may disclose that her husband has also raped her, or that she was trafficked into this country.

In 2016-17, 35% of the women in our services had experienced multiple forms of gender-based violence, increasing to almost 50% in our refuges. Every member of Refuge's frontline staff is trained to support women who have experienced all forms of gender-based violence. Through one-to-one key work sessions and intensive emotional support, Refuge staff build a woman's trust, supporting them to identify the layers of abuse to which they have been subjected.

Through training and education, Refuge also works to raise awareness amongst professionals of different forms of gender-based violence and how to respond. For example, this year, Refuge trained almost 180 professionals across Warwickshire – including housing staff, health and social care professionals and staff from the voluntary sector – on gender-based violence, with a particular focus on female genital mutilation. Refuge also provided printed resources for attendees to take back to their workplaces.



Refuge's chief executive, Sandra Horley, and its Vietnamese service manager visit a charity supporting trafficking survivors in Vietnam.

Modern slavery and human trafficking

Refuge plays a leading role in countering modern slavery in the UK.

Refuge has found that there is a nexus between domestic violence, migration, human trafficking and modern slavery. This means that our services are well-placed to encounter and support victims. Many women present initially as domestic violence victims and later, once Refuge has gained their trust, disclose additional modern slavery and human trafficking experiences. They may have been trafficked or enslaved by current or former partners. Others may have been forced into marriage or to work for low – or no – payment.

In addition, the desire to escape from domestic violence in her country of origin may both provide incentives to migrate whilst leaving a woman vulnerable to exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery.

This year, Refuge has seen the number of victims it supports who have experienced modern slavery and human trafficking increase by nearly a quarter, to 36 (including 33 women and three men).

Modern slavery and trafficking affects women, men and children of all nationalities and ethnic backgrounds; Refuge encounters and supports victims across its national network of services. The countries of origin of Refuge's modern slavery clients in 2016-17 included a significant number from Vietnam, who accessed support from our Vietnamese service. Others originated from Nigeria, Albania, India, Eritrea, Kenya, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Ghana, Pakistan, Romania, Poland and the UK.

Modern slavery and human trafficking is a deeply hidden, organised crime. Certain experiences, relating often to prostitution, leave many women highly traumatised and with intense feelings of shame. They may have serious health problems, including sexually transmitted diseases that have been left untreated. Refuge believes that if we wish to reduce and prevent human trafficking and modern slavery, it is crucial that we focus efforts on reaching out to those currently going undetected and unsupported. Refuge concentrates its time and resources on building trust in the survivors of these crimes; the skilled outreach and awareness-raising work of our staff, combined with their extensive language skills, means Refuge is able to reach even the most marginalised victims.

Women need intensive support in order to come forward and access the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), the Government framework for identifying victims of human trafficking and modern slavery, ensuring they receive the appropriate protection. By supporting clients to engage with the NRM, law-enforcement and wider criminal justice system, Refuge helps to increase modern slavery convictions and therefore reduce this horrendous crime.

As well as providing intensive emotional support, Refuge also meets victims' practical needs, including finding emergency accommodation and empowering them to access welfare benefits, health services, employment opportunities and trauma counselling. Refuge also supports victims' asylum applications. To prove they are victims of modern slavery, Refuge gathers evidence such as reports from experts like psychologists, as well as letters from GPs and social services. The process is complex and time-consuming. Without a specialist worker to advocate on her behalf, a woman may simply be turned away.

Refuge has developed partnerships at the highest levels in the UK to advocate, institutionally, on behalf of victims. Refuge's chief executive, Sandra Horley, sits on the UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's expert advisory panel. Refuge also shares its insight on modern slavery internationally. This year, Refuge's chief executive and its Vietnamese service manager travelled to Vietnam to meet trafficking victims, NGOs and the international community to explore opportunities to work together to support more victims of modern slavery who travel between Vietnam and the UK.

One Refuge outreach worker tells Victoria's story:

Victoria was trafficked into the UK from overseas and forced into prostitution. She eventually managed to escape. She was pregnant at the time. Victoria made contact with Refuge after hearing about the service through word of mouth.

When Victoria called, my immediate priority was to find her somewhere safe to stay – fortunately, I managed to secure her a room in a refuge. I then took Victoria to hospital for a medical check to ensure the baby was okay. So we could get started on securing asylum for Victoria and her unborn child, I contacted a local immigration charity which helped me organise an emergency meeting with an immigration solicitor the following day.

Victoria was very depressed and tearful. She blamed herself for not having left sooner and said she was a bad person. Through regular key work sessions, I supported her to understand that the abuse was not her fault. As I gained Victoria's trust, she began to tell me more about how she was trafficked and sexually abused, and how it had made her feel.

When she felt strong enough, I supported Victoria to make a statement to the police. I was able to explain to her, in her language, what the police would do next and how they would investigate. I keep her updated at every stage of the investigation.

I am now supporting Victoria with her application for asylum. I liaise with her solicitor most days, and I am working with the police so they can provide evidence to support her application. Victoria recently told me:

“I cannot imagine my life and my baby's life without your help. You are the one that I can trust and I will always be thankful. Without you, I never would have known there was a place I could be safe.”

One-stop-shop services

Due to the fact that many women experience overlapping forms of gender-based violence, Refuge has found it effective to provide a variety of specialist support services under one ‘roof’. These services are not always specific buildings – rather, they are a single point of contact, through which anyone can access immediately whichever service they need. We refer to these services as ‘single point of access’ services, or ‘one stop shops’. They act as a gateway to a range of community based support, refuge provision, sanctuary schemes, specialist criminal justice advocacy services, children’s workers and more.

the Gaia centre

Run by Refuge

**Working in Lambeth
to end gender-based violence**

The pioneering Gaia Centre, set up in 2012 and funded by the London Borough of Lambeth, was the first single point of access service of its kind in the UK. This year, the Centre supported 570 women, 746 children and 34 men. Almost half of clients had experienced more than one form of gender-based violence.

Staff continue to find innovative ways to reach more clients who may need their expert support. This year, the Gaia team has given talks at local churches, provided training to midwives and social workers, and presented at the local Marie Stopes Centre, as well as at Lorraine Hewitt House, a local drug and alcohol service.

Through educating local professionals on how to respond to victims of gender-based violence, the Gaia Centre has more than tripled the number of referrals it receives from the community mental health team and GPs this year. Referrals from non-domestic violence related charities (such as charities that support women around substance misuse) have increased from 6 to 37.

Within the Centre, Gaia offers a broad range of services, from intensive one-to-one support from keyworkers, to group sessions and drop-in coffee mornings. There is a programme of activities aimed at increasing women’s emotional health and wellbeing. Highlights this year have included mother and baby yoga, art

classes and a new Spanish-speaking support group, aimed at breaking down the isolation many women in the local Latin American community experience.

The peer mentor programme at Gaia – where survivors of domestic violence are trained to support other women in the service – has continued to grow. Gaia currently has four peer mentors who provide emotional support to women and assist them with tasks such as filling in forms and accompanying them to community events. The Athena service, funded by Lewisham Council, supports women and girls (aged 13 and over) experiencing all forms of gender-based violence. It also supports men aged 16 or over. This year, it has provided life-changing support to more than 1,484 women, children and men. The service is only two years old; this large number of clients is testament to staff’s awareness-raising and partnership work in the community.

Athena

Run by Refuge

**Working in Lewisham
to end gender-based violence**

The Athena service includes refuges, independent advocacy and community outreach programmes. It also runs a group work programme called WINGS, which empowers women to share their experiences, develop support networks and build their confidence. One participant said: “The WINGS programme left me feeling that anything is possible. I felt empowered, more self-aware and hopeful about my future.”

Alongside addressing the abuse women have experienced, Athena works in collaboration with other organisations to offer a diverse programme of activities for women and children. This year, the staff teamed up with theatre company Spare Tyre to deliver art and photography workshops. The women experimented with a range of different mediums and produced their own pieces around the subject of ‘blue skies’. The project culminated in an exhibition in Lewisham of the women’s art during which a quote was read out from a women who had taken part. She said:

“When I first heard about Blue Skies I wasn’t in a good place. Life was complicated and I didn’t want to do anything. But the art classes taught me to see from different perspectives. Blue Skies showed me that even on a dark rainy day, the sky is still blue - it’s just a different shade of blue. Every session left me a happier, jollier and more confident person. I now draw every day and am always taking the day on with a smile, even when it rains.”

Importance of partnership working

This year, the Athena service has worked hard to improve awareness of gender-based violence amongst health professionals in Lewisham – and encourage referrals. In January, Athena staff presented at the Lewisham Clinical Commissioning Group’s conference on domestic violence, at which they were able to share best practice and referral mechanisms with GPs, midwives, nurses, dentists and mental health professionals from across the borough.

Athena also benefits from specialist ‘IRIS’ (which stands for ‘Identification and Referral to Improve Safety’) workers, whose role is to foster relationships with GPs and educate both clinical and administrative staff on how to respond to domestic violence. Athena is now working with 27 of 41 GP practices in the borough – and was recently awarded extra funding from Lewisham Clinical Commissioning Group to expand this important work. Athena has seen referrals from GPs increase significantly, tripling from 10 in 2015-16 to 30 in 2016-17.

“A very useful course. I feel a lot more confident dealing with this complex issue and I feel that the course has helped me increase my skills in recognising domestic violence.”

Lewisham GP who took part in Refuge’s IRIS training

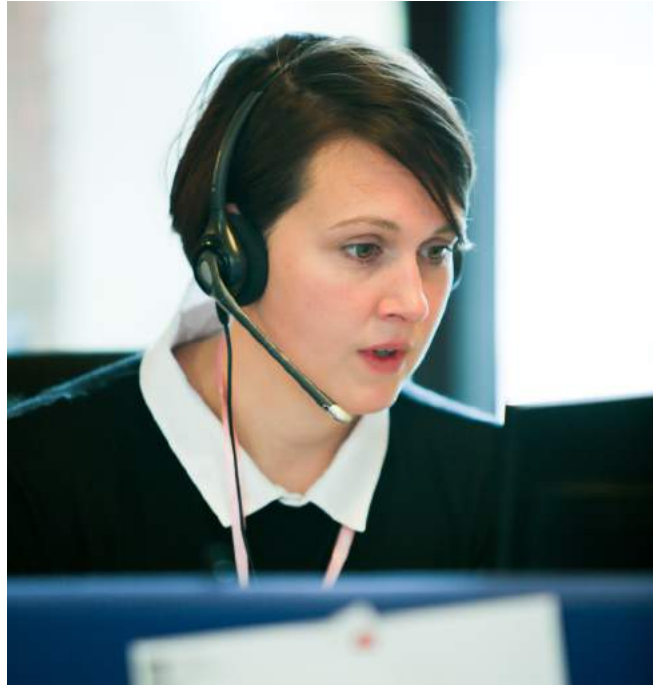
Athena staff have also met with social workers to discuss how best to work together to address child sexual exploitation, and with Witness Care to raise awareness of the specialist support Athena offers. Now, Witness Care automatically refers clients who need support to Athena; this kind of partnership working is crucial to ensuring women’s needs are met.



Local stakeholders connect and build networks to support women who experience gender-based violence.

In Coventry, Refuge’s domestic violence and abuse support service has begun a partnership with the Coventry Law Centre. Together, they agreed a protocol on providing support to women who have no recourse to public funds, which includes accessing legal advice in relation to immigration status within 24 hours of clients being referred to Refuge’s service.

The Coventry team also work closely with the local police. This year, Refuge has provided wallet-sized information cards about the Coventry service so that all first-response officers can promote it and actively seek women’s permission to refer them. The number of referrals from the police has since increased greatly. Coventry staff have also conducted 12 awareness-raising sessions with A&E staff, which has led to yet more women receiving specialist support from Refuge.



Expert advisers take phone calls on the Freephone 24 hour National Domestic Violence Helpline, run in partnership between Refuge and Women's Aid.



The Freephone 24-Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline

Refuge runs the National Domestic Violence Helpline in partnership with Women's Aid. It provides a lifeline for anyone experiencing domestic violence by offering free, confidential support 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Acting as a fourth emergency service, the Helpline staff support women to make life and death decisions about their safety. Helpline staff will never tell a woman what to do. Instead, they provide a listening ear and talk a woman through her options in the short and long term. The majority of domestic violence homicides occur at the point of or soon after separation; it is therefore essential that women receive high-quality support and information during this critical period.

Calling the Helpline is often a woman's first step towards safety. As well as providing emotional support, Helpline staff act as a gateway to refuges and other specialist support – they have access to a database of more than 500 specialist services across the country. The Helpline also provides information to family members, friends and professionals, who want guidance on how to support someone they fear may be experiencing abuse.

This year, the Helpline also expanded the support it offers by establishing a new email response service. Staff can now support more women who are not ready – or not able – to reach out on the phone.

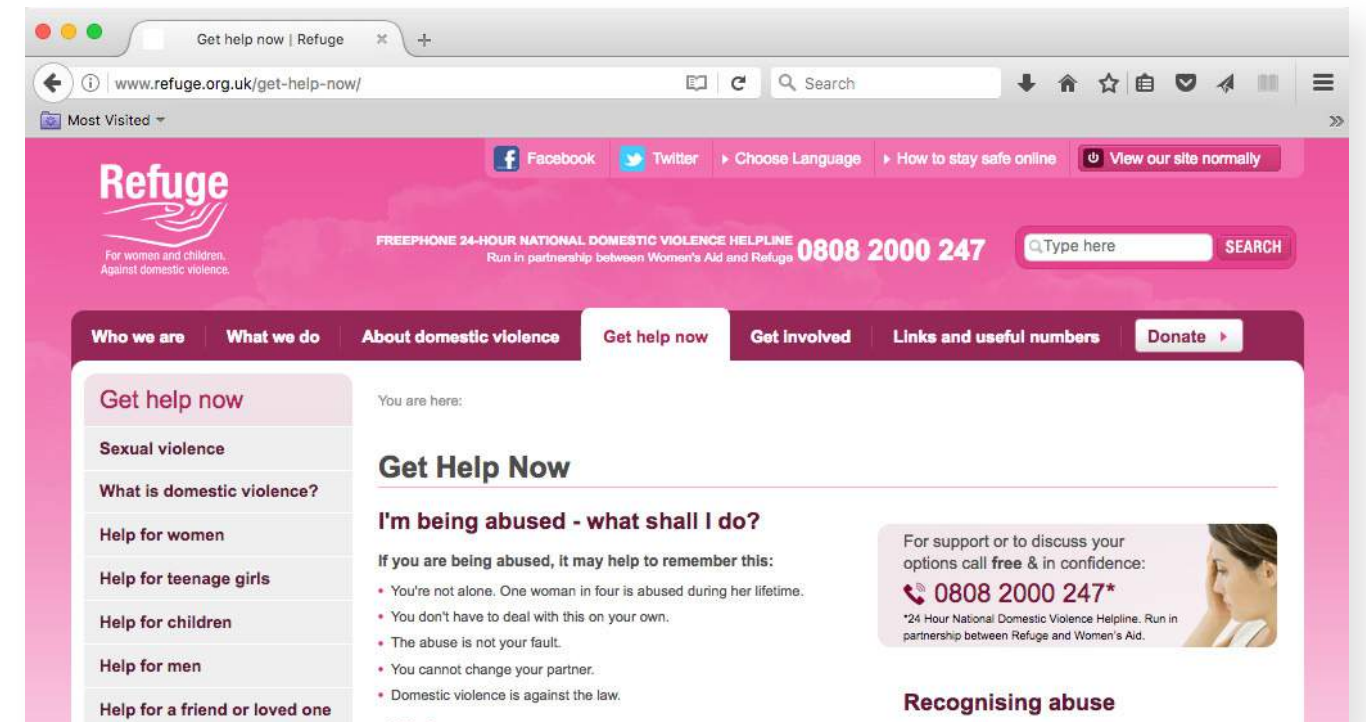
In 2016-17, the Helpline received 86,125 calls, which amounts to almost 240 calls per day. In addition to its nine permanent members of staff, the Helpline has over 60 fully trained volunteers. This year, our volunteers gave 6,172 hours of their time to the service.

Katie's story

"I was feeling really low when I first called the Helpline; I was having some very negative thoughts. I was worried about my young daughter and I didn't know how to get out. My ex was threatening to have me deported and said he would keep my daughter here with him. I felt so trapped.

"The woman I spoke to on the Helpline was very supportive; she tried to calm me down and allowed me to talk through my situation. She helped me see that we weren't safe living with my ex-partner and put me in touch with a refuge. The refuge helped me to move out and get away from my ex.

"I feel really lucky that I spoke to the Helpline worker that day. I was so frustrated and frightened that I couldn't think straight. Now, I'm scared to even imagine what would have happened to me, my daughter and my unborn baby, if I hadn't left."



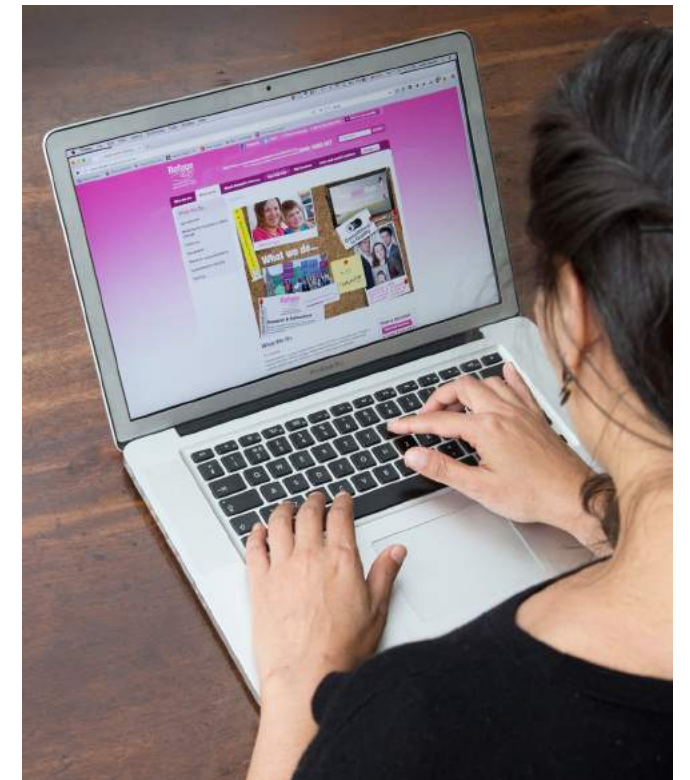
Online support

Telling someone about the abuse you are experiencing can be very difficult, and not every woman is ready to pick up the phone. That is why Refuge sees its website, **www.refuge.org.uk** as a service in itself. Through clear, digestible information, it acts as a critical first line of support. It lets women know that they are not alone and enables them to consider their options.

The website shares Refuge's key messages on how to spot the signs of domestic violence and how to access specialist support. It empowers women to recognise that what they are experiencing is not their fault, and plan their next steps. It also provides essential safety information, as well as practical tips for beginning to separate from an abusive partner. In 2016-17, more than half a million individuals visited Refuge's website. 417,778 individuals visited the 'Get Help' pages alone. In the coming year we expect these numbers to grow, as Refuge launches its brand new website.

More people are hearing about Refuge through social media than ever before. We have gained almost 6,000 new Twitter followers this year and 4,000 more Facebook likes.

Refuge's social media accounts are staffed throughout working hours, so we are on hand to signpost women in need of support to the National Domestic Violence Helpline, and dispel any damaging myths about domestic violence as they appear.



For women wanting to find out more about domestic violence, Refuge's website – www.refuge.org.uk – provides information and support.



Looking forward: developing innovative new service models

Refuge was delighted to secure two large grants this financial year, to run innovative needs-based projects in 2017-18, increasing its provision for women and children yet further.

Refuge will receive funds from Comic Relief to begin a ground breaking project to support female offenders who are also victims of domestic or sexual violence in Derby. The specialist community outreach service will provide intensive one-to-one support to approximately 50 women and their children every year, for three years.

Refuge was also awarded £250,000 of the Government's Tampon Tax fund to develop and deliver a pioneering three-year Technological Empowerment Programme for women who have experienced gender-based violence. Refuge has seen a substantial increase in the number of cases of "tech abuse", where perpetrators misuse technology to abuse. With this funding, Refuge will ensure all of its frontline staff are equipped to meet the demands of the 21st century and give women and children the best possible, technologically adapted support.

Support for men experiencing abuse

In 2016-17:

- Refuge supported 269 men.
- 87% of those we asked reported that they felt safer at the point of leaving our services.
- 87% said their quality of life had improved.

Domestic violence and other forms of gender violence are overwhelmingly perpetrated by men, against women. However, Refuge understands that men can experience some forms of intimate based violence. Everybody, regardless of their gender, deserves specialist support and protection.

Many of Refuge's independent advocacy and community-based services provide specialist support to men who have experienced domestic violence, sexual violence, so-called 'honour' based violence and modern slavery. Our youth advocacy services also support teenage boys.

Christian, who was raped by a stranger, explains what support from a specialist Refuge ISVA meant to him:

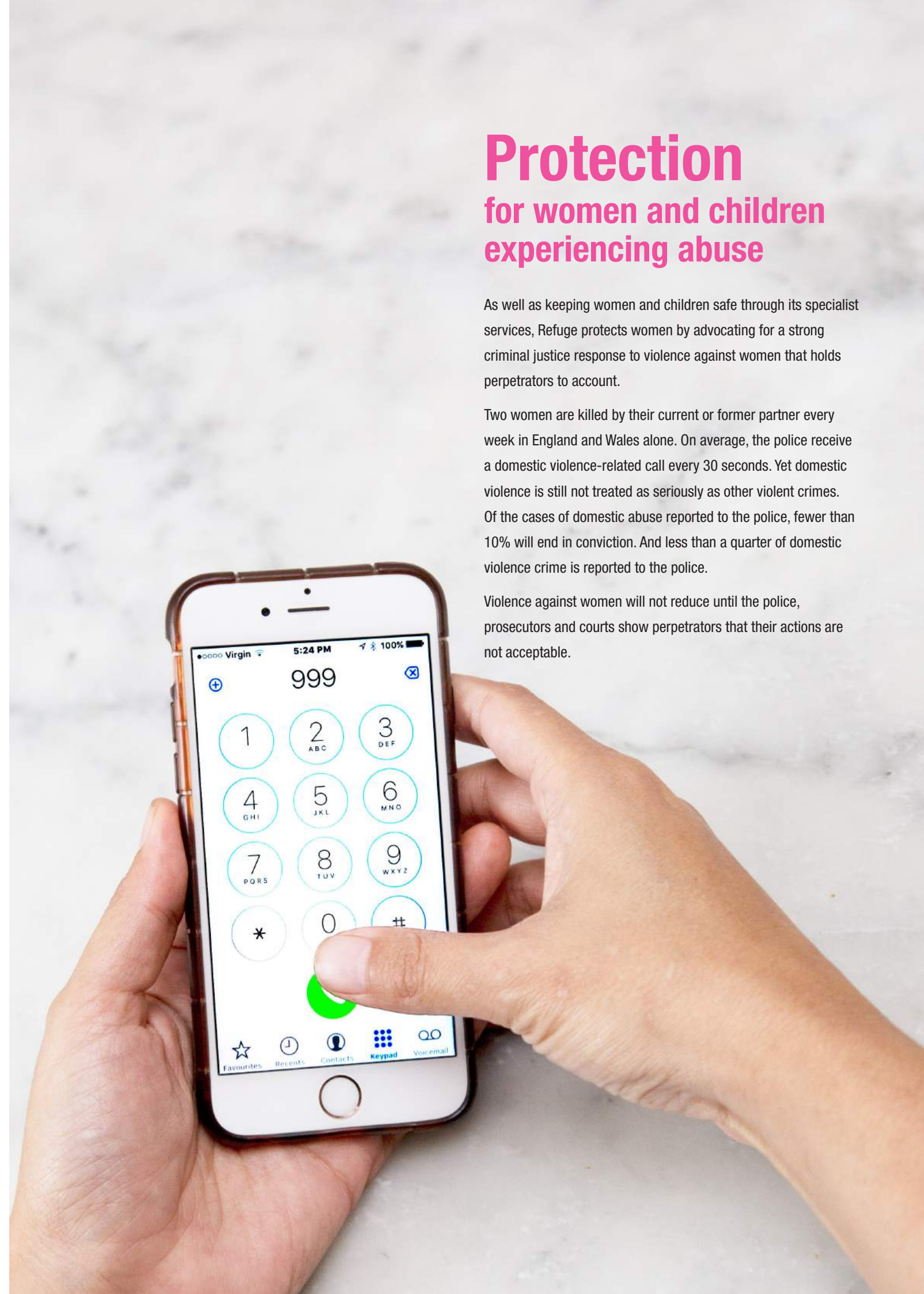
"Speaking to my ISVA helped me begin to come to terms with what I had been through. She opened my eyes and helped me to see things more clearly – with her support I began to understand I was not to blame. Before I met her, life had seemed overwhelming. I would find myself getting very panicky. My ISVA helped me to feel safe again and she supported me to access specialist mental health services to help with my anxiety. Her support was excellent; I wish it didn't have to end."

Protection for women and children experiencing abuse

As well as keeping women and children safe through its specialist services, Refuge protects women by advocating for a strong criminal justice response to violence against women that holds perpetrators to account.

Two women are killed by their current or former partner every week in England and Wales alone. On average, the police receive a domestic violence-related call every 30 seconds. Yet domestic violence is still not treated as seriously as other violent crimes. Of the cases of domestic abuse reported to the police, fewer than 10% will end in conviction. And less than a quarter of domestic violence crime is reported to the police.

Violence against women will not reduce until the police, prosecutors and courts show perpetrators that their actions are not acceptable.



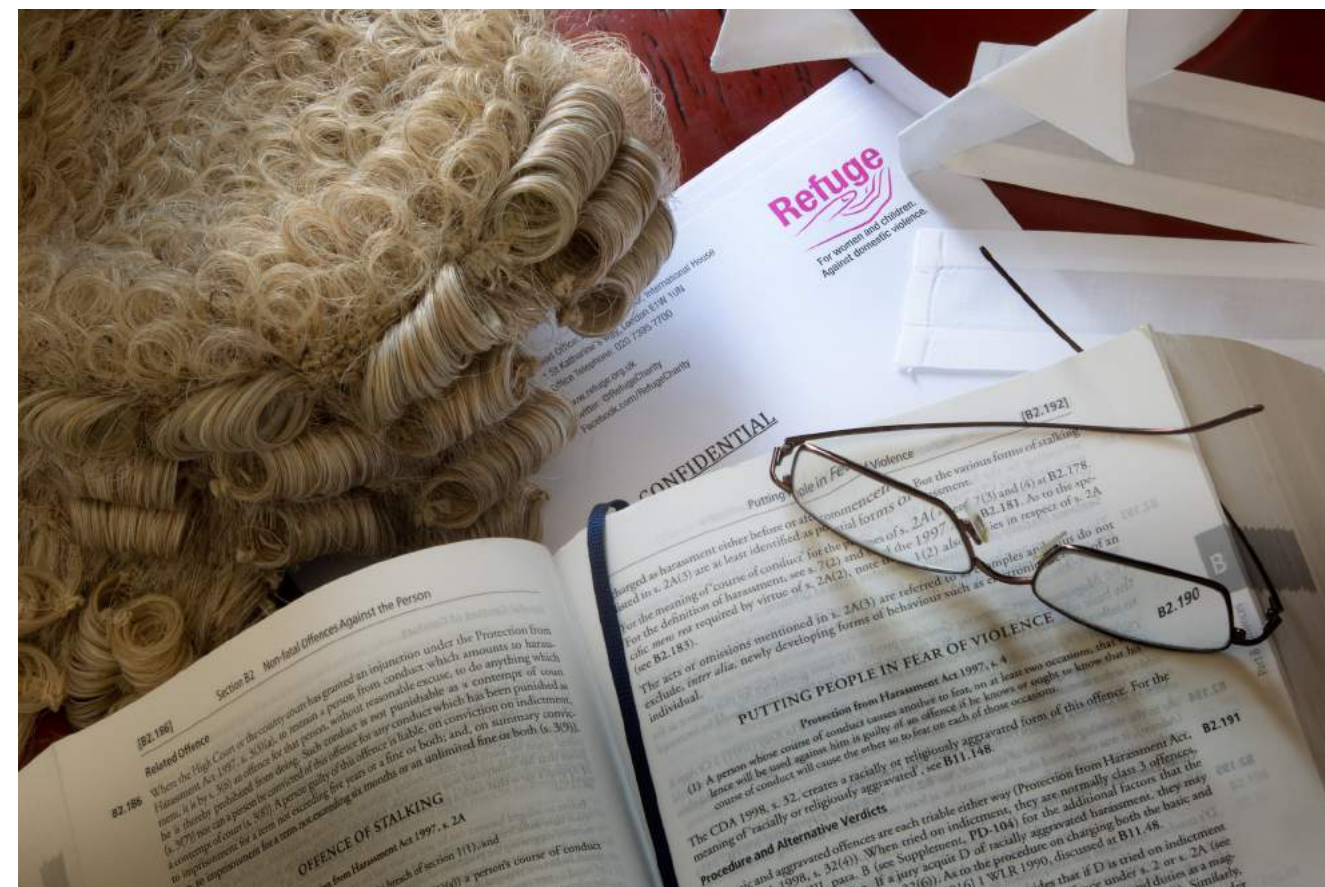


Refuge's expert practitioners regularly share what they learn with policy makers and stakeholders.

Speaking up for women and children International advocacy

A robust criminal justice response is essential in protecting abused women and children – but there are other ways in which women's ability to leave violent perpetrators is limited. This year, Refuge has used its voice to highlight the negative impacts of changes in welfare. Reductions in housing benefit are particularly damaging because this money is how women pay for emergency accommodation. At the beginning of the year, the Government's Housing Bill included plans to extend a housing benefit cap to all those renting from social landlords, of which Refuge is one. If the cap had gone ahead, it would have meant the decimation of the refuge sector Refuge began in 1971. Refuge gave evidence to the Government about the potential catastrophic consequences of the cap and was instrumental, along with the National Housing Federation, in influencing an exemption for refuges. Refuge continues to work with the Government to find a long-term, sustainable funding solution for specialist refuges.

Refuge also advises internationally, sharing best practice and enhancing strategies to tackle all forms of gender-based violence. This year, Refuge chief executive Sandra Horley travelled to Vietnam in order to explore opportunities to work with the international community and specialist anti-trafficking NGOs to support victims of modern slavery in Vietnam and the UK. Sandra Horley was also invited by the British Consulate in Shanghai to give a keynote speech to law-enforcement agencies, academics and civil society on the implementation of new domestic violence legislation. Refuge hosted a reciprocal visit in February, welcoming a Chinese delegation to its head office.



Refuge supports women through the criminal justice system.

Seeking justice

Refuge continues to speak up on behalf of abused women and children, to ensure they get the protection they need and deserve from the police and judiciary. This year, Refuge has: contributed to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's (HMIC) report on police legitimacy; repeatedly highlighted poor practice from the police and judiciary in the national media; and shared its grave concerns around perpetrator programmes and restorative justice as ways to address abusers' behaviour. Refuge has also worked to end the practice of perpetrators cross-examining their victims in the family court. Following pressure from Refuge and others, the Government announced in February that it will bring in new legislation to stop this damaging practice.

Refuge advises regularly the British Government at the highest levels. We sit on the Home Secretary's national oversight committee, which seeks to ensure progress is being made by police forces following HMIC's recommendations on how it should deal with domestic violence. In addition, chief executive Sandra Horley is a member of the UK Independent Anti-Slavery

Commissioner's expert advisory panel. Refuge also advises the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and UK police forces, gives evidence to Select Committees and attends the Inter-ministerial Group on Violence Against Women and Girls.

Refuge does not just support women who are currently experiencing gender-based violence – it also speaks up for those who have tragically lost their lives to these horrifying crimes. When a woman is killed by her partner, a domestic homicide review (DHR) is conducted, where agencies work together to understand lessons that can be learned. Refuge's specially trained staff attend regularly DHRs across the country – they are there to ensure the voice of the deceased is heard. Refuge also sits on the Home Office's Quality Assurance Panel for domestic violence homicides, which meets every quarter to ensure domestic homicide reviews are meeting a high standard and that lessons are learned to prevent future deaths.

Prevention of future violence



Refuge provides training to professionals who come into contact with abused women.

Preventing future violence

Refuge aims to prevent future violence and create a world where violence and abuse towards women and children is no longer tolerated. We work towards this goal through training – so that professionals know how to spot abuse and ensure women get support sooner – education and awareness-raising.

Training professionals

Housing officers, social workers, health professionals or police officers may be the first person to whom a woman ever discloses her experiences. Those likely to come into contact with women who experience gender-based violence must know how to respond appropriately and support women to access specialist services.

Refuge achieves this in several ways: informally, through the crucial relationships our staff members build with key local agencies and awareness-raising in the community; through our advocates working out of local police stations and hospitals in parallel with the frontline staff there, providing guidance and delivering training sessions; and through county-wide training, such as the training we undertook in Warwickshire this year.

Training also increases referrals to Refuge's specialist services, allowing more women to access the support they need sooner,

preventing future violence. Refuge and its local stakeholders are reaching more clients than ever before; between 2015-16 and 2016-17 referrals to Refuge's services have increased by almost 70%.

Communications and campaigns

Raising public awareness of violence against women helps women recognise abuse and seek support.

As well as providing regular commentary from Refuge spokespeople across print and broadcast media, Refuge's communications team empowers former clients to share their stories. In this way, Refuge lets women know they are not alone. In 2016, the work of Refuge's communications team was recognised by the Third Sector Awards, in which they were named 'Communications Team of the Year'.

"I would never have contacted Refuge before I heard about you. I read a story in a magazine about domestic abuse that referenced Refuge. It changed my life. It was such a revelation to read that I was not alone or crazy, or that it was not acceptable to be in that kind of situation. It kick-started a slow but steady campaign to leave my abusive partner and basically save myself and my son from a horrible future."



Home Secretary Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP addresses guests at Refuge's 45th birthday reception, held at the House of Lords.

Refuge also runs high-profile, national campaigns to educate the public on violence against women and girls, ensure the issue remains high on the social and political agenda and help change social attitudes on gender equality. This year – following feedback from staff – Refuge's campaigns have focused on reaching more young people.

Refuge and its long-standing corporate partner Avon launched the 'Define the Line' campaign, which found that one in every two young women has experienced controlling behaviour in a relationship. The study was launched at an event at Somerset House – at which the Avon Foundation also pledged £250,000 to support Refuge's frontline services. 'Define the Line' will continue throughout 2017, as Refuge and Avon create and share materials to help young people identify abuse.

Refuge also launched a campaign with Universal Music UK and BRIT-nominated singer-songwriter Frances, aimed at raising awareness of domestic violence amongst young women. Together with Refuge's pro-bono creative partner BBH, Refuge created an animated music video for Frances' song 'Grow', which directs viewers to Refuge's website for information and support. The video has been viewed more than 170,000 times and shared extensively on social media, as well as being picked up by key teenage publications.

Refuge and the Co-operative Bank's 'My Money, My Life' campaign has continued this year, and achieved a victory when the British Bankers Association (BBA) agreed to explore a Code of Practice which would provide a framework for banks to support victims of financial abuse - a key aim of the campaign.

Special events

Refuge celebrated its 45th birthday in November with a reception at the House of Lords, hosted by Baroness Jenkin of Kennington. Refuge welcomed many of the charity's longest-standing supporters, politicians, patrons and former clients to the occasion. The Home Secretary, Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP, spoke at the event and congratulated Refuge on its work, and comedian and Refuge patron Jo Brand also performed.

In September 2016, Refuge hosted Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Cornwall. During her visit, The Duchess heard from three survivors of domestic violence, who shared how Refuge had supported them, and met frontline staff and Refuge patron Sir Patrick Stewart OBE. The Duchess of Cornwall said:

"Until I got involved, six months ago or so, I had no idea just how many women and children were being affected, and I just hope I can do something to help...I shall keep on trying I promise you."



Raising funds

With public funding for domestic violence provision squeezed, Refuge relies increasingly on the financial support of trusts and foundations, corporate partners and generous individuals to keep our services running.

This year, the Refuge team has raised more than £3.2 million in voluntary funds – an increase of almost 40% on last year.

Refuge has seen an almost 40% increase in the number of individual givers to Refuge, from 6,000 to more than 8,300. This year, 48 individuals ran the Virgin London Marathon for Refuge, raising £91,000 between them. A further 140 supporters ran or cycled in events across the country to help Refuge raise essential funds. Refuge is grateful to each and every one of them for their much-needed support.

International Women's Day

Refuge had a busy calendar of fundraising events to mark International Women's Day on 8th March. The 'She Lights Up the Night' exhibition – curated by our pro-bono creative partner BBH – returned for the second year, bringing together some of the biggest names in contemporary graphic art to raise vital awareness and funds for Refuge. By auctioning off original pieces by the artists, BBH raised more than £24,000 for Refuge.

Refuge was once again the charity partner of The City of London's International Women's Day Breakfast. Chaired by Alderman Alison Gowman, the breakfast provides an opportunity for attendees to network and hear from a range of inspirational women on thriving in the workplace. The event raised more than £50,500 for Refuge.

Walk4

Two hundred Refuge supporters walked through the streets of London in September for Refuge's annual Walk4 event, to show that domestic violence will not be tolerated or ignored. Refuge was joined by survivors of domestic violence and their friends, the families of women killed by their partners and supporter Helena Bonham Carter. Walk4 raised £60,000 for Refuge – as well as much-needed awareness. We were also delighted to be joined by Louiza Patikas, who plays Helen Titchener in The Archers – a character who experienced domestic violence on the show. Walk4 coincided with the climax of The Archers storyline, at which point, the 'Helen Titchener Fund' – a Just Giving page set up in support of the character in 2015-16 – surpassed its target of raising £150,000 for Refuge. The Fund now stands at more than £200,000, including Gift Aid, which is the equivalent of 3,846 nights in a refuge for a woman and her children.



Support from corporate partners

For the second year in a row, Refuge's long-time corporate supporter Benefit Cosmetics undertook its international philanthropy project, Bold is Beautiful. Throughout the month of May, Benefit pledged to donate 100% of the profits from its UK brow wax services to Refuge and one other charity. They also organised the Bold is Beautiful march on behalf of the charities, which saw more than 500 women walk four-and-a-half miles past some of London's most iconic sights. In 2016-17, Bold is Beautiful raised more than £160,000 for Refuge. Benefit Cosmetics also staged the annual Funny Women Awards, which showcases female stand-up talent, and raised £10,000 for the women and children we support.

Wilko – a company with a personal connection to the cause, having lost a colleague to domestic violence – has raised over £52,000 for Refuge this year. Konica Minolta raised more than £37,000, including £13,000 thanks to staff who undertook the three peaks challenge. Refuge also continues to benefit from the support of The White Company, which has raised an amazing £103,000 for Refuge this year, including via 30 members of staff completing Walk4.

These are just a few of the highlights, but Refuge would like to say a huge thank you to all the companies, staff and customers who have given to Refuge over the course of the year. We could not achieve all that we do without your support.

Refuge's fundraisers are cheered on at the Virgin London Marathon.



All of Refuge's frontline staff receive comprehensive training, which is regularly refreshed as legislation and policies change.

Commitment to quality

Refuge's commitment to ensuring every client receives the best possible service is unfaltering, and we ensure universal high quality in a number of ways:

1. Measuring outcomes

Refuge's unique electronic casework management system, IMPACT™, means service managers and senior leadership can measure the outcomes achieved for each client, and the 'distance travelled' since they entered the service, at the touch of a button. It means everything Refuge does is evidence-led – our data shows us what works, so we continuously innovate and improve our services.

2. Ongoing assessment

Each Refuge service has a detailed activity plan with agreed outputs, outcomes and key performance indicators. Refuge uses a quarterly 'scorecard' approach to manage performance, which enables us to monitor targets – using IMPACT – ongoing.

3. Staff development:

Refuge does not just follow best practice, it creates best practice. Refuge worked with Skills for Justice to design the first National Occupational Standards for domestic and sexual violence, which set out the specialised knowledge and skills needed to deliver the highest quality support. Refuge then developed these Standards

into Ofqual-accredited qualifications, demonstrating what best practice looks like on the ground.

This knowledge is integrated into every operational role at Refuge. All Refuge staff – including volunteers – attend accredited in-house training, founded on Refuge's core competence framework. We provide refresher training regularly, ensuring each staff member has up to date knowledge on the laws and procedures that affect our clients. This continuous learning approach is how Refuge ensures the support it provides remains of the highest quality. This year, we have delivered 61 training sessions to 173 members of staff, who attended an average of five courses each.

4. Client feedback:

Refuge proactively seeks feedback from the women it supports during key work sessions, house meetings, exit questionnaires and survivor panels. This feedback is discussed at quarterly review meetings and used to develop and refine services.

All of the above is recognised by Refuge's ISO 9001 accreditation, which we have held since 2010. The ISO 9001 is awarded by The British Standards Institute, to organisations that: demonstrate standards of excellence; are characterised by robust policies, procedures and systems; listen to their customers; and continuously improve.



Practitioners can access IMPACT, Refuge’s cloud-based case management system, online.

Spotlight on: IMPACT

Refuge’s success in growing its services is due, in large part, to its unrivalled ability to demonstrate the positive impact of its support on women, children and society at large.

IMPACT is Refuge’s bespoke, cloud-based case management system, developed by frontline staff over many years. IMPACT features a unique framework which allows Refuge to monitor the outcomes its specialist services achieve for women across four key areas: safety, health, economic wellbeing and social inclusion. IMPACT records every intervention made by Refuge staff, from the moment a woman enters Refuge’s services to the moment she leaves. In this way, Refuge can continue to improve the support it offers – and show funders the specific ways in which its work transforms lives.

By demonstrating exactly what outcomes its clients achieve, from returning to work, to accessing a GP, to reporting their perpetrator to the police, IMPACT also demonstrates that every penny of funding provides a positive social return on investment.

Crucially, IMPACT is a dynamic system. It can be tailored constantly to support the needs of individual services. It automatically flags any ‘gaps’ in casework, ensuring that women in our care stay safe, and it greatly reduces paperwork and bureaucracy for the staff. This means they can spend more time with the women and children they support.

In June, Refuge launched a brand new website to showcase IMPACT, www.impactbyrefuge.org.uk. IMPACT is critical to the life-saving work Refuge does; as of this year, IMPACT software is available for other organisations working with those at risk to use.

Thank you

We would like to thank all of our supporters during 2016-17, including those who have chosen to remain anonymous.

- AbbVie
- Avon Foundation and Avon Cosmetics
- BBC Children in Need
- BBH
- Benefit Cosmetics
- Big Lottery Fund
- Bravissimo
- Cecil and Hilda Lewis Charitable Trust
- Cherie Booth CBE QC
- City of London Corporation’s charitable funder, City Bridge Trust
- City of London International Women’s Day committee
- CM Murray LLP
- CMS Cameron McKenna LLP
- Code Computerlove
- Comic Relief
- Cushman and Wakefield
- Dame Helen Mirren
- Dunard Fund
- Edmond J. Safra Philanthropic Foundation
- Eversheds Sutherland LLP (The Eversheds Sutherland Business Lawyers Charitable Trust)
- Fiona Bruce
- Frances
- Funny Women
- GE

- Gregory Nasmyth and Samantha Rowe-Beddoe
- Helena Bonham Carter
- Herbert Smith Freehills LLP
- Ince & Co LLP
- Inner London Magistrates Court
- Poor Box Charity
- Jo Brand
- Julian Nieman, photographer
- Konica Minolta Business Solutions UK Ltd
- Lauren Laverne
- Lisa Kent
- Little Black Dress
- Matthew Lester
- Merlin’s Magic Wand Children’s Charity
- Nathan Kirsh
- Nick Darke, designer
- Olivia Colman
- Patrick Janssen
- Paul Trueman
- Pilkington Charities’ Fund
- Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP
- Sandy Gumm
- Shearman and Sterling LLP
- Sir Patrick Stewart OBE
- Softwire
- Sophie Dahan
- Stratford Town Trust
- Talisman Charitable Trust
- The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
- The Atkin Foundation

- The Brook Trust
- The Co-operative Bank
- The Double ‘O’ Charity
- The Drapers Arms
- The Eric F Sparkes Charitable Trust
- The Evan Cornish Foundation
- The Gloag Foundation
- The James Weir Foundation
- The Peter Minet Trust
- The Rigby Foundation
- The Swire Charitable Trust
- The White Company
- Universal McCann
- Universal Music UK
- Unruly
- Weil Gotshal & Manges (London) LLP
- West London WI group
- Wilko

As ever, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the staff, volunteers, patrons, trustees and the individuals who support us and whose hard work and dedication result in the delivery of life-saving and life-changing services to thousands of women and children each year. Without the ongoing support of our patrons and the continuing generosity of many donors, this vital work would not be possible.

Structure, governance and management reference, and administrative details

Charity number:	277424
Company number:	1412276
Homes & Communities Agency Number:	4730
Principal office:	International House, 1 St Katharine's Way, London E1W 1UN
Auditors:	Kingston Smith LLP, Devonshire House, 60 Goswell Road, EC1M 7AD
Bankers:	HSBC Bank Plc, 281 Chiswick High Road, London W4 4HJ
Solicitors:	Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP, 25 Old Broad Street, EC2N 1HQ Weil Gotshal and Manges LLP, 1 South Place, EC2M 2WG C M Murray LLP, 1 Canada Square, E14 5AA CMS Cameron McKenna LLP, 78 Cannon Street, EC4N 6AF Shearman and Sterling LLP, 9 Appold Street, EC2A 2AP Herbert Smith Freehills LLP, Exchange House, Primrose Street, EC2A 2HS

Trustees, officers and advisers

Under its Memorandum and Articles of Association, Refuge was originally incorporated in England and Wales as Chiswick Family Rescue on 30th January 1979 as a company limited by guarantee not for profit and not having share capital. The name was subsequently changed to Refuge on 5 March 1993.

It is a charity with a registered office at International House 1 St Katharine's Way, London E1W 1UN.

On 13 August 2012 Refuge became a Registered Provider of Social Housing regulated by the Homes and Communities Agency. A council of management (whose members are also directors of the charitable company) oversees Refuge's policies and the execution of its activities. Members are elected upon a resolution of the council of management and may resign their membership by notice in writing to the company.

The members of the council of management who held office during the year were:

Council of management:

- Barbara Donoghue
- Ruth Harding
- Baroness Helena Kennedy QC
- Shelagh McKibbin
- Dianne Nelmes
- Janice Panton
- Maggie Rae (chair)
- Dame Stella Rimington
- Manel de Silva

Patrons:

- Cherie Booth CBE QC
- Jo Brand
- Fiona Bruce
- Dame Helen Mirren
- Sir Patrick Stewart OBE

Chief executive and company secretary:

- Sandra Horley CBE

Governing document

Refuge is a charitable company limited by guarantee, originally incorporated as Chiswick Family Rescue on 30 January 1979 and registered as a charity on 31 March 1979. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association. In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

Recruitment and appointment of council of management

The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law and under Refuge's Articles are known as members of council of management. Under the requirements of the Articles of Association one third of the members of council of management are required to retire at each annual general meeting. Those longest in office since co-option or election retire first and are all eligible for re-election.

Council of management induction and training

All new members of council of management receive an induction pack containing detailed information about Refuge, its organisation and work. They also spend time with the chief executive, chair and senior staff to familiarise them with Refuge's activities and their role and responsibilities as a charity trustee. Training opportunities are offered to introduce trustees to their legal and governance duties, and Refuge has arranged safeguarding training for board members. There are also regular visits to services, opportunities for specific training and presentations by staff at board meetings. All trustees have received a copy of the Charity Commission publication 'The Essential Trustee'.

Organisation

Council of management is responsible for the overall governance of Refuge. Council of management has a maximum of 12 members. Members of council of management have a range of skills and experience including legal, financial, business, social care and communications that support Refuge in the delivery of its objectives. The charity's council of management meet regularly to manage its affairs. Refuge's chief executive and company secretary, Sandra Horley CBE, is responsible for the day to day management of the charity and the implementation of policy, supported by a highly dedicated and professional team of staff and volunteers.

Partnership

In pursuit of its charitable aim of providing safe accommodation for women and children escaping domestic violence Refuge works in partnership with a number of different housing associations and local authorities:

Housing associations: Amicus Horizon, BPHA, Central and Cecil, Circle Housing, Family Mosaic, Gateway, Hexagon, Home Group, Hyde, London and Quadrant, Orbit, Notting Hill, Sanctuary Housing, Town and Country, Tuntum and Wrekin Housing.

Statutory partners: the London Boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Hackney, Hounslow, Lewisham, Lambeth, Redbridge, Richmond, Southwark and Waltham Forest; the counties of Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Shropshire, East Sussex, and Warwickshire; the cities of Coventry and Derby, and the borough of Warrington. Police Crime Commissioners (PCC): Derbyshire, Hertfordshire and Thames Valley.

Refuge runs the Freephone 24 hour National Domestic Violence Helpline in partnership with Women's Aid.

STRATEGIC REPORT

Objectives

The objects of the company are:-

- (a) To provide for the relief of women and their children or other victims who have been subject to: (i) physical, sexual, emotional and/or mental abuse within an intimate or “family” relationship (“domestic violence”); or (ii) other gender-based violence, which term, for the purposes of these Articles, shall include but not be limited to rape, prostitution, gang violence, sex-trafficking or female genital mutilation, in either of cases (i) or (ii) above, throughout the United Kingdom and abroad;
- (b) To provide specialist supported housing and social housing and any associated amenities in England, designed to meet the needs of women and children who are the victims of domestic violence and/or other gender-based violence, and other services designed to facilitate their onward progression; and
- (c) To advance public education, research and training on understanding of the issues of domestic violence and gender-based violence throughout the United Kingdom and abroad

Refuge’s mission continues to be that of providing emergency accommodation and support to women and children escaping domestic violence whilst raising awareness and understanding of the issue. Its principal aims and objectives are to:

- Provide a range of high quality specialist services to women and children escaping domestic violence including a Freephone 24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline run in partnership with Women’s Aid, a growing number of safe houses with additional specialist support services for women and children, outreach and floating support services, refuges and outreach for black, Asian, minority ethnic and refugee (BAMER) women, independent domestic violence advocates and specialist support
- Raise public awareness of the issues surrounding domestic violence and to influence changes in policy and legislation

Public benefit statement

Refuge operates for public benefit. The trustees confirm that they complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission’s general guidance on public benefit, “Charities and Public Benefit”.

Equality and diversity statement

Refuge values diversity and welcomes applications from all sections of the community for its roles. In line with this we have developed policies to ensure that we have fair and transparent recruitment and selection processes in place that meet our equality and diversity principles.

Refuge will make reasonable adjustments to the selection arrangements, in order to accommodate any applicant who would otherwise be unable to apply.

Financial review

The operating results for the year to 31 March 2017 show another year of stable performance with income rising by 17.9% to £13,292,538 (2016: £11,266,272), total expenditure of £12,856,130 (2016: £11,405,957) giving rise to a surplus of £501,660 (2016: £177,634 deficit) after gains on investments of £65,252. The sector continues to experience cuts in funding as a result of reduced public sector budgets and there is intense competition in all areas of tendering. Closing funds balances amounted to £5,154,828 (2016: £4,653,168) of which, £3,948,476 was held as general unrestricted reserves, £600,000 as designated reserves and £606,352 as restricted reserves.

The increase in income has come mainly from successes in winning new contracts, an extremely good year for fundraising and assets acquired from Redbridge Action Against Domestic Abuse (RAADA) in order to continue their work into the future. Incoming resources from operating activities were up by 11.4% compared to 2015-16 with contracts for support services showing growth of 21% and housing management income showing growth of 1.0%. The provision of advocacy services

provided most of the growth in contracts for support services during the year. Grant income for 2016-17 increased by 3.7% rising to £798,392. Investment income was down 5.8% to £32,120 and reflects the fall in base rates during the year.

The total expenditure of £12,856,130 for the year represented a 12.7% increase compared to 2015-16. Expenditure on advocacy services increased by 31.9% reflecting new contracts won in this area and refuge provision had increased expenditure of 8.9%. There was a 63% increase in expenditure on floating support and outreach services. Expenditure on the Freephone 24-hour National Domestic Violence helpline’s expenditure has fallen by 10% and this reflects continued efficiencies in the running of the service.

Cash balances at the end of the year stood at £6,535,762 (2016: £5,760,745).

Principal risks

Council of management is responsible for establishing and monitoring internal control systems within Refuge. The council of management review the major risks which may impact on the operations of Refuge on a regular basis and are satisfied that the system of internal control currently in place is sound and effective, whilst recognising that it is designed to manage rather than eliminate risk. The council of management agreed that the following are the principal risks that Refuge faces:

- Further significant public sector cuts in future years giving rise to an even more competitive tendering environment. In response to this Refuge develops innovative service delivery models; has a strong focus on diversification; keeps abreast of government policy changes; contributes to relevant government consultations; raises the profile and increases understanding of specialist domestic violence provision
- A more competitive fundraising environment. Refuge has implemented a three to five year fundraising plan with a new fundraising team; targets are monitored monthly and reports monitored by the senior management team and the board quarterly
- Many contracts being retendered. There is ongoing

work reviewing costs to deliver efficiencies; continual improvements in the tender preparation process and the quality of bids; strengthened the development team and maintain strong relations with commissioners in order to understand local commissioning needs

- Challenges recruiting suitably skilled staff and providing capacity for growth. In response to this Refuge has improved the training of managers and its recruitment process; grown its senior operations management and peripatetic teams and has continually reviewed the organisation structure
- Cyber security awareness. Refuge has high level SSL certified encryption for the most sensitive data which is being extended to mobile devices; staff have had IT security awareness and data protection training; new policies on IT and data protection published; penetration testing and security audits by independent experts.

Looking ahead

Building on our success during 2016/17, we have an ambitious set of activities planned for 2017/18. We will work to protect our current base of services; implement and mobilise the service contracts we were awarded last year; whilst diversifying into new service areas. We will increase our support for those who experience domestic and gender based violence within our three overarching aims of provision, protection and prevention.

Key areas of new development will include:

- Working towards becoming a trauma informed organisation, both in Refuge’s approach to supporting women and children, but also in its work across all areas of the charity. This work will create a culture change across Refuge
- Becoming a leader in the field of technological and economic abuse experienced by women who experience gender based violence. Our services and frontline staff will protect women, whilst empowering and educating them to harness technological and economic opportunity
- Developing a modern slavery and human trafficking strategy

that reviews Refuge’s current programme of work and builds capacity

- Creating a survivor engagement function which will review our quantitative and qualitative data (working first hand with women) to ensure the voices and needs of the women and children we support are understood and heard. Findings will inform and drive current services, future services, fundraising, policies, communications and campaigns
- Influencing and seeking change within the criminal justice system to better protect women and children who experience gender based violence by building a first class policy function
- Ensuring the Prime Minister’s proposed Domestic Violence Act is informed by the voices and experiences of women and children who experience domestic violence

These are ambitious plans, and some developments are dependent on securing additional funding streams. However, Refuge is committed to innovation and growing services in its efforts to ensure more women and children are able to escape violence and are given expert support to rebuild their lives.

Investment powers and policy

The Articles of Association contains powers for the council of management to invest funds in any investments, securities and properties.

Reserves policy

Total funds at the year-end are £5,154,829 of which £606,352 is restricted and £4,548,477 (of which £600,000 is designated) is unrestricted reserves. Included in unrestricted reserves is £895,601 from the sale six years ago of a significant asset which is providing resources to see Refuge through the significant financial challenges that are ahead.

The council of management, having referred to the Charity Commission’s revised guidance CC19, has examined the charity’s requirement for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation and has decided that unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets should equate

to six months of core running costs plus the running costs of a quarter of services for three months..

Free reserves are needed to meet the working capital requirements of the charity and to allow for the development of new initiatives. Council of management is confident that at this level they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity in the event of a significant reduction in funding. Free reserves at the year-end were £3,847,997.

The free reserve target based on budgeted costs for 2017/18 is £2,555,580 and has been met at 31 March 2017. Free reserves are expected to move closer to target over the next few years due to further cuts in public funding and increased investment in the diversification of income. There are sufficient reserves to address the potential risk to any vulnerable beneficiaries that could arise should funding cease and cause unplanned closure of services.

The council of management has reviewed the circumstances of Refuge and consider that adequate resources continue to be available to fund all activities for the foreseeable future.

The council of management is of the view that Refuge is a going concern.

Statement of the council of management responsibilities

The council of management (whose members are also directors of Refuge for the purposes of company law) is responsible for preparing the trustees’ report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.)

Company law requires the council of management to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the company and of the outgoing resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the council of management is required to:

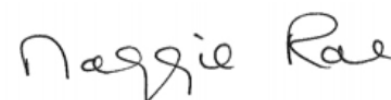
- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Observe the methods and principles in the Housing and Charities SORP
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business

The council of management is responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. In so far as the council of management is aware:

- There is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company’s auditor is unaware; and
- The council of management has taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information

The board reviewed its external audit services in 2016 as part of its governance responsibilities.

On behalf of the council of management

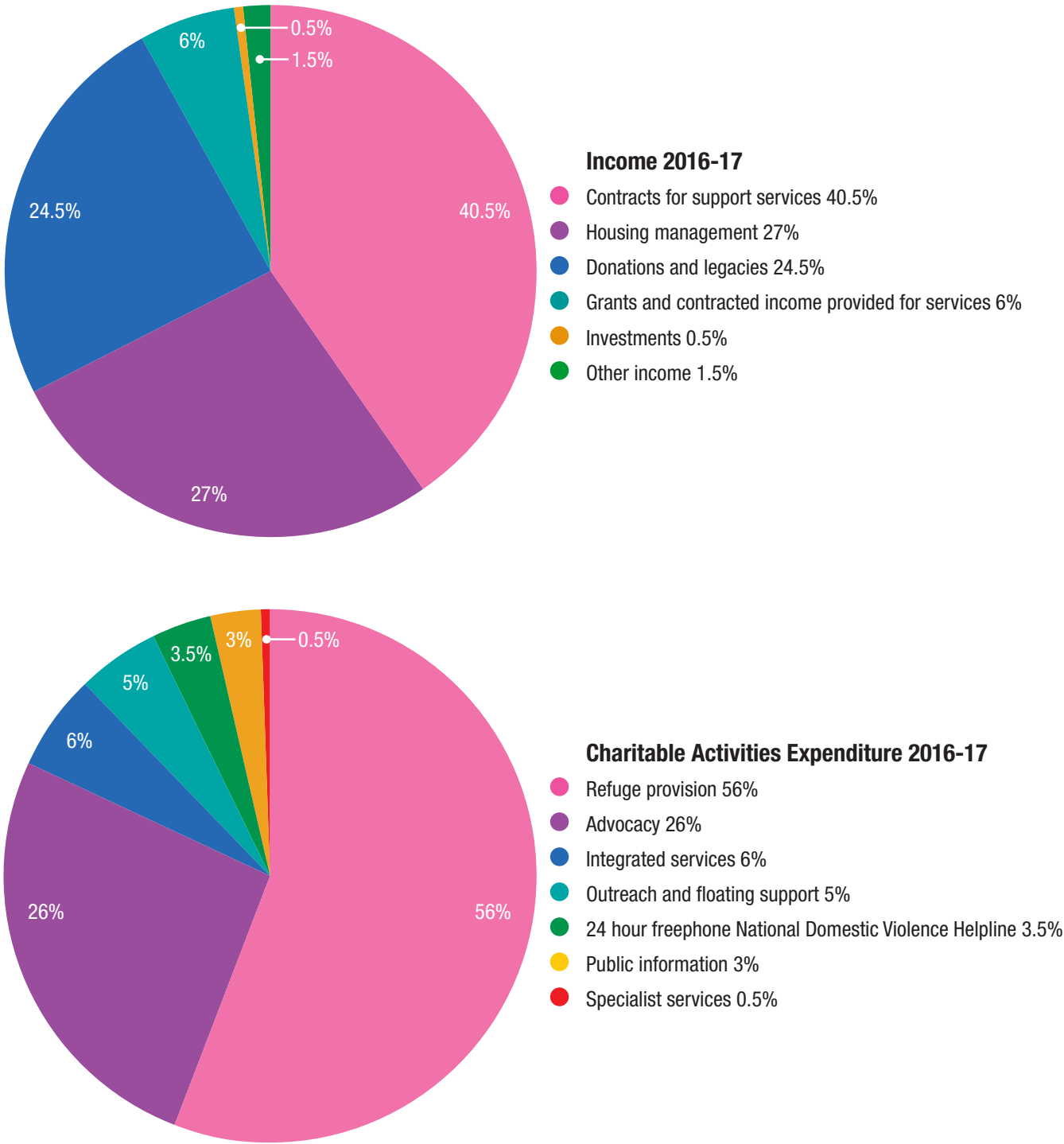


Maggie Rae, chair

This report acts as a directors’ report for the charitable company as required by s415 of the Companies Act 2006 and includes the Strategic Report which has been approved by the Council of Management in their capacity as company directors.

Financial statements for the year to 31 March 2017

Financial overview



Refuge has had another stable year financially with income £13.3m which was 18% higher than the previous year and a surplus of £502k (£178k deficit in previous year). Donations and legacies have continued to improve rising to £3.3m and successes in winning new services has meant that income from contracts for support services has continued

to grow. Refuge has continued its drive for more innovation and efficiency and we have done well in 'providing more for less' with the resources we have at our disposal. Our unrestricted reserves are seen as necessary to enable us to further innovate and diversify our service provision and income streams in the coming years.

Independent auditors’ report to the council of management of Refuge

We have audited the financial statements of Refuge for the year ended 31 March 2017 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities (incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account), the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) including FRS 102 “The Financial Reporting Standard Applicable in the UK and Ireland”.

This report is made solely to the charitable company’s members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company’s members and council of management those matters which we are required to state to them in an auditor’s report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to any party other than the charitable company and charitable company’s members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of council of management and auditors

As explained more fully in the statements of the council of management’s responsibilities, the council of management (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view.

Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board’s (APB’s) Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the charitable company’s circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the council of management; and the overall presentation of the financial statements and to identify any information that is materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by us in the course of performing the audit. In addition we read all the financial and non-financial information in the Annual Report to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies we consider the implications for our report.

Opinion on the financial statements

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company’s affairs as at 31 March 2017 and of its net income and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice including FRS 102 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland, the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 and the accounting Direction for Private Registered Providers of Social Housing 2015, and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Annual Report (including the Strategic Report) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements, and
- the Annual Report (including the Strategic Report) have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

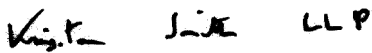
Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the annual report (including the strategic report).

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006, the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 and the Accounting Direction for Private Registered Providers of Social Housing 2015 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the charitable company has not kept adequate accounting records or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the charitable company’s financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records, and returns; or
- certain disclosures of the council of management members’ remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Neil Finlayson, Senior Statutory Auditor

 LLP

Date: 20 September 2017

for and on behalf of Kingston Smith LLP, Statutory Auditor

Devonshire House
60 Goswell Road
London EC1M 7AD

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2017

(incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account)

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2017 £	Total Funds 2016 £
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	4	2,730,561	543,377	3,273,938	2,464,095
Operating activities:					
Contracts for support services	5	5,412,197	-	5,412,197	4,472,574
Housing management		3,561,151	-	3,561,151	3,525,330
Grants	6	-	798,392	798,392	770,177
Other trading activities					
Investments	7	32,120	-	32,120	34,096
Other income	8	128,148	86,592	214,740	-
Total income and endowments	3	11,864,177	1,428,361	13,292,538	11,266,272
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	9	883,944	-	883,944	870,408
Operating activities:					
Refuge provision		6,338,856	330,161	6,669,017	6,122,758
Advocacy		2,753,250	344,437	3,097,687	2,349,376
Integrated services		678,158	88,051	766,209	744,068
Outreach and floating support		400,336	194,274	594,610	364,716
24 Hour Freephone National Domestic Violence Helpline		35,844	393,600	429,444	477,050
Public information		361,314	-	361,314	445,930
Specialist support services		1,047	52,858	53,905	31,651
Total expenditure	3,11	11,452,749	1,403,381	12,856,130	11,405,957
Realised gains/(losses) on investments	15	6,440	-	6,440	(23,322)
Unrealised gains/(losses) on investments	15	58,812	-	58,812	(14,627)
Net income/(expenditure)		476,680	24,980	501,660	(177,634)
Transfers between funds	20,21	(8,964)	8,964	-	-
Net movement in funds		467,716	33,944	501,660	(177,634)
Fund balances brought forward		4,080,760	572,408	4,653,168	4,830,802
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2017	20,21,22	4,548,476	606,352	5,154,828	4,653,168

Approved by the council of management on 6th September 2017

Naggie Rae

Member of the council of management

Member of the council of management

The notes on pages 55 to 74 form part of these accounts.
All of the activities of the charitable company related to continuing operations. There were no recognised gains and losses other than those included in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2017

	Note £	2017 £	2017 £	2016 £	2016
Fixed Assets					
Tangible assets	13		66,500		69,383
Intangible assets	14		33,977		38,884
Investments	15		644,520		578,861
			744,997		687,128
Current Assets					
Debtors	16	1,312,962		771,469	
Cash at bank and in hand		6,535,762		5,760,745	
		7,848,724		6,532,214	
Creditors:					
Amounts falling due within one year	17	(3,138,893)		(2,302,759)	
Net Current Assets			4,709,831		4,229,455
Total Assets less Current Liabilities			5,454,828		4,916,583
Provisions for liabilities and charges	19		(300,000)		(263,415)
Net assets			5,154,828		4,653,168
Represented by:					
Unrestricted Funds	20				
General			3,948,476		3,480,760
Designated			600,000		600,000
			4,548,476		4,080,760
Restricted Funds	21		606,352		572,408
Total Funds	22		5,154,828		4,653,168

Approved by the council of management on 6th September 2017

Naggie Rae

Member of the council of management

Member of the council of management

The notes on pages 55 to 74 form part of these accounts.

Cash-flow Statement for the year ended 31 March 2017

	Note	2017 £	2016 £
Statement of Cash Flow			
Net Cash Inflow from Operating Activities	1	778,598	514,338
- Investment income	7	32,120	34,096
Capital expenditure and financial investment			
- Payments to acquire Tangible Fixed Assets	13	(25,741)	(47,347)
- Payments to acquire Intangible Fixed Assets	14	(9,553)	(43,771)
- Payments to acquire Financial Investments	15	(20,061)	(100,566)
- Investment disposal proceeds		17,072	90,343
Increase in Cash and Cash Equivalents	2	772,435	447,093

Notes to the Statement of Cash-flow

1. Reconciliation of Changes in Resources to Net Cash Outflow from Operating Activities

Net movement in funds	501,660	(177,634)
Depreciation	28,624	45,022
Amortisation	14,460	13,188
Investment income	(32,120)	(34,096)
Unrealised/realised losses/(gains)	(65,252)	37,949
(Increase)/Decrease in trade and other debtors	(541,493)	377,296
Increase in trade and other creditors	836,134	217,633
Increase in provisions	36,585	34,980
	778,598	514,338

2. Reconciliation of Net Cash Flow to Movements in Net Funds

Increase in Cash and Cash at Bank in the year	772,435	447,093
Increase in net funds	772,435	447,093
Net funds at 1 April 2016	5,773,655	5,326,562
Net funds at 31 March 2017	6,546,090	5,773,655

	2017 £	2016 £
Reconciliation of net funds to cash at bank and in hand		
Net funds	6,546,090	5,773,655
Cash held with investment managers	(10,328)	(12,910)
Cash at bank and in hand	6,535,762	5,760,745

The notes on pages 55 to 74 form part of these accounts.

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2017

1. Accounting policies

Basis of accounting

The accounts are prepared on the historical cost convention of accounting and in accordance with applicable Accounting Standards and in compliance with The Accounting Direction for Private Registered Providers of Social Housing 2012, the Statement of Recommended Practice “Accounting for Registered Social Providers 2010”, the Statement of Recommended Practice 2005 on Charity Accounts, FRS 102 “The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland” (“FRS 102”) and the requirements of the Companies Act 2006. The charity is a public benefit entity for the purposes of FRS 102.

Going concern

These financial statements are prepared on the going concern basis. The council of management have a reasonable expectation that the company will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future based on budgets, forecasts and projections for 2017-18 and up to 12 months from the date the financial statements are approved. Council of management are not aware of any material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt upon the charity’s ability to continue as a going concern.

Tangible Fixed Assets - Depreciation

Tangible fixed assets costing more than £500, except items of high wear and tear for refuges, have been capitalised and recorded at cost. Depreciation is provided on all fixed assets at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset over their estimated useful lives or the length of the contract/project for which the fixed assets were acquired.

Leasehold improvements	7 years straight line
Freehold buildings	50 years straight line
Fixtures and fittings	1 - 4 years straight line
Motor vehicles	1 - 4 years straight line
Office equipment	1 - 4 years straight line

Intangible fixed assets

Intangible assets costing more than £500 are recognised at cost and are subsequently measured at cost less accumulated amortisation.

Amortisation is recognised so as to write off the cost of assets over their useful lives on the following bases:

Software	1 - 4 years straight line
Websites	1 - 4 years straight line

Income

Donations and legacies includes donations, gifts, legacies and some grants receivable.

Gifts in kind and intangible income are treated either as donations in the period the gift or intangible income is received, or as an asset, in both cases at a reasonable estimate of the gross value to the charity.

Fundraising income is shown gross except for small fundraising events where the cash is received net of expenditure. Investment income is accounted for on a receivable basis.

Legacies

Legacies are recognised as income where there is entitlement, probability of receipt and measurability of the legacy.

Grants received

Grants are recognised when the entitlement to the grant is confirmed. Grants that provide core funding, or are of a general nature provided by the government and charitable foundations, are recorded as voluntary income.

Costs of raising funds

Fundraising expenditure comprises costs incurred encouraging people and organisations to contribute financially to the charity’s work. This includes costs of advertising and staging of special fundraising events.

Governance costs

Governance costs comprise all expenditure not directly related to the charitable activity or fundraising ventures including audit fees.

Provisions

Provisions include the council of management’s estimate of the present cost of cyclical maintenance of properties and office dilapidations that Refuge is directly responsible for.

Bad debts

Bad debts are recognised when all arrears and debt collection procedures have been exhausted. Bad debts are written off on a percentage basis depending on their age and probability of collection.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities. These financial statements are prepared on the going concern basis.

Financial instruments

The company has elected to apply the provisions of section 11 ‘Basic financial Instruments’ and Section 12 ‘Other Financial Instruments Issues’ of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments. Financial instruments are recognised in the company’s balance sheet when the company becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial instruments

Basic financial instruments, which include trade and other receivables and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at market rate of interest.

Other financial assets

Other financial assets, including investments in equity instruments which are not subsidiaries, associates or joint ventures, are initially measured at fair value, which is normally the transaction price. Such assets are subsequently carried at fair value and the changes in fair value are recognised in profit or loss, except that investments in equity instruments that are not publicly traded and whose fair values cannot be measured reliably are measured at cost less impairment.

Trade debtors, loans and other receivables that have fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market are classified as ‘loans and receivables’. Loan and receivables are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any impairment.

Interest is recognised by applying the effective interest rate, except for short term receivables when the recognition of interest would be immaterial. The effective interest method is a method of calculating the amortised cost of a debt instrument and of allocating the interest income over the relevant period. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts through the expected life of the debt instrument to the net carry amount on initial recognition.

Impairment of financial assets

Financial assets, other than those held at fair value through profit and loss, are assessed for indicators of impairment at each reporting end date. Financial assets are impaired where there is objective evidence that, as a result of one or more events that occurred after the initial recognition of the financial asset, the estimated future cash flows have been affected. The impairment loss is recognised in profit and loss.

Derecognition of financial assets

Financial assets are derecognised only when the contractual rights to the cash flows from the asset expire, or when it transfers the financial asset and substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership to another entity.

Classification of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities and equity instruments are classified according to the substance of the contractual arrangements entered into. An equity instrument is any contract that evidences a residual interest in the assets of the company after deducting all of its liabilities.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including trade and other payables, bank loans from fellow group companies and preference shares that are classified as debt, are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade payables are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade payables are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method.

Other financial liabilities

Financial liabilities and equity instruments are classified according to the substance of the contractual arrangements entered into. An equity instrument is any contract that evidences a residual interest in the assets of the company after deducting all of its liabilities.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when, and only when, the company’s obligations are discharged, cancelled, or they expire.

Investments

Investments are held in the balance sheet at market value at the year end. Any change from market value at the previous balance sheet date or from cost if purchased during the year, is included in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Stocks

No value has been ascribed to stocks of publications on the basis that the majority of these are normally given away and therefore it is considered prudent to account for all publications in the period they are incurred.

Pension funds

Refuge operates a defined contribution pension scheme for all staff. The amount charged to the Income and Expenditure Account in respect of pension costs is the contributions payable in the year.

Operating lease agreement

Rentals applicable to operating leases where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor are charged against profits on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

Research and development

Research and development costs are expensed to the SOFA in the year that they are incurred.

Fund account

Restricted funds represent monies received for specific projects undertaken by the charity. Designated funds represent monies set aside by the trustees for a specific purpose. General unrestricted funds of the charity are available for the general purposes of the charity.

Status

Refuge is a registered social landlord with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The register number is 4730. The company is limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital. It is also a registered charity (Number 277424). In the event of the company winding up, members are required to contribute a sum not exceeding £1.

Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In the application of the company’s accounting policies, the directors are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

Critical judgements

The following judgements (apart from those involving estimates) have had the most significant effect on amounts recognised in the financial statements.

The company has an obligation to pay dilapidations on expiry of the company’s lease. The cost of these reinstatements and the present value of the obligation depend on a number of factors including; the expeted rising cost of building maintenance, uncertainty over the timing of the cost of reinstatements and the discount rate. Management estimates these factors in determining the dilapidation provision in the balance sheet. The assumptions reflect historical experience and current trends. See note 19 for the disclosures relating to the dilapidation provisions.

The company makes an estimate of the recoverable value of trade and other debtors. When assessing impairment of trade and other debtors, management considers factors including the current credit rating of the debtor, the ageing profile of debtors and historical experience. See note 16 for the net carrying amount of the debtors and associated impairment provision.

The annual depreciation charge for property, plant and equipment is sensitive to changes in the estimated useful economic lives and residual values of the assets. The useful economic lives and residual values are re-assessed annually. They are amended when necessary to reflect current estimates, based on technological advancement, future investments, economic utilisation and the physical condition of the assets. See note 13 for the carrying amount of the property, plant and equipment and note 1 for the useful economic lives for each class of asset.

Similarly the annual amortisation charge for intangible assets is sensitive to changes in the estimated useful economic lives and residual values of the assets. The useful economic lives and residual values are re-assessed annually. They are amended when necessary to reflect current estimates, based on technological advancement, future investments and economic utilisation of the assets. See note 14 for the carrying amount of the intangible assets and note 1 for the useful economic lives for each class of asset.

2. Comparative Statement of Financial Activities

	Note	Total Funds 2017 £	Unrestricted Funds 2016 £	Restricted Funds 2016 £	Total Funds 2016 £
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	4	3,273,938	2,097,043	367,052	2,464,095
Operating activities:					
Contracts for support services	5	5,412,197	4,472,574	-	4,472,574
Housing management		3,561,151	3,525,330	-	3,525,330
Grants	6	798,392	-	770,177	770,177
Other trading activities					
Investments	7	32,120	34,096	-	34,096
Other income	8	214,740	-	-	-
Total income and endowments	3	13,292,538	10,129,043	1,137,229	11,266,272
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	9	883,944	870,408	-	870,408
Operating activities:					
Refuge provision		6,669,017	5,856,293	266,465	6,122,758
Advocacy		3,097,687	1,951,484	397,892	2,349,376
Integrated services		766,209	645,667	98,401	744,068
Outreach and floating support		594,610	212,502	152,214	364,716
24 Hour Freephone National Domestic Violence Helpline		429,444	102,414	374,636	477,050
Public information		361,314	445,930	-	445,930
Specialist support services		53,905	1,042	30,609	31,651
Total expenditure	3, 11	12,856,130	10,085,740	1,320,217	11,405,957
Realised gains/(losses) on investments	15	6,440	(23,322)	-	(23,322)
Unrealised gains/(losses) on investments	15	58,812	(14,627)	-	(14,627)
Net income/(expenditure)		501,660	5,354	(182,988)	(177,634)
Transfers between funds	20,21	-	13,334	(13,334)	-
Net movement in funds		501,660	18,688	(196,322)	(177,634)
Fund balances brought forward as restated		4,653,168	4,062,072	768,730	4,830,802
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2017	20,21,22	5,154,828	4,080,760	572,408	4,653,168

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2017

3a. Particulars of turnover, cost of sales, operating costs and operating surplus

	2017 Turnover	2017 Operating Costs	2017 Operating Surplus/ (deficit)	2016 Turnover	2016 Operating Costs	2016 Operating Surplus/ (deficit)
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Social housing lettings	3,561,151	3,583,231	(22,080)	3,525,330	3,517,464	7,866
Other social housing activities:						
Contract for supporting services	1,947,591	1,876,640	70,951	1,762,151	1,770,128	(7,977)
Other grants and contracts	422,973	330,162	92,811	259,011	259,011	-
Total social housing	5,931,715	5,790,033	141,682	5,546,492	5,546,603	(111)
Non-social housing activities	7,426,075	7,066,097	359,978	5,719,781	5,897,303	(177,523)
Total:	13,357,790	12,856,130	501,660	11,266,272	11,443,906	(177,634)

3b. Particulars of income and expenditure from social housing lettings

	2017 £	2016 £
Social housing income		
Rent receivable net of identifiable service charges	1,579,739	1,518,824
Service charges receivable eligible for Housing Benefit	2,018,049	2,019,570
Service charges receivable ineligible for Housing Benefit	221,902	208,943
Rent losses due to voids	(258,539)	(222,007)
Turnover from social housing lettings	3,561,151	3,525,330
Expenditure on social housing lettings		
Services	1,021,315	997,222
Management	1,318,813	1,332,949
Routine maintenance	73,636	102,423
Planned maintenance	47,904	75,620
Bad debts	169,339	176,519
Lease charges	951,540	832,047
Property depreciation	684	684
Operating costs on social housing lettings	3,583,231	3,517,464
Operating surplus/(deficit) on social lettings	(22,080)	7,866
Social housing units		
The number of supported housing units under management at the end of the period:	2017	2016
Owned and managed	8	8
Not owned but managed	288	262
	296	270

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2017

4. Donations and legacies 2017

Donation and legacies income was received during the year from trusts, corporate and private donors.

5. Contracts for supporting services

Support services under housing related support would encompass such activities that enabled the service user to develop the appropriate skills needed for maintaining independence in their own home once outside of the support service framework i.e. building local networks for support, making links into the community, understanding benefit entitlement and how to apply, developing personal finance awareness to pay rent and other associated household bills.

Contracts for support services are awarded to Refuge as the Service Provider by the Administering Authority (Local Authority/Borough) with approval of the Commission Body “(a partnership of local housing, social care, health and probation statutory services)”.

Outreach and Floating Support

Outreach and Floating Support are awarded by contract for the provision of services to vulnerable service users living in their own homes. The aims of empowering the service user towards maintaining independence are equally inherent in all outreach support service provision.

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2017

6. Grants

	2017 £	2016 £
	Restricted	Restricted
Brent Council	-	15,000
BBC Children in Need	27,597	18,566
Big Lottery Fund	35,086	71,701
Comic Relief	50,000	53,000
City of London Corporation’s charitable funder, City Bridge Trust	27,700	4,600
Derby City Council	45,414	18,274
Derbyshire Police	-	57,908
Department for Communities and Local Government	-	13,344
Department for Work and Pensions	-	2,519
Fenland District Council	50,779	27,471
Home Office	330,000	300,000
Huntingdonshire District Council	57,343	38,394
Job Centre Plus	8,448	4,082
London Borough of Hackney	-	32,000
London Borough of Lewisham	-	7,961
London Borough of Redbridge	5,118	
London Councils	59,683	59,090
London Stock Exchange	20,000	-
Rosa	-	1,800
Shropshire County Council	18,849	-
Southwark Council	42,375	2,985
Stratford-on-Avon District Council	-	41,482
Stratford Town Trust	15,000	-
The Peter Minet Trust	5,000	-
	798,392	770,177

In 2016-17 Refuge received a grant from Big Lottery Fund of £35,086 part of a three year award of £92,612, towards general running cost and salaries for outreach services in all London Boroughs. This grant is fully expended this year as disclosed in note 21.

In accordance with section 37 of the Local Government Act 1989 the grant from London Councils of £59,683 was used in respect of the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017, as follows:

	£
Towards general running costs and salaries of the free phone 24 hour Freephone National Domestic Violence Helpline run in partnership with Women’s Aid - the grant was fully used.	59,683

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2017

7. Investment income

	2017 £	2016 £
Listed investments	18,585	19,967
Interest receivable	13,535	14,128
	32,120	34,096

8. Other income

On 18th April 2016 refuge acquired the net assets of Redbridge Action Against Domwstic Abuse (RAADA charity number 294889) in the sum of £214,740 of which £86,592 is restricted.

9. Costs of raising funds

	2017 £	2016 £
Staff costs	516,993	413,304
Depreciation and amortisation	1,124	1,124
Other costs	365,827	455,979
	883,944	870,408

10. Governance costs

	2017 £	2016 £
Auditors’ remuneration - current year fee (inclusive of irrecoverable VAT)	15,500	15,120

Governance costs for the year which are included (inclusive of irrecoverable VAT) in support costs (note 11) are £15,500 (2016 - £15,120) representing less than 1% of our total costs.

11. Expenditure

2017

	Cost of raising funds £	Refuge provision £	Integrated services £	Floating support and outreach £	Advocacy £	24-Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline £	Public information £	Specialist services £	2016-17 Total £
Direct costs including operational support	728,391	5,645,708	673,314	508,887	2,712,541	335,026	202,055	45,744	10,851,666
Support costs*	155,553	1,023,309	92,895	85,723	385,146	94,418	159,259	8,161	2,004,464
	883,944	6,669,017	766,209	594,610	3,097,687	429,444	361,314	53,905	12,856,130

*Support costs include governance costs of £15,500

2016

	Cost of raising funds £	Refuge provision £	Integrated services £	Floating support and outreach £	Advocacy £	24-Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline £	Public information £	Specialist services £	2015-16 Total £
Direct costs including operational support	653,224	5,123,037	655,603	298,001	2,075,823	333,530	144,978	26,578	9,310,774
Support costs*	217,184	999,721	88,465	66,715	273,553	143,520	300,952	5,073	2,095,183
	870,408	6,122,758	744,068	364,716	2,349,376	477,050	445,930	31,651	11,405,957

*Support costs include governance costs of £15,120 (2016).

	2017 £	2016 £
Expenditure analysis		
Staff costs	7,356,628	6,082,675
Temporary staff	176,893	356,278
Consultants	139,587	119,948
Other staff costs	298,911	358,721
Property costs	1,789,582	1,623,961
Equipment costs	20,678	26,649
Telephone	388,410	324,185
Audit	15,500	15,120
Depreciation	28,624	45,022
Amortisation	14,460	13,188
Other costs	2,626,857	2,440,210
	12,856,130	11,405,957

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2017

12. Staff costs

	2017 £	2016 £
Wages and salaries	6,446,293	5,295,407
Staff benefits	22,735	23,958
Social security costs	630,114	513,445
Pension costs	257,486	249,864
	7,356,628	6,082,675

The average number of employees (full time equivalents), analysed by charitable activities, during the year was:

	2017 No.	2016 No.
Refuge provision	66	58
Floating support and outreach	10	6
Integrated services	19	18
Advocacy	65	46
24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline	8	9
Public information	2	2
Specialist services	2	1
Other Refuge services	43	39
	215	179

The number of employees whose remuneration (including benefit in kind but excluding employer’s National Insurance and employer’s pension contributions) was in excess of £60,000 during the year was:

	2017 No.	2016 No.
£60,001 - £70,000	1	2
£70,001 - £80,000	2	2
£80,001 - £90,000	1	1
£170,001 - £180,000	-	1
£210,001 - £220,000*	1	-

*Includes keyman health cover and pension supplement from 2017.

	2017 £	2016 £
Pension contributions in respect of the highest paid employees above	23,683	61,548

Redundancy and termination payments	2017 £	2016 £
	4,285	32,740

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2017

12. Staff costs (continued)

	2017 £	2016 £
Emoluments of key management personnel		
The remuneration paid to key management personnel of Refuge (the chief executive, director of operations, director of communications and fundraising, head of development, head of HR, and head of finance and IT was:		
Emoluments (including pension contributions and benefits in kind and employer’s National Insurance)	702,847	665,261
The highest paid member of key management personnel has a personal pension to which refuge contributed:	-	37,484

During the year no member of the council of management received reimbursement of travel expenses (2016 - £189).
No members of the council of management received any remuneration during the year (2016 -£Nil).

Remuneration policy - key management personnel

The remuneration of key management personnel is set by undertaking an annual review of their roles considering:

- Any change or additional scope to the role requiring re-evaluation
- The benchmarking of similar roles within the market relevant for the professional field and /or sector
- Recruitment and retention issues or requirements

Any changes are discussed by the chief executive and the chair of the council of management, before the remuneration is agreed.

13. Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold Property £	Fixtures and Fittings £	Motor Vehicles £	Office Equipment £	Total £
Cost					
At 1 April 2016	34,173	353,072	-	160,075	547,320
Additions	-	19,315	-	6,426	25,741
Disposals	-	(43,121)	-	(27,985)	(71,106)
At 31 March 2017	34,173	329,266	-	138,516	501,955

Depreciation					
At 1 April 2016	12,998	341,040	-	123,899	477,937
Charge for the year	684	14,747	-	13,193	28,624
Disposals	-	(43,121)	-	(27,985)	(71,106)
At 31 March 2017	13,682	312,666	-	109,107	435,455

Net Book Value					
At 31 March 2017	20,491	16,600	-	29,409	66,500
At 31 March 2016	21,175	12,032	-	36,176	69,383

In the opinion of the council of management, the value of the company’s freehold property is considerably in excess of its book value. Due to the costs involved, it is not considered practicable to quantify the difference.

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2017

14. Intangible fixed assets

2016-17

	Websites	Software	Total
Cost	£	£	£
At 1 April 2016	13,201	104,260	117,461
Additions	8,640	913	9,553
Disposals	-	-	-
At 31 March 2017	21,841	105,173	127,014
Amortisation			
At 1 April 2016	2,750	75,827	78,577
Charge for the year	4,677	9,783	14,460
Disposals	-	-	-
At 31 March 2017	7,427	85,610	93,037
Net Book Value			
At 31 March 2017	14,414	19,563	33,977
At 31 March 2016	10,451	28,433	38,884

15. Investments

	2017	2016
	£	£
Investments at market value at the beggining of the year	565,951	593,677
Additions at cost	20,061	100,566
Disposal proceeds	(17,072)	(90,343)
Realised/unrealised gains/(losses)	65,252	(37,949)
Investments at market values at year end	634,192	565,951
Cash held with investment managers	10,328	12,910
Market value at the year end	644,520	578,861
Historic cost at the year end	580,409	552,141
Comprising:		
Global fixed interest	113,260	107,099
UK equities and funds	300,229	277,892
Overseas equities and funds, property and alternatives	220,703	180,960
Cash	10,328	12,910
	644,520	578,861

All investments are listed on a recognised stock exchange.

There were no individual holdings the market value of which is considered to be material in the context of the portfolio as a whole.

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2017

16. Debtors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2017	2016
	£	£
Trade Debtors	483,104	293,900
Prepayments	310,175	274,208
Rent deposit	184,241	173,895
Other debtors	335,442	29,466
	1,312,962	771,469
	2017	2016
	£	£
Financial assets that are debt instruments, at amortised cost	993,115	480,946

17. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2017	2016
	£	£
Trade Creditors	1,235,504	1,135,455
Accruals	417,381	378,184
Deferred income (note 18)	1,241,776	598,646
Other taxes and social security	188,209	149,320
Other creditors	56,023	41,154
	3,138,893	2,302,759
	2017	2016
	£	£
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	1,708,908	1,554,793

Refuge currently has one registered charge against its assets in the sum of £161,228, which relates to the current lease of its head office.

18. Deferred income

2017	At 1 April 2016	Created	Released	At 31 March 2017
	£	£	£	£
Deferred income	598,646	1,099,173	(456,043)	1,241,776
2016	At 1 April 2015	Created	Released	At 31 March 2016
	£	£	£	£
Deferred income	480,310	676,365	(558,029)	598,646

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2017

19. Provisions for liabilities and charges

	2017 £	2016 £
Provision at beginning of the year	263,415	228,435
Created during the year	36,585	34,980
Balance at the end of the year	300,000	263,415

The provision relates to the council of management’s estimate of the present value cost of dilapidations work that will be required to be undertaken on expiry of and in accordance with the terms of the company’s lease, on the premises at Head Office.

20. Unrestricted funds

	At 1 April 2016	Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers *	At 31 March 2017
	£	£	£	£	£
General	3,480,760	11,929,429	(11,452,749)	(8,964)	3,948,476
Designated	600,000	-	-	-	600,000
	4,080,760	11,929,429	(11,452,749)	(8,964)	4,548,476

	At 1 April 2015	Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers *	At 31 March 2016
	£	£	£	£	£
General	3,462,072	10,129,043	(10,123,689)	13,334	3,480,760
Designated	600,000	-	-	-	600,000
	4,062,072	10,129,043	(10,123,689)	13,334	4,080,760

General funds: These are funds available for Refuge’s general purposes.

Designated funds. Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that the council of management have set aside to support innovations in service delivery, diversification of income streams and to provide for sinking fund repairs of leased and owned properties. These funds will be utilised over the next two financial years.

Transfers *

2016-17: Transfer of £8,964 from unrestricted to restricted reserves to cover the deficit on the 24 Hour Freephone National domestic Violence helpline..

2015-16: Transfers of £13,334 represents the net expenditure adjustment concerning the revision of restricted reserves.

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2017

21. Restricted funds

2017	At 1 April 2016 £	Incoming £	Outgoing £	Transfers * £	At 31 March 2017 £
Refuge provision	393,725	414,908	(330,161)	-	478,472
Outreach and floating support	-	161,523	(157,683)	-	3,840
Integrated services	-	90,059	(88,051)	-	2,008
Big Lottery Fund - Eastern European (IDVA)	-	43,151	(36,592)	-	6,559
24 Hour Freephone National Domestic Violence Helpline	-	384,635	(393,599)	8,964	-
Specialist services	31,606	31,597	(52,858)	-	10,345
Advocacy	147,077	302,488	(344,437)	-	105,128
	572,408	1,428,361	(1,403,381)	8,964	606,352

2016	At 1 April 2015 £	Incoming £	Outgoing £	Transfers * £	At 31 March 2016 £
Refuge provision	407,061	266,464	(266,466)	(13,334)	393,725
Outreach and floating support	-	152,214	(152,214)	-	-
Integrated services	55,625	42,776	(98,401)	-	-
Big Lottery Fund - Eastern European (IDVA)	834	71,701	(72,535)	-	-
24 Hour Freephone National Domestic Violence Helpline	-	374,636	(374,636)	-	-
Specialist services	43,649	18,566	(30,609)	-	31,606
Advocacy	261,561	210,872	(325,356)	-	147,077
	768,730	1,137,229	(1,320,217)	(13,334)	572,408

Integrated services

Refuge runs a number of integrated services, which act as the first point of contact for any victim of gender-based violence. This service supports those who have experienced domestic violence, rape and sexual assault, prostitution, stalking, trafficking, forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM) and so-called ‘honour’ based violence. Our clients are able to come to one place to access a range of specialist support, including safety, alongside emotional and practical support.

Refuge provision

Housing benefit and support funding used in an emergency accommodation setting to provide critical support services to women and children fleeing from domestic violence. Relevant support activities range from support to setting up and maintaining a home, and making links with community groups and organisations; assistance in developing independent living skills (finance, social and domestic/life); signposting to specialist services to help maintain health and well being; signposting to culturally specific legal services, health services, counselling and advocacy.

Floating support and outreach

Used in the local community setting to provide critical support services to women and children fleeing from domestic violence. Relevant support activities range from support to maintain a home; making links with community groups and organisations; assistance in developing independent living skills (finance, social and domestic/life); signposting to specialist services to help maintain health and well being; signposting to culturally specific legal services, health services, counselling and advocacy.

Big Lottery Fund - Eastern European Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service

Used to fund support and information to Eastern European women experiencing domestic violence across three London boroughs.

24 Hour Freephone National Domestic Violence Helpline

Used to fund the 24 Hour Freephone National Domestic Violence Helpline run in partnership with Women’s Aid.

Specialist services

Used to fund support workers to improve outcomes for women and children who have experienced domestic violence.

Advocacy

Used to fund intensive short to medium support to women at high risk of domestic violence as they pursue legal remedies and protection through the criminal and civil justice systems.

22. Analysis of net assets between funds

2017	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total £
Tangible fixed assets	66,500	-	66,500
Intangible fixed assets	33,976	-	33,976
Financial investments	644,520	-	644,520
Net current assets	4,103,480	606,352	4,709,832
Provisions	(300,000)	-	(300,000)
	4,548,476	606,352	5,154,828

2016	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total £
Tangible fixed assets	69,383	-	69,383
Intangible fixed assets	38,884	-	38,884
Financial investments	578,861	-	578,861
Net current assets	3,657,047	572,408	4,229,455
Provisions	(263,415)	-	(263,415)
	4,080,760	572,408	4,653,168

23. Commitments

At 31 March 2017 the company had annual commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as set out below:

	2017 Land and Buildings £	2017 Other £	2016 Land and Buildings £	2016 Other £
Operating leases which expire in less than one year	-	3,498	-	8,349
Operating leases which expire within one to five years	2,740,027	20,454	804,393	13,262
Operating leases which expire over five years	-	-	-	-
	2,740,027	23,952	804,393	21,611

Operating lease costs in the year amounted to £724,395 (2016: £709,038) in respect of land and buildings and £18,229 (2016: £26,425) in respect of other leases.

Refuge is expecting negotiations with their landlord concerning a planned rent review relating to head office from 19 April 2017 to 18 April 2022, however these negotiations have not concluded and no estimate of any increase is included in the commitments above as this could be prejudicial to the negotiations.

24. Related party transactions

During the year no trustee received reimbursement of expenses (2016 - £697).

Donations from trustees during the year were:

	2017	2016
	£	£
	496	41,873



Head Office: Refuge, 4th Floor, International House,
1 St Katharine's Way, London E1W 1UN

Office Telephone: 020 7395 7700.
www.refuge.org.uk

24 Hour National Domestic Violence Freephone Helpline
run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge:
0808 2000 247

Thanks to Nick Darke for design
and Julian Nieman for photography.

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Refuge

For women and children.
Against domestic violence.

Refuge

For women