

Annual Report and Financial Statements 2017/2018

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Refuge



For women and children.
Against domestic violence.

On average
two women
are killed
every week by
a current or
former partner.

Office for National Statistics 2017

Contents

Introduction

Refuge: who we are and what we do	1
Refuge statistics at a glance	2
Our '3P' approach to ending abuse	3
Message from Maggie Rae, chair	4
Message from Sandra Horley CBE, chief executive	5
Highlights 2017/18	6
Adapting to the growing threat of technological abuse	9
Ellen's story	9
Modern slavery and human trafficking work	10
Ha's story	11

Provision of specialist services for survivors of abuse

Refuge's frontline services	12
Mental health and substance misuse	13
Refuge accommodation	14
Turn2us fund for single women leaving refuges	15
Culturally-specific refuges	18
Our generous supporters	19
Immigration advocacy	20
Children	20
Child support workers	22
Refuges: the threat on the horizon	23
Community-based services	25
Community outreach	25
Single point of access services	25
Culturally-specific outreach and advocacy	26
Independent domestic, sexual, and gender-based advocates	26
MARACs	28

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

Working with other agencies	28
Eastern European Advocacy Service	29
Male survivors	30
Criminal justice outcomes	31
Helpline and online	33
BSI 2018 assessment – testament to Refuge's work	35
IMPACT	36
Staff	36
General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)	37

Protection of survivors through reform of legislation and policy

Policy reform	38
Domestic Abuse Bill	38
Refuge funding	39
Universal Credit	39
Housing	39
Expert groups	39
Suicide report	40

Prevention of future violence

External training	41
Communications	41
Fundraising – our supporters	42
Richard Herring's International Women's Day Tweetathon	44
Thank you	45

Financial Statements

Financial overview	53
Independent auditors report	54
Statement of financial activities	56
Balance sheet	57
Cash flow statement	58
Notes to the financial statements	59

“I understand now why my self-esteem was so low, why I was second-guessing myself. I felt depressed and anxious. I now know what happened was due to his behaviour, it was not my fault. I recognise I was controlled, wasn’t allowed to see friends or family. He took my money and put trackers on my phone. I wasn’t in charge of my life. I am now.”

INTRODUCTION

Refuge: who we are and what we do

For more than 45 years, Refuge has championed the needs and rights of abused women and children. Today we are the largest single provider of specialist services to survivors of domestic abuse, rape and sexual violence, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, so-called ‘honour-based’ violence, sexual exploitation, modern slavery, and human trafficking in the UK. Refuge also offers some of these services to men and boys.

More than 300 expert, frontline staff support over 6,000 survivors a day across our refuges, single point of access centres, independent advocacy, community outreach and culturally-specific services. We support around 240 callers a day via the National Domestic Violence Helpline, which Refuge runs in partnership with Women’s Aid. Refuge has also enhanced its modern slavery and human trafficking services in response to changes in social trends and demographics.

Refuge has formed a ground-breaking partnership with Google to deliver a new programme aimed at identifying and combating ‘tech abuse’ – the misuse of technology to track and control women. Our new team of ‘tech’ experts are already involved in a number of tech-related cases and Refuge is leading the response to this new and fast-evolving form of abuse.

New media has meant that Refuge is able to reach out to yet more people. In October 2017 we relaunched our website, refuge.org.uk which, in six months, received over a half a million page views. All of the most-viewed pages – ‘domestic violence: the facts’, ‘recognising abuse’ and ‘support for women’ – directly

link to our key goals of helping survivors find support and raising awareness of domestic and sexual violence. Refuge has also built up its profile on social media: last year we reached more than 2.5 million people on Facebook and made 7.2 million impressions on Twitter.

Refuge works to eradicate the gender inequality and sexism that underlie violence against women and girls through its policy and campaigning work, and its education and training for professionals. We recognise that some men are abused by their intimate partner. However, research shows that domestic abuse is a gendered phenomenon, where the vast majority of victims are female and perpetrators male.

Home Office figures for the year ending March 2017 showed that:

- In 30% of male domestic homicides, the perpetrator was a female partner or ex-partner
- With 76% of female domestic homicides being carried out by a male partner or ex-partner

Crown Prosecution Service data also shows that 93% of defendants in domestic abuse court cases are male and 84% of victims are female.

Refuge believes that everyone has a right to live in safety. Wide-scale engagement and educational efforts are needed to eradicate gender inequality and sexism that perpetuate violence against women.

Refuge statistics at a glance

In 2017/18 Refuge saw a 9% increase in the number of survivors supported compared with the previous year.

Of the more than 6,000 survivors of abuse that Refuge supports every day, around:

- 3,500 are children
- 2,500 are women
- 90 are men

Women's experiences of abuse*

68% experienced physical abuse

82% experienced psychological abuse

33% experienced economic abuse

27% experienced sexual abuse

2017/18 outcomes

93.7% of the women we supported said they felt safer on exit

90.7% said their life had improved

*Source: IMPACT

Our '3P' approach to ending abuse

At Refuge, our holistic approach to addressing domestic abuse and violence against women and girls is guided by our three-pronged approach: provision, protection and prevention.

Provision

Specialist services for survivors of violence and abuse:

- Refuge accommodation
- Community outreach
- Independent advocacy services
- Single point of access services
- Culturally-specific services
- Child support workers
- National Domestic Violence Helpline (NDVH) run in partnership with Women's Aid

Protection

- For survivors as they navigate the criminal justice system, ensuring it works to protect them from further harm
- Through our policy work and individual advocacy with survivors, Refuge promotes a rigorous arrest-and-charge, policy as well as prosecution and appropriate sentencing for perpetrators
- Working with the violence against women and girls sector and other partners to advocate for change

Prevention

- Training professionals - to raise awareness, dispel myths about domestic abuse, change attitudes and improve practice
- Keeping the issue of domestic abuse in the media through consistent high quality proactive and reactive coverage
- Through our award-winning campaigns
- Policy work that keeps domestic abuse high on the political and social agenda

At Refuge, we will not rest until all women and girls can enjoy a life of equality and justice in a world free from fear of discrimination, inequality and violence inflicted simply because they are female.

Message from Maggie Rae, chair



Refuge's vision – of a world where domestic abuse and violence against women and girls is not tolerated, and where women and children can live in safety – runs through the veins of the charity, and I have seen time and again how it shapes everything we do.

As chair of Refuge, both I, and the trustees, acknowledge fully the dedication and the commitment of the chief executive, the senior management team, and all members of our staff. Every day we see this ethos manifest in the expert, personal care offered to each and every client who seeks Refuge's support. Women are treated as individuals and empowered to make choices at their own pace – Refuge staff are there to support, never to judge.

Refuge does not just adopt best practice – it defines best practice. The British Standard Institute's (BSI) recent audit is external validation of this: the auditor noted that it was not a case of Refuge conforming to the BSI standard, but setting the standard, and Refuge was commended for its fact-based decision-making.

The value of Refuge's work was also independently endorsed in a second New Economic Foundation (NEF) Social Return on Investment (SROI) assessment in 2016, which concluded that Refuge produced a social return of £4.94 for every £1 invested. Ever keen to ensure the upmost impact and cost-effectiveness of our services, the senior management team has continued to work with NEF to produce an updated calculation of Refuge's SROI, a piece of work that we will take forward in the next financial year.

Looking ahead, I have overseen the approval of an ambitious business strategy for 2018/19 which builds on last year's achievements and sees Refuge continuing to listen and respond to the needs of survivors and the changing nature of the threat

of violence against women. Priorities for the coming year will be cementing Refuge's position as a leader in the field of technological and economic abuse, expanding the capacity and profile of its modern slavery and human trafficking work, and ensuring Refuge's work remains high profile across policy and media channels.

Refuge has grown enormously in the last few years and public expectations about our governance have also advanced. In view of this the board has, with the help of the senior management team, engaged in a wide-ranging exercise to ensure our governance practices are fit for purpose and comply with the Charity Commission Governance Code, which was published in 2017. This is a big task and we have made considerable progress in this area. We are drafting new staff guidance, some of which has already been sent to staff. This has included a newly updated whistleblowing policy, coupled with the appointment of one of our board members, Dame Stella Rimington as a designated whistleblowing trustee. The remaining staff guidance will be ready in the very near future and appropriately communicated to staff. In addition we have nearly finished the work on our values, which completes the project undertaken last year, seeking staff views on values that underpin Refuge. The trustees have also undergone safeguarding training, which was extremely helpful.

Refuge could not deliver its excellent services without the commitment and passion of all our staff and I speak for the whole board when I say that staff welfare is a very high priority for us. I would also like to pay a warm tribute to my fellow trustees who all work hard in providing the support and guidance Refuge rightly expects from us. Some of the trustees have served for a very long time and are approaching retirement. In this context, the board has launched a rigorous recruitment campaign to engage new trustees and I have been delighted with the quality of the applicants.

I would like to thank our tireless frontline staff as well as the commissioners, donors, patrons, partners, fundraisers, and supporters who make this work possible. We could not do it without you. Thank you from Refuge, and from the women and children whose lives are transformed by your invaluable support.

Maggie Rae

Message from Sandra Horley CBE, chief executive

This has been an unprecedented year, one in which we saw global awareness of violence against women soar as the international media shone a spotlight on the issues raised by #MeToo. This resulted in greater awareness and activism not just by millions of women but also men, who I am pleased to say have joined the struggle to end gender discrimination and inequality.

2018 was already an important year for women in the UK as they commemorated the centenary of women's right to vote, but the news gets even better: on International Women's Day, 8 March 2018, the Government launched a consultation in advance of the much-anticipated Domestic Abuse Bill. We very much hope that this potentially 'once in a generation' legislation will bring women and girls the rights and protections they deserve.

After 35 years at Refuge, it finally seems as though women have found their voice in the media. Better still, a window of opportunity has opened to amplify these voices yet further and finally start to change society so that women and girls can take their place alongside men and boys – in all areas of life – as equals.

Against this exhilarating backdrop, over the past year Refuge has continued on any given day to support more than 6,000 women, men, and children experiencing violence and abuse.

With generous support from Google, we also launched an ambitious and innovative technological abuse programme, aimed at addressing and disrupting the misuse of technology by abusers whilst empowering women to use and enjoy modern technology safely.

Refuge opened new services in Kingston, Warwickshire, Richmond, and Wandsworth, as well as community outreach support for South Asian clients in Derby. We have also established a new service for female offenders who have experienced domestic or sexual abuse, and continued to engage with national and local government on the issues which matter to the women we support.

However, this year, as ever, the demand for refuge accommodation has continued to exceed supply and the Government's proposed funding mechanism for supported housing has been of grave concern. If implemented, it would prevent women using housing benefit to pay for refuge accommodation, giving the funding to local authorities instead. This would remove one of the last essential sources of refuge funding.



It would without doubt be the single biggest threat to the future of refuges that we have seen – especially as children, who are the majority of those staying in our refuges, already receive no financial assistance. Withdrawing support for women could mean that they are faced with a stark reality: staying with a violent partner, or living on the streets. To address this threat, Refuge is working with the Government and peer organisations to develop a sustainable model of funding for refuges, alongside specialist services for women and children experiencing domestic abuse and violence.

As cuts to our budgets increase, our staff are asked to do more with less... and miraculously, they rise to this challenge day after day after day. Many work on an on-call basis, supporting women and children in the middle of the night if immediate sanctuary is needed, and then continue, over time, to give whatever it takes to help them regain control and rebuild their lives. The work can be difficult and emotionally challenging. I started my career working in frontline services, and I know that Refuge would not exist without the commitment and dedication of its staff. I pay tribute to them all, whether a frontline worker, member of staff at head office, or one of our amazing volunteers. Thank you for always going that extra mile.

Sandra Horley

HIGHLIGHTS 2017/18

April

- In Warwickshire we opened a county-wide ‘single point of access’ service, providing refuge accommodation, outreach support in the community, independent domestic violence advocacy, support through the criminal justice system and sanctuary services
- We began to implement eight new projects, funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), in partnership with 21 local authorities
- Refuge responded to the Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary’s (HMIC) annual ‘State of Policing’ report, describing the police response to domestic abuse crimes as a postcode lottery
- 39 supporters ran the Virgin London Marathon for Refuge, raising close to £90,000

May

- We launched our community outreach project supporting female offenders, who have experienced domestic and sexual violence
- We hosted a number of meetings to inform a forthcoming Domestic Abuse Bill, including meetings with Home Office and Downing Street officials, Baroness Newlove – the Victims’ Commissioner, and others

June

- Refuge held a focus group with the Sentencing Council and members of our frontline staff to discuss sentencing guidelines in domestic violence cases, which were issued in February 2018. We also provided testimony from survivors, ensuring the experiences of victims were heard and taken into account in the final guidelines. When the new guidelines were issued in February they took a much tougher stance on sentencing of domestic violence abusers

July

- The Richmond and Wandsworth community outreach service, supporting women with additional needs around mental health and substance misuse, launched with funding from the DCLG
- Our new refuge accommodation service opened in Kingston-upon-Thames, including the provision of a specialist refuge for South Asian women

August

- Our East Sussex refuge service launched a pilot project ‘transforming responses to service users with multiple, complex needs’ in partnership with Brighton and Hove City Council and funded by DCLG

September

- More than 200 supporters took part in Walk4, our annual fundraising and awareness-raising 10km walk across four iconic London bridges, raising £37,000
- Refuge worked closely with the Evening Standard’s ‘Slavery on our Streets’ campaign, raising awareness of the support we offer victims of human trafficking

October

- The launch of our new, innovative programme to address ‘tech abuse’ took place at Google’s headquarters, with more than 80 stakeholders and partners attending. A number of survivors Refuge had supported spoke about their experiences of tech abuse
- The Government announced proposed changes to how refuges are funded, opening a consultation on these

November

- Our new refuge.org.uk website launched
- We responded to the Greater London Authority’s London Housing Strategy, highlighting the housing needs of survivors in the capital

December

- Our Christmas advent appeal was a huge success, incorporating fundraising calls with important messages about domestic abuse and our services, delivering a 40% increase in donations compared with the previous year
- Refuge responded to the Government’s consultation on social housing, calling for improved access for the victims of domestic abuse
- We briefed MPs in advance of the House of Commons debate on refuge funding
- Refuge produced a modern slavery and human trafficking strategy in light of the Government’s increased focus on the issue

January

- Following focus groups with our frontline staff, we submitted our response to the consultation on changes to refuge funding, urging the Government to take refuges out of the supported housing proposal and to develop a sustainable model of specialist services

February

- A British Standards Institute (BSI) audit validated Refuge’s commitment to providing the best possible support to survivors of domestic abuse and other victims of gender-based violence. BSI particularly commended us for achieving excellence in our measurement of customer satisfaction and the fact-driven nature of Refuge’s decision-making
- We welcomed the Sentencing Guidelines on domestic abuse-related crimes, which recognised offences taking place in a domestic context should be taken more seriously than non-domestic crime
- Our first ever digital fundraising campaign, #Refuge100, launched, encouraging supporters to raise £100 to mark the centenary of the first women in the UK gaining the right to vote

March

- International Women’s Day, 8 March, opened with the 12th City of London International Women’s Day breakfast attended by many of our corporate partners and major donors
- Later the same day, staff and survivors met the Prime Minister, Theresa May, at Downing Street to discuss the proposed Domestic Abuse Bill
- Richard Herring raised over £155,000 on Twitter for Refuge!
- 15 runners took part in the London Landmarks Half Marathon, raising close to £9,000
- The Domestic Abuse Bill consultation opened. Refuge is working closely with the Government to ensure that the needs of survivors are at the heart of the new legislation
- We finalised our research which looked into the links between domestic violence and suicide



In Focus

Adapting to the growing threat of technological abuse

Increasing evidence suggests tools and technology from mobile phones and social media to online banking, smart home technology and satnavs are being misused by abusive men to track, isolate, harass, and control their partners. Research from Comic Relief in 2016 showed four in five women who had experienced domestic abuse had their activity monitored by their partner.

In October 2017 Refuge partnered with Google.org, Google's philanthropic wing, to launch a new programme to tackle technological abuse and economic and technological exclusion and empower women to use technology safely and unlock the opportunities it affords.

Since the launch of our tech abuse programme, Refuge has recruited a team of five tech abuse leads, a tech abuse manager, and over twenty tech abuse champions, located across our national network of specialist violence against women and girls support services.

UK legal experts have led training exploring the links between abuse of technology and the law, and how the team can help survivors in gathering evidence that will provide robust support to police forces, as well as working with the Crown Prosecution Service to bring successful criminal prosecutions against perpetrators of technological abuse.

Meanwhile, the project was highlighted in the Government's consultation on 'Transforming the response to domestic abuse' as an example of innovative practice to tackle tech abuse. The new team is already supporting more than 30 specific tech abuse cases.

Testimony

Ellen's story

Ellen was living in one of our refuges with her two children when her former partner 'bumped into' them. She could not work out how they had been found. She had recently left him following years of violence, constant harassment, abusive language, and monitoring of her activities.

Speaking to her keyworker, Ellen deduced that he must have tracked her whereabouts through accessing her emails via her home computer. Thanks to the support of her tech keyworker, she soon identified other ways in which she was vulnerable to abuse via everyday technology, for example through her daughter's online video games, her own social media activity, and the various email accounts she had set up. Ellen also disclosed that, due to her fear of being tracked down by her ex, she no longer bought anything online and had shut down a lot of her social activities, losing contact with lots of friends and family members.

Ellen's tech advocate created guides to show her how to keep safe whilst continuing to access many digital tools. They reviewed her Wi-Fi, PC, Smart TV, and wireless printer, and she was taught how to install firewall security. Ellen says she now feels safe and capable of handling day-to-day technology and troubleshooting issues herself. She has regained the confidence to make online purchases using vouchers, and in time she hopes to have the confidence to use a debit card again. She is able to recognise phishing emails, knows how to set up and access parental controls on the Smart TV, Nintendo Switch and laptop, is aware of tracking devices that could be placed on her daughter following contact with her ex, and has set up WhatsApp – an encrypted messaging service that is safe – so that she can get back in touch with her friends and family.

These new skills will "be relevant for the rest of my life - as I go forward, I no longer fear technology," Ellen recently told her keyworker.



Spotlight

Our modern slavery and human trafficking work

Given the growing number of women, children and men being trafficked into – and around – the UK for sexual and labour exploitation, Refuge caseworkers nationwide are increasingly finding themselves supporting victims of modern slavery and human trafficking.

Through this work we have, over time, uncovered a nexus between domestic violence and human trafficking and modern slavery: victims might in the first instance appear to be survivors of domestic violence, but once we have gained their trust signs of trafficking and exploitation emerge. This places Refuge in an unique position to identify and help victims of trafficking and modern slavery who are also survivors of domestic abuse.

These individuals, who have often experienced unspeakable brutality at the hands of their abusers, are largely hidden in society, isolated and extremely vulnerable.

Many do not speak English or have any understanding of British systems or services, which when combined with the effects of trauma and the real threat from traffickers creates serious barriers to obtaining help. Those who do escape often face additional difficulties in terms of insecure immigration status and no recourse to public funds, leaving many extremely vulnerable to being re-trafficked by their abusers and forced to return to a life of exploitation and deprivation.

Our specialist outreach workers, based in the Vietnamese and Eastern European communities, are able to provide expert practical and emotional support in the client's own language. Refuge has been working with the Vietnamese community since 1994, and today we even have victims who approach our caseworkers, having heard of their existence through word of mouth.

Testimony

Ha's story

I was born in Hanoi, in Vietnam. My mother left when I was eight, when my father remarried three years later my stepmother told me to leave home. I helped out on roadside stalls, sleeping there at night. When I was about 17 I got a cleaning job. One day, a group of men and women approached me and started to tell me about the great opportunities in Korea. They gave me money to buy clothes and makeup, and to learn Korean, so I started to trust them. After several months they told me they had organised my trip for my arranged marriage.

After about a month of travelling by coach and on foot, we arrived in Korea. I was taken to a hotel by the beach where I was told to wash and put on makeup. Then I was made to line up with other women whilst men chose which of us they wanted for a wife. One chose me and returned to collect me a few days later. He took me to his home, which was large and clean, and we lived as husband and wife.

Eventually I fell pregnant and had a baby boy. When he was four weeks old my husband said he was taking him for a check-up; I wanted to go too but he told me to stay at home. I waited all day, but he never came back. The next day the police visited the house. They asked for my papers and arrested me.

I was locked in a windowless cell with other people, but a few weeks later the guards handed us over to a group of men. I didn't know it, but my journey to the UK had started. Every night we drove for hours, I was in the back of a lorry with other people. I think about ten months passed.

Eventually the lorry was forced open and people in uniforms pulled us out – I found that were in the UK, and they were the police. We were arrested, and through an interpreter I told them everything that had happened. The next day they let me go but said we couldn't stay where we were. I didn't know what to do, but another group of Vietnamese people came out of the police station and said I could go with them to London.

They dropped me in a street, and a couple of hours later two men who spoke Vietnamese came along. They asked if I could cook and clean, and I told them I could, so they took me in their car to

their house. There was nobody else there. After a few weeks, they had a party with lots of men and asked me to join them. I didn't want to take part, but they gave me something alcoholic and I passed out.

I woke up completely naked – I had been raped, I don't know how many times. I tried to escape, but every door was locked. I was warned that I would be arrested because I had no papers. Two weeks later, they had another party and did the same thing. The next day I was able to escape by jumping out of a window. It was light and I was worried they would find me, so I hid until it was dark and then walked as far as I could.

A woman found me on the pavement, freezing cold, and took me to her home. I helped around the house for two or three months, then fell sick. The woman found a doctor's surgery where there was a Vietnamese speaker and put me on a train to London. He told me I was pregnant. When he asked who the father was, I told him everything. He called Refuge's Vietnamese service.

Refuge's worker arranged to meet with me and immediately took me to a solicitor and found me somewhere to stay. She worked with me to call the police and give a formal statement, and helped me access the National Referral Mechanism and apply for asylum as it was not safe for me to return to Vietnam.

I didn't want to leave the refuge, but the Home Office moved me into asylum seekers' accommodation. It's in a completely different part of the country and there are no Vietnamese speakers. I am learning English and looking after my little girl as I wait for my asylum decision to come through. Life is difficult, but even though I have been moved several times, Refuge has never stopped supporting me. With them by my side, I feel safe and hopeful.

PROVISION OF SPECIALIST SERVICES FOR SURVIVORS OF ABUSE



Refuge's frontline services

Refuge's services are grounded in the experiences of abused women, and our commitment to quality and innovation. Our rigorous assessment and information-recording processes mean that all survivors are guaranteed a consistent standard of care.

Our unrivalled and extensive case management database, IMPACT, holds thousands of records on the survivors of abuse who approach us for support. This allows us to analyse their experiences so we can improve our services and disseminate more widely important information and trends.

Our staff are at the core of everything we do – they are highly trained experts who provide bespoke support to survivors so they can first access safety and then being to rebuild their lives.

What makes our services 'specialist' and distinctive?

Refuge has decades of experience in working with survivors and offers tailored services that transform the lives of victims.

Our services:

- Recognise that survivors of abuse are often isolated, traumatised, and can require intensive support during crisis periods
- Understand that survivors of abuse must be safe from further violence and abuse before work on recovery can begin
- Offer bespoke, flexible services that are responsive to individual needs and vulnerabilities – including those of children
- Provide highly-trained staff who are experts in the field, with the skills to support clients with complex needs
- Offer ongoing support to clients in specialist refuge accommodation
- Deliver specialist support to address many different aspects of abuse, including practical, emotional, financial, legal and culturally-specific

Testimony

Supporting women with additional mental health and substance misuse needs

Fiona remembers the abuse beginning with a slap but escalating until one day, her partner, Paul*, pushed her hard against the wall. Fiona was terrified that her nose was broken. Another time, he threw a boiling hot metal spoon at her. In addition to the physical violence, Paul constantly accused her of cheating and he sexually assaulted Fiona when he suspected her of having 'been with' another man.

Fiona had been in a relationship with Paul for two years when she approached Refuge for help. At the time the abuse had affected her so badly that she began taking medication for depression. Her keyworker, Julie*, noted that Fiona was feeling despondent and suicidal when she arrived at our service.

As they built up a rapport and she gained Fiona's trust, Julie explored Fiona's experiences of domestic abuse and its impact on her. With Julie's support, Fiona went on to disclose problems with substance misuse. Julie arranged for Fiona to see a GP, who made an urgent referral to the Community Mental Health Team, and also to Adult Social Care for additional support.

Refuge staff encouraged Fiona to join a group and participate in one-to-one sessions for drug and alcohol misuse. Fiona was successful in tackling her addiction and consequently, her confidence improved. Over time, with Refuge's help, Fiona began to attend training sessions to mentor other young women misusing substances and enrolled on a beauty therapy course at a college.

Many women who have suffered abuse or violence can be deeply traumatised and may feel depressed or anxious as a result. Some might even use drugs or alcohol to help them to cope. Our highly trained staff understand that these are common consequences of abuse and they are well-placed to identify and support survivors, like Fiona, who have complex needs.



Refuge accommodation

We currently run 42 refuges across 23 local authorities.

It can take several years before a woman is able to take the daunting step to seek refuge, and most will have been assaulted more than 35 times before they contact the police.

We know that women are at greatest risk of serious harm or homicide at the point of separation – around two women are killed by their current or former partner in England and Wales every week, often as they try to escape. Just over a third of women who came to our refuges last year were injured when they arrived, and more than 40% had had their lives threatened by their abuser.

Women are often asked why they did not leave sooner. Although there are many understandable reasons – fear of violence, lack of funds, having nowhere to go, nobody to turn to – it is the wrong question. We should instead be asking: “Why does he abuse her, and why doesn’t he stop?”

For some women, there is no choice but to flee. But on just one day in 2017 a sector survey showed that more than 180 women and children were turned away from refuges due to lack of space. What ought to be an automatic human right to safety has become a rarity, with demand consistently outstripping supply.

Nevertheless, our staff are on call to receive a woman and her children at any time of day or night. Our immediate priority is always their safety.

After arrival in a refuge, over the next few months a woman’s keyworker will work with her to assess her needs and those of her children, and put in place the support she needs to rebuild her life. Our staff understand the nature and likely effects of abuse, so can respond to trauma in an informed manner and work to reduce survivors’ isolation and help them rebuild independent lives free from violence and fear. Staff are also experienced in housing advocacy, financial empowerment, civil and criminal legal options, welfare, and health and community services.

Our partnerships with other agencies can make a significant difference in meeting the needs of survivors. For example, in Kingston, Refuge staff have met with the local housing support service to discuss smoother routes for women to access local housing, and held talks with the local Job Centre to explore pathways to support residents into employment. In Cambridgeshire, housing staff come to the refuges and work with our team to make homelessness applications, reducing the stress on survivors whilst maintaining their confidentiality.

Our frontline staff spend a great deal of time helping women access new housing. This is a real challenge particularly for single, working women or those with previous rent arrears.

Fortunately, grants from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have helped some women with deposits on rental accommodation. Muslim charity Nawaal has supported women in our Hackney refuge to move on, as has the Turn2us Response Fund.



Spotlight

Turn2us fund proves a life saver for single women leaving refuges

Refuge recently supported a young woman called Rebecca who, as she had no children and was in paid employment, was not eligible for support from the local housing authority.

Rebecca had previously experienced financial abuse at the hands of her ex-partner and consequently had numerous debts. She was keen to settle these as she knew not doing so would affect her chances of employment, renting, or buying a property in the future. But maintaining the debt repayments made it very difficult for her to save for a deposit on a property. Unfortunately, women in refuges sometimes experience negative responses from estate agents and others when they disclose that they are living in a refuge.

Refuge supported Rebecca to access the Turn2us Response Fund, a charitable initiative which supports people through life-changing events – in particular, it helps single women being supported by Refuge with housing deposits. As the funds went straight into her bank account, she was able to rent privately without having to disclose this support, which helped her to secure a property of her choice. Her new home was close to her

workplace, so she was able to continue her employment and has since started a training programme to develop her career.

As she prepared to leave the refuge, Rebecca felt really positive about the future: “I didn’t know there was so much support available and I am really grateful that I have been able to escape my abusive partner, but still have good prospects for my future.”

The Turn2us Response Fund has to date directly helped 116 women being supported by Refuge, with over £200,000 in grants. This money has been invaluable in helping women move out of our refuges. All too often at the last hurdle they struggle to find suitable accommodation or pay deposits on private rental properties, and then have no funds to set up their new home.

Debby Mulling, Head of Engagement at Turn2us, says:

“The Turn2us Response Fund provides vital and timely financial support to those who have experienced a life-changing event in the past 12 months,”

The support survivors receive from Turn2us has helped many overcome this daunting challenge and start their new life with greater ease – and Debby says:

“working in partnership with Refuge for the past year has meant that we have been able to provide much needed support to survivors of domestic abuse. This is an amazing achievement and one we wish to repeat this year.”



Rebuilding survivors' confidence can involve helping them to access workshops and training. Our Cambridgeshire services work closely with the local Children's Centre, which has been proactive in finding free courses such as cooking on a budget and first aid. In a Derby refuge we organise weekly arts and crafts sessions and mindfulness classes, while in Hastings staff run in-house sessions on building self-esteem which may have been negatively impacted by abuse. In addition, the Hastings Furniture Service delivers workshops on making items for new homes.

After being contacted by one of our refuges Lee Pycroft, an international makeup artist who runs My-Makeover, gathered a team of makeup artists, hairdressers, masseuses, and manicurists to provide a bespoke workshop focusing on 'self-care'. Residents were overwhelmed by the experience:

"Thank you for making me feel beautiful, he always told me I was ugly, I now know he's wrong."

"Thank you for making my mum smile again, she looks lovely."

For many women who have been controlled, isolated, and financially abused, spending money and going out for pleasure can feel unfamiliar and challenging as they take those first steps to rebuilding their lives. Many of our refuges organise social activities for the women and their children, from celebrations inside the refuge to outings like visiting a park, having a picnic, going to the cinema or a museum, or visiting the zoo or theme park. Few of the families could afford these outings without Refuge's help.

Our staff frequently comment on how valuable and important these activities are for the children. Beyond simply enjoying the activities, receiving peer support and building relationships with other women who have been through similar experiences is also invaluable to survivors.

"Sandra Horley, chief executive of Refuge, is utterly tireless, indefatigable and relentless in her championing of victims of domestic violence."

The figures are absolutely astonishing and sadly unchanging. One in four women experiences some form of domestic violence; two women are killed each week by a current or former partner. How has this not changed?

But Sandra has provided a place for women and their children to go. She never gives up. I've known her for at least 20 years and, though she's always pleased to see me, if there's something I can do for her, she never hesitates to ask. Quite right, too. That is what you have to do. It is a thankless task running a charity like Refuge because you constantly have to ask people for money and that is so difficult. I think she deserves a medal for all that she has done. And in my view, it couldn't be for a better cause. We women owe Sandra a lot."

Fiona Bruce

Refuge patron and BBC television personality.



Culturally-specific refuges

Refuge runs a number of culturally-specific refuges for women of African and Caribbean and Asian ethnicity. Nine out of ten women in these refuges said they preferred living in a specialist refuge.

Staff in our specialist refuges understand the specific pressures and challenges facing these women with regard to immigration, modern slavery, forced marriage, 'honour'-based violence, and female genital mutilation (FGM), particularly when accessing the criminal justice system.

Many of the women we support in our Asian refuges do not speak English as a first language, which contributes to their isolation in wider society. Thankfully, our refuge workers speak a range of languages, including Urdu, Punjabi, Mirpuri, Hindi, and Sylheti.

Our generous supporters

As funding for services has been cut, many of our refuges depend increasingly on the generosity of local organisations and companies to supplement activities and extra facilities. We are very fortunate to have many supportive communities and partners.

Councillor Sue Sampson, the Mayor of Hounslow, has been a supporter of Refuge for many years. Domestic violence is close to heart as her sister was killed by her partner. In May 2017, when she was elected as Mayor, she chose Refuge as one of her two official charities. To date, Councillor Sampson has raised £64,000 for both charities. She has set a target of £70,000 by May 2018 and is confident she will surpass it!

Our partnership with the Buddy Bag Foundation ensures all children in our refuges receive a buddy bag on arrival: a backpack containing toiletries, pyjamas, socks, and underwear, as well as comfort items like a book, photo frame, and teddy bear. This wonderful bag makes that initial period of coming to emergency accommodation a little easier and gives children items of their own.

GE has been a longstanding and generous supporter of Refuge, sending Christmas gifts for all the women and children in the local service as well as providing the food, an entertainer, face painter, and 'Santa' for a Christmas party.

The Kew Women's Institute raised funds and donated toiletries for welcome packs for families arriving in our Hounslow refuges. The Children's Centre in Brixton sent Christmas gifts to residents, while Pai Skincare arranged large donations of beauty products to the women in our refuge in Southwark, and a local solicitors firm delivered large food hampers to survivors in another service.

Many services have praised local food banks for providing basic items to residents in need. The Association of Muslim Police in Hackney donated presents at the end of Ramadan so that all the children in one of our South Asian refuges were given a gift for Eid. An annual grant from Bright Horizons nursery helped replenish our children's resources in Eastbourne.



The Nawaal Benevolence Fund, a Muslim charity, has been of great support to our culturally-specific refuges in Hackney. For the past five years, they have sent fresh red meat, which is too costly for the residents to buy themselves, for Eid celebrations. The Fund also helps women who arrive at the refuge with no money by ensuring they are able to access emergency funds as part of their welcome pack. Benefits can take weeks to be processed so the women can struggle during this time, and this money means they have one less thing to worry about.

These are but a few of the wonderful gestures that not only help survivors in very practical ways, but just as importantly show that other people care about them.

In Focus

Immigration advocacy

Amina came to Refuge with her two young children following years of abuse from her husband. She told us that he was consistently physically, emotionally, sexually, and financially abusive towards her: throwing objects, making threats to hurt and kill her, and controlling all the finances. Her husband received all the benefits for the family, including child benefit, whilst she had no access to money and was even denied access to her own bank account.

When she first arrived at the refuge, Amina appeared anxious and afraid; her keyworker described her as ‘visibly tearful and clearly exhausted’. With their support, Amina has been able to access her bank account safely and is now receiving child benefit for her two children.

At the time she moved to the refuge, Amina had already made an application using an immigration solicitor to remain in the UK via the Destitute Domestic Violence Concession. She was granted leave to remain in the country and recourse to public funds while her application was considered.

Refuge staff worked closely with her immigration solicitor to collect statements from the agencies that had supported Amina prior to Refuge. She began to talk about the abuse she experienced, safe in the knowledge that it was her decision to stop if it became too much. Amina found talking about her experiences very difficult and struggled with feelings of shame due, in large part, to family pressure to stay with her husband.

Earlier this year Amina was granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK. Her solicitor commended Refuge for its efficiency in submitting the information requested, suggesting it had directly contributed to the positive and prompt decision from the Home Office.

When she first came to Refuge, Amina’s English was limited. Staff had to use an interpreter for all communication, but she has since made great progress and can now have basic conversations in English with her keyworker and other residents. This has had a very positive impact on her, not least in reducing her previous isolation. Her self-confidence has increased and staff are in the process of exploring her options for moving on.



Children

Although the majority of residents tend to be children, the cost of housing them or supporting them is not covered in the current funding model for refuges.

Hundreds of thousands of children are adversely affected by domestic abuse every year, with one in five UK children thought to be living with domestic abuse at any time. Adverse childhood experiences, such as living with domestic abuse, have been found to have serious lifelong consequences to health, psychological wellbeing, relationships, learning, and behaviour.

Refuge’s own statistics indicate that we supported 6,484 children living with domestic abuse over the past year – and the Children’s Commissioner estimates that there are more than 800,000 children each year living in a family with domestic violence.



We also know that with appropriate support, children can overcome the harm caused by domestic abuse and go on to live safe, happy, and productive lives.

Earlier this year our patron, Sir Patrick Stewart OBE, spoke on the Loose Women programme about his experience of growing up with domestic violence:

“We became experts in something children should never, ever have to deal with, which was listening to the argument and judging when the argument would transform into violence. At those moments we would go in, we would just try and put our bodies between our mother and our father.

“One of the problems of domestic violence is [the] shame attached to it – for everybody, for the victim and the abuser and the children, too. After a weekend of trouble, walking to school, I knew that all of the neighbours had heard everything.”

Refuge employs a small team of dedicated child support workers in its refuges and community-based services to help children feel safe, welcome, and secure. Through play, the children have an opportunity to explore their own experiences whilst developing their social skills by making friendships with other children. Our child support workers provide childcare when mothers meet with their solicitors or keyworkers and during house meetings, ensuring children are protected from hearing and reliving the traumatic details of the violence they have experienced. They also run homework clubs, assist with nursery and school applications, provide support to children while they await a place, and refer them for other support as appropriate.

Women living in our refuges also receive support for their children in the form of positive play and parenting skills. Domestic abuse has the potential to harm the mother-child relationship in several ways, from direct manipulation of the child by the abuser to diminishing a mother’s capacity to parent through injury, depression, or even substance misuse. Strengthening the relationship between mother and child following escape from domestic abuse is a critical element in rebuilding their new lives together.

“I’ve understood that my minimising and denying put me and my son at risk. My son was exposed to the danger from the abuse. I am now aware of how it impacted on my parenting. But not anymore. I have escaped the abuse.” Suzy, mother of Arran.



Spotlight

Child support workers

A child support worker in one of our refuges summarised her work last August in her monthly report:

“This month has been very busy with children being on their summer holidays. We have had two mother and toddler sessions and four over 5s sessions every week during the holidays. In each of these sessions, children continued to choose activities they enjoyed. Some children, especially in the over 5s sessions, like me to get involved when playing board games and having conversations about different topics such as animals, the environment, and issues at school.

“This month we had a few planned activities, which involved a lot of baking. We used small ready-made pizza bases, the children were asked to add toppings of their choice, mothers also got involved and made their own pizzas, which they all enjoyed. We made cupcakes and biscuits. The children also joined in, making shapes with dough to bake in the oven. The shapes were then left for a few days and painted.

“I managed to arrange a few trips during the summer holidays – one was a boat ride for all residents and children. Everyone enjoyed the hour-long ride. We also went to a park. Another day Cineworld was kind enough to give us a private screening of a film of our choice – we watched How to Train Your Dragon 2. Everyone had a lovely time on the trips... they all had lots of fun.

“This month, I have also been supporting mothers by making school applications and getting them registered with a local GP. While school places are being allocated, children are provided with extra sessions to ensure their basic education needs are met, such as numeracy, literacy and handwriting practice.

“During the summer holidays, I have tried to accommodate the children the best I can providing them with extra play sessions, as some of the mothers are unable to take the children to do outdoor activities which may cost a lot of money.”

In Focus

Refuges: the threat on the horizon

The outlook for women and children escaping violence and abuse is bleak. No country, no matter how developed its response to domestic violence, has ever removed the need for refuges.

Under the Government's proposals, housing benefit for a stay in a refuge will no longer be available to abused women, but will be paid to the local council to fund services. Under these plans there would be no requirement for local authorities to fund refuge provision at all. Over the past few years we have seen local authorities, whose budgets have been eroded, increasingly turning to cheaper hostel-style accommodation to provide emergency housing support. This 'generic' provision is not appropriate for women and children escaping domestic violence.

More than 50% of refuge funding comes from housing benefit, with further funds provided by local authorities under contract. Plans announced by the Government last October would take away an essential source of income for refuges, removing refuges and other temporary supported housing from the welfare system and essentially preventing women from paying their rent with housing benefit.

Specialist refuges offer more than just a bed for the night: they are a highly specialised, national network of safety and support services for women and children. If the Government goes ahead with these proposals, refuges will have to close or reduce the number of beds they offer.

Anyone fleeing violence will need to relocate a considerable distance away from the perpetrator of that violence - if it were safe to remain in the local area, most people would stay at home. But the reality is, in order to stay safe, many women need to move. Indeed, more than 80% of all women given places in Refuge's safe accommodation during the year were referred from outside of their existing local authority area. Yet, increasingly, local authorities are only willing to fund services for women from their area. This means that local women must remain in the area, putting them in danger.

Refuge has seen cuts to 80% of its services since 2011. During the same period funding for the safe-houses Refuge runs has, on average, been cut by over £800,000. Some areas of the country now have no refuge provision at all.

Moving to a refuge was invaluable to Sarah*: “Refuge saved my life. After four years of physical, emotional and sexual abuse from my partner, I finally escaped to a refuge with my two children, George and Eleanor. Without this safe haven to flee to, I would still be with him. Or worse, not be here at all.”

The Council of Europe recommends one refuge place per 10,000 of the population – a level which only Vienna currently achieves. Meanwhile the Government's own Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy promises that by 2020 “no victim is turned away from accessing critical support services delivered by refuges”.

We urge the Government to stand by its commitment and set the standard for a world-leading and sustainably-funded network of specialist refuges.



Community-based services

Many women choose to access community or outreach services rather than seeking a refuge place, either due to the current shortfall in refuge provision or because they might not be ready to leave their partner. At Refuge, we acknowledge that leaving an abusive partner is an individual and often lengthy process and so we offer a range of services across the country to meet the differing needs and preferences of survivors. These include community outreach, advocacy support from Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs), Independent Gender-based Violence Advocates (IGVAs), or Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVAs), and an increasing number of one-stop-shops or single point of access services.

During 2017/18 our community outreach saw an increase in 33% in the number of survivors supported.

Community outreach

Refuge's outreach workers support women wherever they feel safe and comfortable – at one of our offices or in a local cafe or park within the community. Some may be living with their abuser, whilst others may have left but still need support. Survivors are allocated their own keyworker, who provides one-to-one emotional and practical support around matters like safety planning, housing, financial empowerment, contacting the police, understanding the criminal justice system, and ensuring the safety of their children during contact visits with their father, as well as with referrals to other services.

Some outreach staff also run drop-in sessions in local communities, for example in children's centres or advice centres, as is the case in the London Borough of Richmond.

One children's centre manager said:

"Because the outreach worker is based at the centres, we can catch up on how clients and children are on a regular basis and if we need any advice, she is there and we can just go and ask. It helps to raise awareness of domestic violence to clients and staff... The outreach worker being at the centres makes it easier for people to come and see someone and it is bringing the service into the community and raising awareness."

Detective inspector Nicky Arrowsmith, chair of the multi agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) said:

"If we were to lose the expertise of the children's centre outreach worker, we might be alienating groups of victims who may not have reported to the police. Potentially, we could lose the opportunity to impact on the quality of life of those clients and their children who may be adversely affected by domestic violence and abuse. The police would very much want to support the continuation of this post to ensure we have an outreach worker in different locations in the borough."

Single point of access services

Acting as the first point of contact for any survivor of gender-based violence or abuse, single point of access centres offer a range of specialist services including community outreach, independent advocacy, and refuge accommodation. This allows clients to obtain different forms of tailored support under one roof or via a single helpline. We currently run six single point of access services across 36 local authorities.

Refuge has continued to build on the success of its single point of access services and further develop this innovative model. Its appeal is reflected in the rise in local authorities commissioning such services.

Culturally-specific outreach and advocacy

As with refuge accommodation, we offer culturally-specific outreach and advocacy services. We know that women from minority ethnic groups can face additional barriers to accessing support due to discrimination, language difficulties, or immigration status.

Our expert staff speak 44 languages and provide culturally-specific services for Eastern European, Vietnamese, African, Caribbean, and Asian women.

In July, Refuge launched a new culturally-specific outreach service for South Asian women and men in Derby City. Since the launch, 42 female and seven male clients have been supported during the past eight months with forced marriage protection orders, rehousing, assistance with benefit applications, child contact orders, help with paperwork and accompanying clients to Citizens Advice, working with children's services, and navigating civil and criminal courts. Tailored support in the client's own language has removed a significant barrier to accessing appropriate support for these survivors. One said:

"I would not have to explain the culture and religious perspective to my worker, as she had the understanding. I am fluent in Urdu and so was she, therefore I felt at ease talking to her and did not have to think about what I had to say. If I had had a non-Asian worker, I know I would not have disclosed so much information."

An employee of social services echoed similar praise for the service:

"If it hadn't been for you talking to me today, my only recourse left would have been to get my client and her children in my car tomorrow and drive to social services head office and drop them off there. They deserved better... it's a miracle that the client hasn't had a nervous breakdown. Next time a vulnerable mum with young children might not be so lucky and in that state of mind could even contemplate actions that no one wants to even think about... From the bottom of mine, and the family's hearts, a heartfelt thank you to yourself and to the team at Refuge. All I ever wanted to hear were the words 'we will provide a refuge for her and we will support her until she is capable of supporting herself.' Within 30 seconds of our phone conversation, you answered this question without me asking it."

Independent domestic, sexual, and gender-based advocates

We run 10 independent advocacy services across 43 local authorities.

Refuge provides independent domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence advocates (IDVAs, ISVAs and IGVAs) for adults and young people who have experienced specific forms of abuse or violence. They support survivors of all forms of gender-based violence, in particular those who may be at the highest risk of serious harm or homicide. Many are referred to Refuge at a point of crisis by police or health professionals.

In addition to the crucial emotional and practical support they offer survivors, our independent advocates also provide training to key agencies such as the police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to improve responses to domestic abuse, and to health professionals to assist in identifying potential victims.

As with our outreach workers, IDVAs, ISVAs, and IGVAs develop safety plans with survivors and offer support as they address the impacts abuse may have had. We also help clients navigate the civil and criminal courts as appropriate. It takes an enormous amount of courage for a survivor to report violence or abuse to the police and give evidence in court – the legal system can be confusing, frightening, and isolating. Nevertheless, in circumstances where our independent advocates offer support, from the time of arrest to the conclusion of a court case, three-quarters of these cases result in guilty verdicts.

IDVAs accompany survivors to court or arrange pre-trial visits, support those who are willing to give evidence, and assist with victim impact statements. They also help women access refuge accommodation or make their existing properties more secure, provide information about protective orders or child contact issues, and refer women to other services as appropriate.

Sarah self-referred to one of our IDVA services earlier this year. She wanted information regarding non-molestation orders as her ex-partner, Tom, was turning up at her workplace and her home on a daily basis. Sarah was so frightened she would not put the light on in her house and would sit in the dark. She had reported this repeatedly to the police but no action was taken, so her IDVA, Jo, helped her obtain a non-molestation order for 12 months.



However, Tom kept breaching the order and the police finally arrested and charged him. He would often park his car outside Sarah's workplace or home and drive up and down her road, all of which made Sarah afraid to leave the house for work.

At the first court hearing, he pleaded guilty and a date was set for sentencing. Sarah remained concerned as her non-molestation order only had a few months before expiry; she hoped to get this extended but did not know how. Jo attended court with Sarah and discussed the case with the prosecutor, prior to which he did not know the impact Tom's behaviour had had on her.

Once this information was shared with the court an indefinite restraining order was granted. Sarah says she believes that if Jo had not been in court on the day of sentencing, the restraining order would have not been granted. Since the order has been in place, there have been no further breaches and she feels she is in a much safer place. "All of the advice was invaluable; I knew where to go and who to speak to. You gave me confidence to obtain an order and follow up a prosecution."

Demystifying the criminal justice system might seem part

and parcel of an IDVA's daily job. But sometimes independent advocates come up against new, unexpected challenges as was the case for Andrea this year.

Andrea's client, Cathy had relocated to a new property in an area away from her abusive ex-partner, when a friend alerted her to an update on social media indicating he knew where she was. After deliberation with other agencies at a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) for high-risk domestic abuse cases, it became apparent that he may have found her by checking where she had taken her car for an MOT. The Driver Vehicle and Standards Agency (DVSA) website allows people to search for MOT history.

Andrea contacted the DVSA on Cathy's behalf to see if they could remove the details of the garage location from their search results. The DVSA was very responsive, removing the information within 24 hours. Staff are now continuing to work with Andrea and Refuge policy team to develop a long-term plan for data-sharing to ensure that they are doing all they can to keep victims safe.

Spotlight

MARACs

MARACs, or Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences, bring together representatives from different agencies to discuss and share information on local, high-risk domestic abuse cases, including joint safety planning.

Pamela* was referred to our Richmond and Wandsworth domestic violence and complex needs service by the local police safeguarding team, following concerns that her perpetrator was due to be released from prison. Pamela was deemed at ‘high risk’ of further violence by the police, as her perpetrator had been sent to prison for grievous bodily harm against her and knew where she lived. She was also considered vulnerable due to alcohol dependency.

One of our caseworkers, Diane, contacted Pamela to offer her support. Together they completed a risk assessment where Pamela disclosed that she had suffered abuse for the last two years, which had been physically, verbally aggressive, demeaning and controlling.

Her case was referred to a local MARAC and agencies came together to develop a plan to reduce the risk of further harm to Pamela. They explored the options available, advice was offered around securing safe accommodation out of borough and, with a lot of support, Pamela agreed.

Pamela was supported to make a homeless application and was given temporary accommodation outside the borough. Diane further helped Pamela by signposting her to charities that could assist her with emotional and practical support. A new safety plan was made and agencies such as the drug and alcohol services were informed of the move and encouraged to offer Pamela additional support during this transition period.



Working with other agencies

In Hertfordshire, staff are co-located at various sites such as the specialist police unit, child protection, and health teams. This has had numerous benefits, from allowing professionals easy access to an IDVA on site, to being able to make referrals quickly, to providing a number of locations where advocates can meet clients safely for face-to-face support. In addition, our staff have held regular training on domestic abuse and risk indicators for the teams with whom they are co-located.

In Focus

Eastern European Advocacy Service

Thanks to a three-year grant from the Big Lottery Fund, we were able to expand our IDVA services for Eastern European women and children experiencing violence and abuse.

The new Eastern European Independent Gender Violence Advocacy Service builds on ten years’ experience of providing culturally-specific support to Eastern European women facing complex and overlapping instances of abuse, from domestic abuse and sexual assault to sexual exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery.

The service operates across the boroughs of Brent, Ealing, and Hounslow with a team of bilingual advocates, who speak Polish and Romanian and can access interpreters for women who speak other Eastern European languages.

In addition to providing direct support to women from Eastern Europe, the IGVA also act as a bridge between the women and other agencies; support which might otherwise be difficult for them to access due to their limited knowledge of the UK system.

Tracy Hider, the detective inspector in Brent stated:

“Brent is recognised as one of the most culturally diverse areas of the country. Refuge’s skilled staff offer invaluable support and advice to Eastern European women in a time of need. Culture, language, and differences in the support systems between countries all contribute to barriers in supporting survivors. The Eastern European Advocacy Service enables conversations to be held in the survivor’s own language and this builds trust, facilitates disclosure which allows appropriate support to be identified and offered at the earliest opportunity. Ultimately their work reduces the risk to the lives of many survivors from Eastern Europe who are resident in Brent.”

Paula was referred to us as a high-risk domestic violence case, but over time her case worker recognised that she was also a victim of modern slavery. She was provided with temporary

accommodation by Social Services, but no food or funds were offered. Our Refuge case worker helped her access food from a local food bank.

Social Services refused to continue to pay for the accommodation as they were planning to repatriate her back to Romania, despite her needing to attend court as a witness in an ongoing investigation into sexual abuse.

We worked with Social Services and put Paula through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) – a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking or modern slavery. Our Refuge caseworker managed to stop the repatriation and she was accepted by the NRM. Paula and her daughter were taken outside London to safe accommodation.

Paula agreed to speak to the police about the modern slavery offence and has since expressed her thanks to Refuge for our help.

Other clients grateful for the help they received from the service include Petra and Kasia:

“My IDVA met me the day after I was assaulted by my ex-partner. I had never discussed the years of abuse that I had experienced and I was really grateful that she listened to me and acknowledged my feelings. She then contacted my social worker and arranged a three-way meeting. She kept me updated on the progress of my case and advised me on child contact. I feel so much safer now and I am no longer depressed or scared of what will happen in the future.”

Petra

“I appreciate that my IDVA helped me to obtain a non-molestation order. I was not entitled to legal aid and could not afford a solicitor. She helped me at every stage of the process... she also attended all the court hearings with me, which gave me the strength to face my ex-partner in court. Since the order was issued, I feel much safer and think positively about my future! I would not have been able to leave my abusive partner without your service.”

Kasia



Spotlight

Supporting male survivors of sexual violence

James was referred to one of our ISVA services due to the psychological harm of historic sexual and current domestic abuse. James had been sexually assaulted by a previous male partner. Staff provided James with emotional and practical support.

On one occasion, James was feeling suicidal. Mel* (his ISVA) explained that she could call the police to do a welfare check if this would be helpful. The police attended his property and then called an ambulance. Paramedics suggested he should go to hospital but James was unwilling. His GP was then informed and he was referred to a psychiatrist.

Mel supported James in applying for a permanent visa to live in the United Kingdom. As James had long-term medical needs, she also assisted him by arranging hospital appointments and transport.

Mel helped James to apply for a non-molestation order and assisted him with safety planning, as well as sharing information regarding his rights as a victim of hate crime (James had been abused because of his sexuality).

When his case was closed, Mel referred James to a local community service for ongoing support and made referrals on his behalf to adult social services and another charity.

Male survivors

Across many of our services, staff offer support to male survivors of domestic abuse or sexual violence. On average, we support around 90 men every day through services specifically shaped by their needs. Staff in these services have all received additional training in how to best support male clients.

Male survivors are allocated an independent advocate who will determine their needs; they will work together to find a suitable venue for the man to talk openly about the effects of domestic abuse or sexual violence and the impact that it has had on them.

One of our largest sexual violence services, for both men and women, covers the Thames Valley region, spanning the counties of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Berkshire. Recognising the success of the service and an increase in referrals for the younger age range, the commissioners agreed this year to fund a further Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) post to support more young adults between 18-25 years old.

Refuge's ISVA services acknowledge that it is often difficult for survivors of sexual violence to come forward for support. For this reason, the Thames Valley team at Refuge have been partnering with other local organisations within Berkshire, Oxfordshire, and Buckinghamshire to try to identify and reach out further to those who require support.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE OUTCOMES

Our number one priority is always keeping a survivor safe from further violence and abuse. But if they wish to access the criminal justice system, our experts will help them to do so. Survivors say they find our expert support invaluable as the legal system can very often be both complex and traumatising. Through our policy and communications work, Refuge strives to ensure that the interests of victims are put at the heart of the justice system. We believe that strong sentences for perpetrators convicted of abuse both act as a deterrent to abusers and send a strong message to society that such criminal behaviour will not be tolerated.

Criminal justice outcomes achieved for our clients across some of our services are shown below:

Refuges

15% of women in our refuges had reported the abuse to the police; in 41% of these cases charges were brought against the perpetrator; in 34% the CPS initiated proceedings against perpetrator; and 76.2% found guilty where the outcome is known.

Community outreach services

30% of women accessing our community outreach services had reported the abuse to the police; in 38% of these cases charges were brought against the perpetrator; in 31% the CPS initiated proceedings against perpetrator; and 83.9% found guilty where the outcome is known.

Independent advocacy services

61% of women accessing our independent advocacy services had reported the abuse to the police; in 42% of these cases charges were brought against the perpetrator; in 37% the CPS initiated proceedings against the perpetrator; and 78.8% found guilty where the outcome is known.

Single point of access services

44% of women accessing our single point of access services had reported the abuse to the police; in 38% of these cases charges were brought against the perpetrator; in 32% the CPS initiated proceedings against perpetrator; and 77.8% found guilty where the outcome is known.

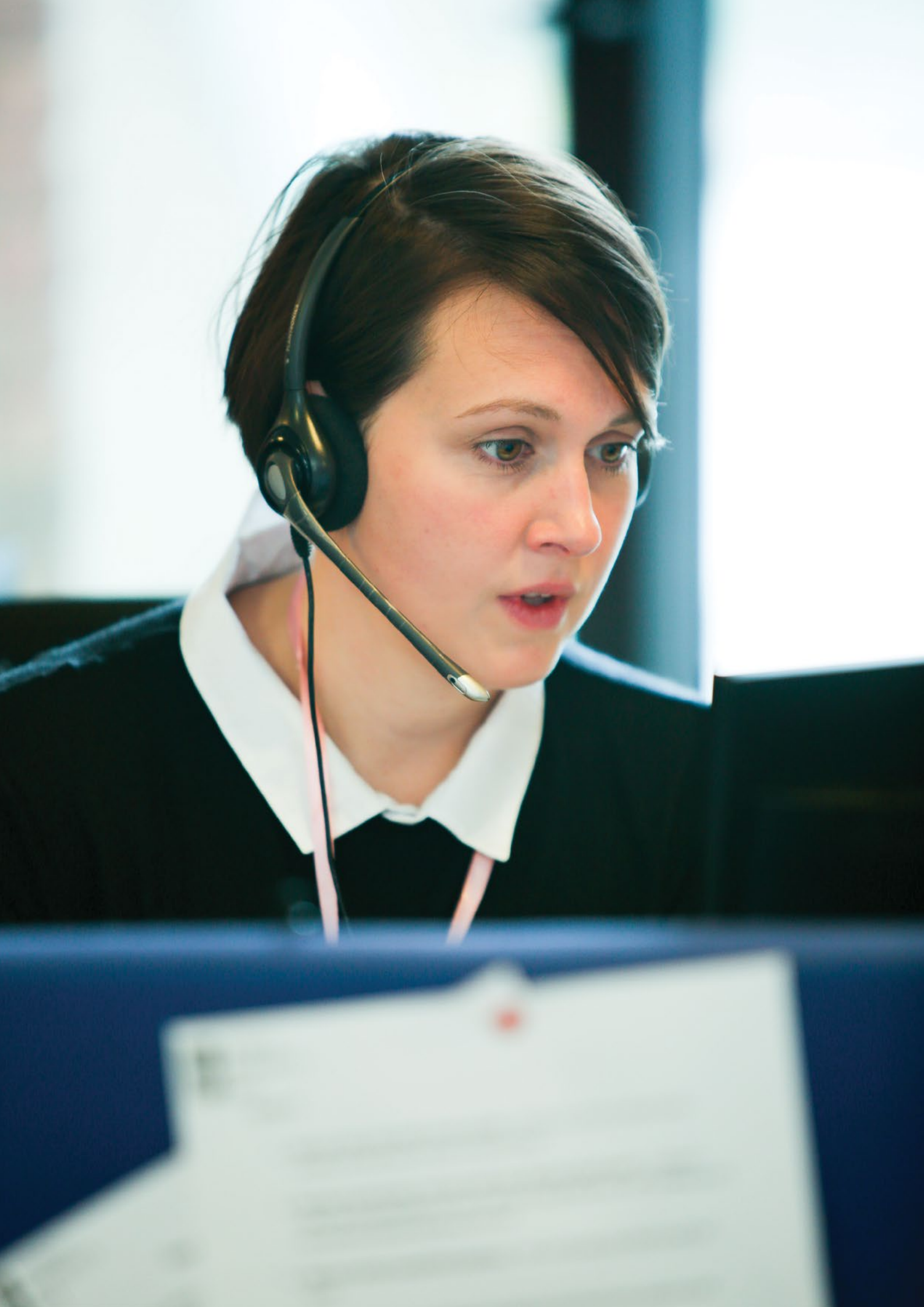


Culturally specific services

48% of women accessing our culturally specific services had reported the abuse to the police; in 50% of these cases charges were brought against the perpetrator; in 41% the CPS initiated proceedings against the perpetrator; and 87.1% found guilty where the outcome is known.

Men (accessing our non-accommodation services)

38% of men accessing our non-accommodation services had reported the abuse to the police; in 34% of these cases charges were brought against the perpetrator; in 32% the CPS initiated proceedings against perpetrator; and 68.6% found guilty where the outcome is known.



HELPLINE AND ONLINE



National Domestic Violence Helpline 2017/18

- Number of calls taken by Helpline: 94,549
- Calls per day: 259
- Nine permanent members of staff
- 70 volunteers
- Two five-day Helpline Volunteer training programmes held

Our team of nine permanent staff and 70 volunteers cover a 24-hour shift pattern to respond to the calls of survivors seeking advice via the National Domestic Violence Helpline, which is funded by the Home Office, Comic Relief, and London councils, and run by Refuge in partnership with Women's Aid.

The Helpline managers have developed a strong, experienced, and dedicated team of volunteer practitioners who provide flexible, informed, and empowering support on a whole range of issues.

"[The Helpline worker] really understood what I am experiencing – most people don't understand."

"I can't thank you enough. The person I spoke to was amazing and she really set me on a path that I just wouldn't have gone down without her help. I seriously can't thank you enough."

"Thank you so much, I so appreciate all the support from all of you! The Helpline made me feel stronger and heard ... sending you a virtual hug with many, many thanks."

The Helpline staff might be the first person a caller has ever spoken to about their experiences; other calls might be from relatives or friends worried about a loved one, and professionals from GPs to the police also frequently call to seek information or refuge places.

"Service users really appreciate the Helpline. It is a very efficient service," one professional told us.

Volunteers and staff undertake a comprehensive training and shadowing programme, which includes understanding domestic abuse, recognising risk, supporting suicidal callers, cyber security, substance use, welfare benefits, financial abuse, and how to handle complex or challenging callers.

"I really like volunteering for Refuge – it is honestly the best place I've done any volunteering."

In addition, the team has established strong training partnerships across the year with mental health organisations like Sane and Rape Crisis.



Online help

It is essential that we are able to reach survivors and others online, both to increase awareness of domestic abuse and to provide clear, usable information about our services and options available.

The Refuge website is particularly useful for survivors who do not feel able to call the Helpline to discuss concerns. Using the website, they can increase their understanding of domestic abuse, recognise they are not alone, and find out about their rights.

For those who are worried that someone they know may be being abused, the website provides important information which empowers them to offer sensitive and appropriate support to survivors.

The website is also a valuable resource for professionals, who use it to educate themselves about domestic abuse.

During the year we launched a new and improved *refuge.org.uk* website which allows users to better navigate the information and resources we have available online. Four months after its launch, the new website received over half a million page views. In line with our goals to reach survivors and raise awareness, we were pleased to note that some of the most-visited pages included Domestic Violence Facts, Recognising Abuse, Support for Women, and Get Help Now.

OUR COMMITMENT TO QUALITY

Spotlight

BSI 2018 assessment serves as testament to Refuge's work

We take pride in having maintained our British Standards Institute (BSI) ISO 9001 certification – validation of our commitment to providing the best possible support to survivors of domestic abuse and other gender-based violence.

The BSI audit reviewed the management of specialist services run by Refuge, including women's refuges, culturally specific support for women from black and minority ethnic communities, outreach and independent domestic violence, sexual violence advocacy and other gender violence services.

Refuge became the first domestic violence organisation in the country to achieve the internationally-recognised ISO 9001 certification by BSI in 2010. Since then, Refuge has continued to operate a first-class management system for its national network of specialist services, which BSI has confirmed complies with the requirements of the ISO 9001 standard.

In Refuge's latest assessment, which took place in February, it was recognised that Refuge had multiple best practice processes and had achieved excellence in many contexts, especially in the measurement of customer perception/satisfaction. The assessment highlighted the factual nature of Refuge's decision-making, which helps to ensure the organisation, its donors and the staff on the ground can be certain that decisions are made with confidence.

Refuge takes huge pride in the auditor's assessment which highlighted that in many ways we are ahead of the curve in terms of systems and processes designed to improve the quality of service for its customers.

Jane Keeper, Refuge's director of operations, confirmed:

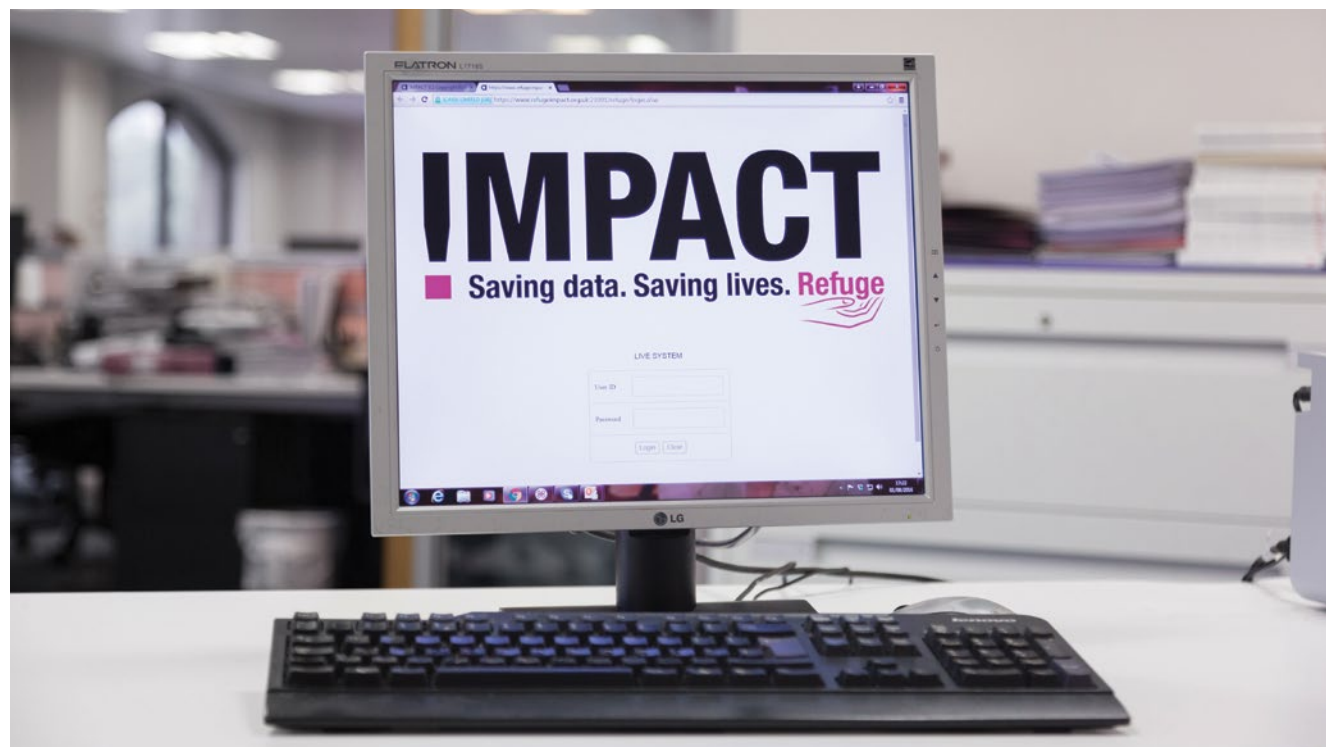
"We have developed a distinctive, specialist approach to managing the cases of the 6,050 victims escaping abuse and violence we support on any given day. We are especially delighted that BSI has recognised Refuge's strategic direction and its new approach to tackling tech abuse. Refuge strives at all times to offer the best possible support to women and children experiencing domestic abuse and other types of gender-based violence,"

Sandra Horley CBE commended the organisation's staff:

"This ISO 9001 certification is a wonderful tribute to the immense hard work and dedication of all Refuge's employees. We have a team of amazing expert staff and managers across the organisation, each of whom has contributed to this achievement. Working in emotionally-tough roles and financially-challenging times, our team goes the extra mile on a daily basis to save and transform the lives of victims of gender-based violence."

Carla Whyte, Senior Client Propositions Manager at BSI explained the value of Refuge's certification:

"By achieving certification to ISO 9001, Refuge can provide assurance to its customers and stakeholders that it is carrying out best practice in quality management, and is focused on continually improving its products and services. The Refuge staff, its management team and trustees should be very proud of this achievement."



IMPACT

www.impactbyrefuge.org.uk

Refuge's bespoke, unrivalled case management database contains more than 80,000 records, spanning the last ten years. Our frontline staff record every intervention they make from the arrival of a survivor in our services to their exit. IMPACT allows us to monitor the quality of our services, investigate specific cases in depth, stay on top of any 'gaps' in casework, and draw analysis on broader trends.

Our services and new programmes of work are informed by the results recorded and trends identified in IMPACT. This allows the team at Refuge – as well as survivors and commissioners – to be confident that Refuge's work is grounded in and shaped by the reality of violence and abuse against women and girls and their experiences.

Staff

Our staff are highly-trained and experienced in all aspects of violence and abuse. Every member of staff, including volunteers, attends accredited in-house training, as well as regular refresher courses.

In 2017/18 we delivered over 110 training sessions to approximately 210 members of staff, who attended on average five courses each.

Work with traumatised women and children is undeniably tough and demanding but according to many of our staff it can also be equally rewarding.

"There are many proud moments but from an IGVA perspective, observing and supporting a woman through the criminal justice system, seeing the strength she has developed and seeing her feeling empowered enough to get into the witness stand and tell her story is an amazing feeling."

"Assisting a woman at court to get her three children back from social care when they had been taken away from her because of the perpetrator, then going late at night to get the children from the foster carer's and giving them back to their mum, was a magic moment!"

"I feel proud of the team, when we come together I realise that we have a huge team of talented, skilled women who have come from a variety of backgrounds and all bring something different to the team."

Spotlight

Recognising the work of our staff

Earlier this year, two members of Refuge's IDVA service and three members of the local police force in Richmond-upon-Thames were awarded Borough Commander commendations for their work supporting a client at high risk of homicide to secure a conviction against her perpetrator.

Chief Inspector Karen Duckworth, spoke at the event and praised the team who "demonstrated a determination to put the victim at the heart of what we do as multi-agency partners and to prioritise victim safeguarding to remove and reduce the substantial risks they face." They "helped to maintain contact with the victim throughout the criminal justice process and motivated and supported her through a successful judicial outcome."

The two Refuge IDVAs supported the client for a period of 18 months, not only through the criminal justice process but also with issues like housing. This rare recognition from the police force is testament to the invaluable work carried out by the IDVAs in supporting this client, and the trust they were able to build with the police and the housing association.

But as one IDVA commented, Refuge "staff are doing work like this all the time and don't necessarily get commendations, this is just the work we are all doing every day".

"We have worked with Refuge in Warwickshire for many years and have established a really positive and honest working relationship. In the first year of their new contract, Refuge increased the number of referrals into the service and supported more individuals to rebuild their lives than the previous year."

Louise Williams

Community Safety and Locality Working Group Manager, Warwickshire (Local commissioner)

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

This year the European Union proposed GDPR, its new privacy and data protection legislation. This gives individuals new rights to control their data and creates more obligations for data-holders. At Refuge we are proud of our evidence-led approach, based on the recorded experiences of the thousands of women and children we support, and we have taken care to ensure that our database is fully compliant with the new law when it comes into force in May 2018.

In 2017 Refuge appointed an independent consultant to undertake a data protection audit across the organisation. This helped Refuge to identify key areas that needed to be made ready for GDPR. All of the teams at Refuge worked hard to ensure that essential structures were in place to meet GDPR compliance. Refuge published new privacy and data protection policies, together with other key policies and procedures and will be offering mandatory online data protection training for new staff, volunteers and all current staff on the new requirements of the legislation.

PROTECTION OF SURVIVORS THROUGH REFORM OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY

In Focus

Domestic Abuse Bill

Our key priorities for the forthcoming legislation include:

- Calling for a Violence Against Women and Girls Bill, rather than being limited to domestic abuse only
- Highlighting that the proposed definition of domestic abuse is too broad, conflating a wide range of abuses. Refuge recommends that intimate-partner violence is clearly and separately defined from other forms of abuse to reduce misunderstanding and ensure appropriate responses and services for survivors
- Ensuring new legislation is met with significant investment in specialist services for survivors
- Ensuring all women, including those with no recourse to public funds, are supported irrespective of their immigration status

Ensuring the new legislation goes beyond the criminal justice system

- Family courts: The legislation must prohibit the common practice of the cross examination of survivors by perpetrators and alleged perpetrators in the civil and family courts; the capital means test for legal aid for survivors of domestic violence should be removed; the presumption that children should have contact with both parents should not apply in cases of domestic abuse
- Housing: The legislation should clarify in law that survivors of gender-based violence qualify as a priority need for long-term housing
- Welfare system: changes should be made to Universal Credit so that split payments are the default option for all couples
- Securing from the Government a clear strategy, with adequate sustainable funding, to provide services for children of all ages impacted by domestic abuse
- Improving the response to abuse perpetrated through technology



As a leading provider of specialist domestic and gender-based violence services, Refuge gives a voice to survivors. We influence changes in legislation and policy to better protect victims and prevent future violence and abuse.

Through our research and the expertise of our staff, as well as the experiences of the women with whom we work, Refuge identifies systemic problems and develops evidence-based solutions to promote change.

Policy reform

Domestic Abuse Bill consultation

Refuge was instrumental in some of the very early discussions in relation to the domestic abuse legislation and will continue to work with the Government as the Bill progresses.

Refuge conducted an intensive internal consultation with its frontline staff to develop a comprehensive response to the consultation on domestic abuse, which is the first step towards a Domestic Abuse Bill. Refuge also held an engagement event for the Home Office as part of this process, and staff and survivors spoke at the Home Office's regional stakeholder event in Manchester.

Refuge funding

Refuge submitted a response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (formerly DCLG and now MHCLG) consultation on short-term supported housing funding, which proposed a major change to the way in which refuges are funded. Refuge met with ministers in the Home Office and MHCLG to raise its concerns. As a result of lobbying by Refuge and others, the Ministry launched a review into domestic abuse services to explore alternative models of funding.

Universal Credit

Refuge is concerned that the design of the new benefits system, called Universal Credit, has the potential to facilitate economic abuse. Unlike the old benefits system, all benefit payments are made to one person in each household, making it much easier for an abuser to control all of the household finances. Refuge staff gave oral and written evidence to the Work and Pensions Select Committee inquiry into Universal Credit and victims of domestic abuse, recommending that benefit payments are split for all couples to protect women from potential economic abuse.

Housing

Housing is a central issue for the women and children we support. Too often women and children are unable to obtain long-term appropriate housing. Refuge submitted a response to both the MHCLG consultation on improving access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse and the Greater London Authority's London Housing Strategy.

Expert groups

Refuge sits on multiple expert policy panels and groups including: the Home Secretary's National Oversight Group on Domestic Abuse, UK Finance's steering group on the development of an economic abuse guideline for banks and building societies, and the CPS violence against women and girls stakeholders group.

“Refuge plays a vital role in reaching out to women from an Eastern European background. Language and cultural barriers can often make it difficult for survivors to obtain crucial information around what support is available and to get the help they need. Refuge provides a valuable bridge allowing lifesaving interventions and support with confidential contact. ... Their work is paramount in giving this hard to reach community the same protections and successful outcomes as the wider community and reducing the risk in their lives.”

Chris Brown

DI of the Hounslow Community Safety Unit.

In Focus

‘Suicide must not appear to be the only escape for some victims of abuse.’

In a new report, to be launched in July 2018, Refuge calls for greater recognition of the risk of suicide among victims of abuse and for the provision of specialist services for survivors and their children.

Staff from Refuge and the University of Warwick looked at the experiences of more than 3,500 of Refuge’s clients with the aim of informing policy and practice in relation to victims of abuse who are at an increased risk of suicide. It was one of the largest studies of its kind, and a first for the UK.

The findings show that:

- 83% of clients came to Refuge’s services feeling despairing or hopeless – a key determinant for suicidality
- At least 24% had felt suicidal at one time or another
- 18% had made plans to end their life

The level and timing of support for survivors from professionals and external agencies was seen as crucial by Refuge practitioners; long delays in obtaining external support had the potential to exacerbate difficulties for survivors.

Time pressures and large caseloads were seen as threats to best practice: survivors need adequate time to disclose the full impact of their abuse and a suitable environment to ‘tell their story’ at their own pace. The report calls for a commitment to sufficient specialist services, both outreach and refuge, for the survivors of abuse.

While having children was found to be a protective factor for victims of abuse, being childless increased a survivor’s suicide risk.

Although the research did not engage with or about children directly, the authors urge professionals to both recognise and address the devastating impact on a child of having a suicidal parent – especially those bereaved in this context.

PREVENTION OF FUTURE VIOLENCE THROUGH EDUCATION, TRAINING AND AWARENESS-RAISING

The prevention of violence against women and girls is central to Refuge’s work and is accomplished through awareness-raising, education, training, and campaigns.

External training

We routinely train professionals about domestic abuse and violence against women and girls. During 2017/18:

Our Redbridge VAWG staff delivered domestic abuse training to approximately 50 members of staff from children’s centres.

Staff from our Derby service delivered presentations on gender-based violence, modern slavery, and trafficking to students and professionals at Derby University and Derby College to raise awareness and understanding of the barriers to survivors accessing support.

Staff from Warwickshire County Council and its partner agencies working in the violence against women arena were given training to increase awareness of domestic abuse, risk identification, and harmful practices, as well as sharing knowledge of local Refuge services available to survivors.

Our Thames Valley ISVA service staff presented at regional conferences, including the Learning Disability, Sexual and Domestic Abuse Conference attended by 175 professionals. Refuge also ran a stand at the East Berkshire Violence and Exploitation Conference where 250 local professionals were present.

Using information from Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) and Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) our Athena service in Lewisham delivered a programme of training and seminars to local safeguarding teams, to increase their understanding of the dangers posed to women and children by domestic abuse perpetrators. This training represents an innovative approach to increasing agency engagement with perpetrators to ensure their abuse is neither ignored nor condoned.

Communications

Refuge understands the power of media campaigns in influencing public opinion and public policy. We follow and tap into popular culture to convey Refuge’s key messages as and when issues around woman abuse arise. We hope that by engaging in these conversations, issues like domestic violence remain in the public consciousness and women experiencing abuse can know they are not alone and that Refuge is there to offer them support.

The communications team provides regular news commentary and analysis on external developments in the sector, offering quotes and spokespeople for interview as well as empowering survivors to tell their story in a sensitive and measured way.

Over the past year, the communications team has issued media responses to Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary’s (HMIC) thematic report on the policy of domestic violence and abuse, the CPS report on prosecuting violence against women and girls offences, the new Sentencing Guidelines, proposed changes to refuge funding, and the Domestic Abuse Bill, among others. Refuge’s comments were picked up by TV and national news outlets.

On a more proactive front, intensive work went into supporting the *Evening Standard*’s ‘Slavery on our Streets’ campaign. Sharing the story of our client Thanh*, alongside comments from Refuge, the team secured extensive coverage in the *Evening Standard* and on the *ITN News at 10* programme. ITN news anchor, Julie Etchingham, described Thanh’s story as “one of the most shocking accounts of human trafficking” she had ever heard.

This work was followed in early 2018 by a feature on modern slavery in *Marie Claire*.

The BBC, *The Times*, the *i* paper and *The Pool* all covered the launch event of our tech abuse and empowerment programme held at Google’s offices.

Comment pieces from Sandra Horley on Anti-Slavery day were secured in *The Times* and *the i* paper, which also ran a comment piece on the Sentencing Guidelines. Sandra Horley published a letter in *Women's Health* to the women of the future to mark International Women's Day.

One of Refuge's main campaigns in 2017 centred around the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence – an international campaign running from 25 November, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to 10 December, Human Rights Day. Each day we shared the story of one of 16 incredibly brave survivors of violence and abuse who have used Refuge's services. On Facebook, our impressions totalled almost 35,000, and on Twitter almost 90,000.

More broadly, Refuge is investing time and effort into its digital communications channels. In November, we relaunched our website, refuge.org.uk, with a new, mobile-optimised design to make our information and signposts to support more accessible. Refuge's social media profile is growing with more than 2.5 million people reached via Facebook and 7.2 million impressions on Twitter.

In addition to securing widespread coverage, Refuge is also increasing engagement and building communities. As of 31 March Refuge had 24,000 followers on Facebook and almost 37,000 on Twitter. We are now devoting more resources to Instagram, which will be important to our efforts to engage with younger women and girls.



Fundraising – our supporters

It has been another busy year for our fundraising team and incredible supporters. We are hugely grateful to all our donors and fundraisers for their creativity, passion, and commitment. Together we stand shoulder to shoulder with women and children affected by abuse.

Some of our 2017/18 highlights include our annual Walk4 event, which in September saw over 200 people join an event where we walked 10km across four of London's most iconic bridges. We walked to raise awareness of and funds to support the one in four women who will experience domestic violence in their lifetime. Supporters included Luke and Ryan Hart, two brothers who took part to honour their mother, Claire, and sister, Charlotte, who were murdered by their father in 2016. Councillor Sue Sampson, the Mayor of Hounslow, walked in memory of her elder sister, who was murdered in 1976 by her estranged husband.



We were delighted to work with Avon in 2017. The long-standing support of Avon's Representatives and customers has made a huge difference to the women and children whose lives we seek to improve and protect from domestic abuse. We received a total contribution of £77,650 from Avon in 2017, all of which has been used to fund our national IDVA Manager and IDVA Peripatetic Coordinator. With their specialist knowledge, our advocates provide a level and quality of specialist service that is available nowhere else in the community. The Avon Foundation also generously donated £250,000 which provided essential support and underpinned the funding shortfalls across our refuges.

We remain hugely grateful to The White Company for its long-term support of Refuge. We received over £75,000 from the profits from range of The White Company products.

To mark 100 years since the first women in the UK won the right to vote, in February we launched our first-ever digital community fundraising campaign, #Refuge100. We asked supporters to raise £100 each; many supporters took part in an assortment of events, from quizzes and bake sales to running and walking challenges.

International Women's Day was marked with a City of London breakfast, sponsored by HSBC, on 8 March. With fantastic guest speakers including Dany Cotton QSM, the first female commissioner of the London Fire service, it was an inspirational morning attended by corporates from across the City of London. The event raised over £25,000 in support of our work.

The day will forever be remembered at Refuge thanks to Richard Herring, who undertook a twitterathon throughout the entire 24 hours of International Women's Day. From beginning to day end he encouraged his supporters to raise funds for Refuge and amassed a phenomenal £150,000 – for which we are enormously grateful.

In the run up to Mother's Day Homebase, the home improvement retailer and garden centre, supported Refuge in its stores across England and Northern Ireland by working to raise public awareness of domestic violence against women and children. From cake sales to kids' face painting, the in-store teams raised almost £16,000.

In March we also celebrated Mese Della Donna – Italian for Women's Month – with our exciting new partners Polpo, the Venetian restaurant. Polpo donated £1 from each of its five specials dishes and raised almost £5,000 for Refuge. A huge thank you to everyone involved.

Our amazing runners yet again braved rain and shine to raise staggering sums of money for us. Thirty-nine incredible runners took part in the Virgin London Marathon, raising nearly £90,000. Author, political journalist, and survivor Isabel Hardman joined #TeamRefuge and ran numerous running events in 2017 including Vitality 10K and the Royal Parks half marathon, raising over £7,000.

Back for its fourth year, Benefit Cosmetics' fantastic 'Bold is Beautiful' initiative took place throughout May. The 'Bold is Beautiful' project, which aims to empower women and girls, raised over £150,000 for our life-saving services. This unique partnership saw pop-up shops in England, Ireland and Scotland, offering brow waxes in aid of Refuge.

To each and every one of our supporters, you are incredible. Thank you for your ongoing and unswerving support.



Spotlight

Richard Herring's International Women's Day Tweetathon

On International Women's Day, Refuge was very grateful to have the support of comedian Richard Herring, who raised more than £150,000 through his annual tweetathon. Richard raises funds for Refuge by responding to tweets that asked "when is International Men's Day?"

Thousands of his followers on Twitter pledged to donate to Refuge for each tweet he posted. Within a matter of hours on International Women's Day, Richard had smashed his initial target of raising £25,000. Richard said:

"I do this so that everyone else can get on with celebrating International Women's Day and using it to raise awareness of the issues that affect women. And trying to achieve equality. It's really just a bit of fun to point out how unoriginal people are being and also answer the question that they don't expect has an answer. The answer is November 19th. But as the number of people asking never seems to decrease it's a busy day for me. I thought this year it would be nice if we raised some money along the way, to turn stupid or negative comments by people who don't understand how to google into something that will be positive and helpful."

Sandra Horley praised his efforts:

"We are absolutely astonished by Richard's incredible efforts today. We cannot thank Richard and his followers enough for helping to raise these vital funds."

Thank you to all our valuable supporters, patrons, donors and partners

We would like to thank all of our supporters during 2017/18, including those who have chosen to remain anonymous.

Atkin Charitable Foundation
 Association of Muslim Police, Hackney
 Avon Cosmetics
 Barbara Nokes
 BBC Children in Need
 BBH
 Benefit Cosmetics
 Big Lottery Fund
 Bravissimo
 Bright Horizons Foundation for Children
 The Brook Trust
 The Calypso Browning Trust
 The City Bridge Trust
 City of London International Women's Day committee
 Cllr. Sue Sampson, Mayor of Hounslow
 CM Murray
 CMS Cameron McKenna Nabarro Olswang LLP
 Code Compterlove
 Comic Relief
 The Co-operative Bank
 Cuckooz
 Dunard Fund
 Edward J Safra Philanthropic Foundation
 Euromonitor International
 The Evan Cornish Foundation
 Fiona Bruce
 Garfield Weston Foundation
 Gloag Foundation
 Google.org
 Homebase Bunnings
 The Home Office
 HSBC

Hush Homeware
 Ince & Co LLP
 Inner London Magistrates Court Poor Box Charity
 Isabel Hardman
 Julian Nieman
 Kew Women's Institute
 Konica Minolta Business Solutions UK Ltd
 Lauren Laverne
 Lee Pycroft
 London Councils
 Merlin's Magic Wand Children's Charity
 News Corps Giving UK
 Nick Darke
 Olivia Colman
 Sir Patrick Stewart OBE
 Pilkington Charities Fund
 Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP
 Pilot printing
 Polpo
 Quality of Life Charitable Trust
 Rotarians, St Ives, Cambridgeshire
 Richard Herring
 Shearman & Sterling LLP
 The Stratford Town Trust
 Turn2us
 Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP
 The White Company
 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 England 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 Homes England.

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: BPHA, Central and Cecil, Circle Housing, Family Mosaic, Gateway, Hexagon, Hyde, London and Quadrant, Metropolitan, Notting Hill, Optivo, Orbit, Paragon, Sanctuary Housing, Stonham, Town and Country and Tuntum.

Statutory partners: the London Boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Hackney, Hounslow, Kingston on Thames, Lambeth, Lewisham, Redbridge, Richmond, Southwark and Waltham Forest; the counties of Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, East Sussex, and Warwickshire; the cities of Coventry and Derby, and 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 2018 show another year of stable performance with income rising by 8.6% to £14,436,486 (2017: £13,292,539), total expenditure of £14,580,253 (2017: £12,856,130) giving rise to a deficit of £158,318 (2017: £501,660 surplus) after losses on investments of £14,551. 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 £4,996,510 (2017: £5,154,828) of which, £3,704,581 was held as general unrestricted reserves, £673,167 as designated reserves and £618,762 as restricted reserves.

The increase in income has come mainly from successes in winning new contracts, an extremely good year for fundraising including winning financial support for our new Tech Advocacy Project from Google’s Tides Foundation. Incoming resources from operating activities were up 15.5% compared to 2016-17 with contracts for support services showing growth of 16.8% and housing management income growing by 2.9%. The provision of advocacy services provided most of the growth in contracts for support services during the year. Grant income for 2017-18 increased by 62.2% rising to £1,294,993. Investment income was up 22.7% to £39,423.

The total expenditure of £14,580,253 for the year represented a 13.4% increase compared to 2016-17. Expenditure on advocacy services increased by 19.4% reflecting new contracts won in this area and refuge provision had decreased expenditure of 8.8%. There was a 23.6% increase in expenditure on floating support and outreach services reflecting success in winning MHCLG funding. Expenditure on the Freephone 24-hour National Domestic Violence helpline’s expenditure has fallen slightly reflecting continued efficiencies in the running of the service.

Cash balances at the end of the year stood at £6,795,427 (2017: £6,535,762) and ensures a healthy working capital position.

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:

- Government proposals for the future funding of refuges and continued significant public sector making future funding more insecure: In response to this Refuge is providing evidence to government consultations; working with bodies such as the NHF; making contingency plans; developing innovative service delivery models; focusing on diversifying income streams; raising the profile of and increasing understanding of specialist domestic violence provision
- A more competitive fundraising environment: Refuge is putting a new fundraising team in place and are in the process of preparing a new three year strategy; targets are monitored monthly and reports monitored by the senior management team and the board quarterly
- Significant contracts being retendered: There is ongoing work reviewing costs to deliver efficiencies; continual improvements in the tender preparation process and the quality of bids; maintaining 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 to ensure adequate management capacity, knowledge and skills for the services being delivered
- 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; policies on IT and data protection have been reviewed due to GDPR; penetration testing and security audits by independent experts

Looking ahead

In 2018/19 Refuge will build on the successes achieved in the previous financial year with an ambitious set of activities planned for the year. As social and demographic trends change Refuge will continue to be agile enough to update and improve its response to meet the complex and changing needs of its clients and address the wider violence against women and girls (VAWG) agenda.

Key areas of new development will include:

- Continuing to lead 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
- Extending the capacity and profile of our modern slavery and sex trafficking work
- Ensuring the survivor’s voice is heard through our newly created survivor engagement function. This work will inform and drive current services, future services, fundraising, policies, communications and campaigns
- Continuing to influence and seek change within the criminal justice system to better protect women and children who experience gender based violence through our first class policy function

- Ensuring the Prime Minister's proposed Domestic Abuse Bill is informed by the voices and experiences of women and children who experience domestic violence
- Running high profile media/social media campaigns which ensure that Refuge is front and center of all discussions whilst proactively undertaking prevention work to reach out to women whilst challenging negative public attitudes to VAWG
- Ensuring Refuge is GDPR compliant and all areas of Refuge's business are underpinned by ongoing GDPR programmes of work

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 £4,996,510 of which £618,762 is restricted and £4,377,748 (of which £673,167 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 £3,608,361.

The free reserve target based on budgeted costs for 2018/19 is £2,605,109 and has been exceeded at 31 March 2018. Free reserves are expected to move closer to target over the next few years as financial challenges continue to increase 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

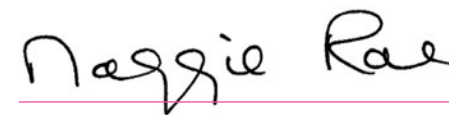
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business

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

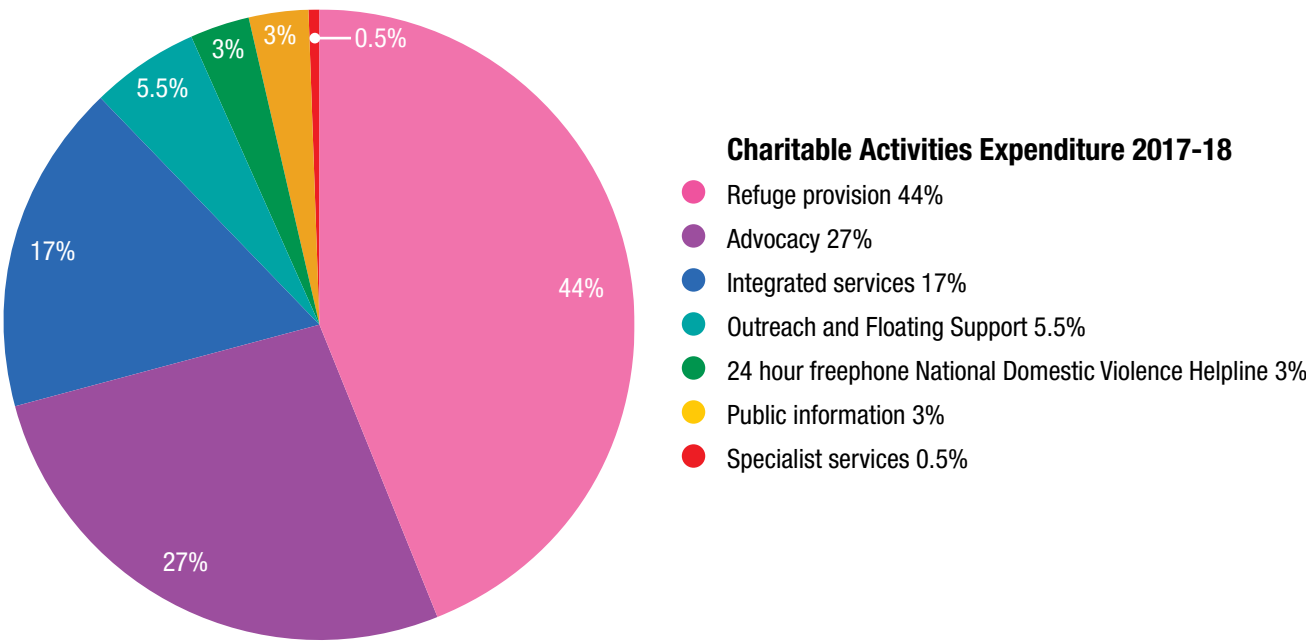
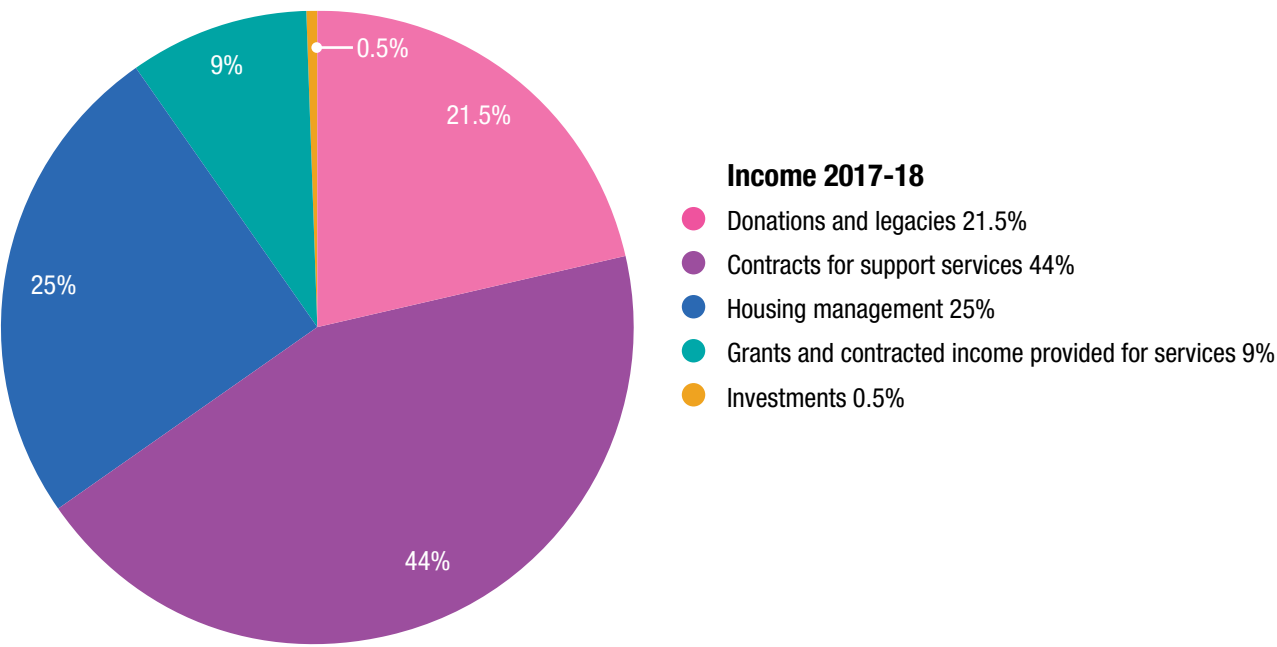


Maggie Rae, chair

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 2018

Financial overview



Refuge has had another year of growth with income 8.6% higher than the previous year at £14.4m and a deficit of £158k (£502k surplus in the previous year). Refuge continued to win and implement new services and we were particularly successful in increasing grant income which grew by 62% (£496k) and enabled the launch of new services

such as our tech abuse programme. We are continually looking for ways to diversify income streams while improving efficiency through innovative approaches to services provision. We have maintained a level of unrestricted reserves to enable us to further innovate and diversify our service provision and ensure sustainable services in the future.

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Refuge (‘the company’) for the year ended 31 March 2018 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 ‘The Financial Reporting Standard Applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland’ (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

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 2018 and of its incoming resources 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; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, the Accounting Direction for Private Registered Providers of Social Housing 2015, and the Statement of Recommended Practice for registered social housing providers 2014

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs(UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor’s Responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC’s Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require us to report to you where:

- the trustees’ use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the trustees have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the company’s ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor’s report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions 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 strategic report and the trustees’ annual report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the trustees’ annual 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 strategic report or the trustees’ annual report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006, the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, the Accounting Direction for Private Registered Providers of Social Housing 2015, and the Statement of Recommended Practice for registered social housing providers 2014 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or

- certain disclosures of trustees’ remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees’ responsibilities statement set out on page 48, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company’s ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor’s responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor’s report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK) we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

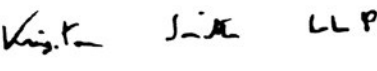
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purposes of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the charitable company’s internal control

- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the trustees
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the trustees’ use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charitable company’s ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor’s report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor’s report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company’s members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company’s members those matters 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.



Neil Finlayson (Senior Statutory Auditor)

for and on behalf of Kingston Smith LLP, Statutory Auditor

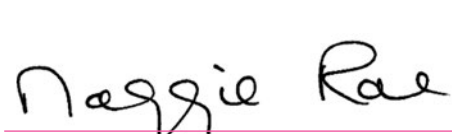
Devonshire House
60 Goswell Road
London EC1M 7AD

13 September 2018

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2018
(incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account)

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2018 £	Total Funds 2017 £
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	4	2,551,704	560,399	3,112,103	3,273,938
Operating activities:					
Contracts for support services	5	6,323,787	-	6,323,787	5,412,197
Housing management		3,666,180	-	3,666,180	3,561,151
Grants	6	-	1,294,993	1,294,993	798,392
Investments	7	39,423	-	39,423	32,120
Other income	8	-	-	-	214,740
Total income and endowments	3	12,581,094	1,855,392	14,436,486	13,292,538
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	9	790,317	-	790,317	883,944
Operating activities:					
Refuge provision		5,720,370	361,145	6,081,515	6,669,017
Advocacy		3,214,301	485,562	3,699,863	3,097,687
Integrated services		2,209,145	133,090	2,342,235	766,209
Outreach and floating support		313,109	422,023	735,132	594,610
24 Hour Freephone National Domestic Violence Helpline		43,935	383,573	427,508	429,444
Public information		440,259	-	440,259	361,314
Specialist support services		1,440	61,984	63,424	53,905
Total expenditure	3,11	12,732,876	1,847,377	14,580,253	12,856,130
Realised gains/(losses) on investments	15	20,106	-	20,106	6,440
Unrealised gains/(losses) on investments	15	(34,657)	-	(34,657)	58,812
Net income/(expenditure)		(166,333)	8,015	(158,318)	501,660
Transfers between funds	20,21	(4,394)	4,394	-	-
Net movement in funds		(170,727)	12,409	(158,318)	501,660
Fund balances brought forward		4,548,476	606,352	5,154,828	4,653,168
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2018	20,21,22	4,377,749	618,761	4,996,510	5,154,828

Approved by the council of management on 11th September 2018



Member of the council of management



Member of the council of management

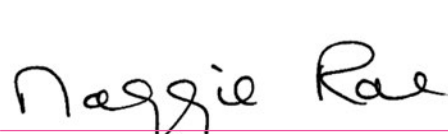
The notes on pages 57 to 76 form part of these accounts.

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 2018

	Note £	2018 £	2018 £	2017 £	2017
Fixed Assets					
Tangible assets	13		64,563		66,500
Intangible assets	14		31,657		33,977
Investments	15		630,725		644,520
			726,945		744,997
Current Assets					
Debtors	16	1,641,130		1,312,962	
Cash at bank and in hand		6,795,427		6,535,762	
		8,436,557		7,848,724	
Creditors:					
Amounts falling due within one year	17	(3,826,992)		(3,138,893)	
Net Current Assets			4,609,565		4,709,831
Total Assets less Current Liabilities			5,336,510		5,454,828
Provisions for liabilities and charges	19		(340,000)		(300,000)
Net assets			4,996,510		5,154,828
Represented by:					
Unrestricted Funds	20				
General			3,704,581		3,948,476
Designated			673,167		600,000
			4,377,748		4,548,476
Restricted Funds	21		618,762		606,352
Total Funds	22		4,996,510		5,154,828

Approved by the council of management on 11th September 2018



Member of the council of management



Member of the council of management

The notes on pages 57 to 76 form part of these accounts.

Cash-flow Statement for the year ended 31 March 2018

	Note	2018 £	2017 £
Statement of Cash Flow			
Net Cash Inflow from Operating Activities	1	269,625	778,598
- Investment income	7	39,423	32,120
Capital expenditure and financial investment			
- Payments to acquire Tangible Fixed Assets	13	(27,574)	(25,741)
- Payments to acquire Intangible Fixed Assets	14	(21,053)	(9,553)
- Payments to acquire Financial Investments	15	(109,162)	(20,061)
- Investment disposal proceeds		109,760	17,072
Increase in Cash and Cash Equivalents			
	2	261,019	772,435

Notes to the Statement of Cash-flow

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

Net movement in funds	(158,318)	501,660
Depreciation	29,511	28,624
Amortisation	23,372	14,460
Investment income	(39,423)	(32,120)
Unrealised/realised losses/(gains)	14,551	(65,252)
(Increase)/Decrease in trade and other debtors	(328,168)	(541,493)
Increase in trade and other creditors	688,100	836,134
Increase in provisions	40,000	36,585
	269,625	778,598

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

Increase in Cash and Cash at Bank in the year	261,019	772,435
Increase in net funds	261,019	772,435
Net funds at 1 April 2017	6,546,090	5,773,655
Net funds at 31 March 2018	6,807,109	6,546,090

	2018 £	2017 £
Reconciliation of net funds to cash at bank and in hand		
Net funds	6,807,109	6,546,090
Cash held with investment managers	(11,682)	(10,328)
Cash at bank and in hand	6,795,427	6,535,762

The notes on pages 57 to 76 form part of these accounts.

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2018

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 2018-19 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.

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2018

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 the Statement of Financial Activities.

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.

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2018

Financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including trade and other payables, bank loans from fellow groupcompanies 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 Homes England. The registered 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 expected rise in the 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 2018 £	Unrestricted Funds 2017 £	Restricted Funds 2017 £	Total Funds 2017 £
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	4	3,112,103	2,730,561	543,377	3,273,938
Operating activities:					
Contracts for support services	5	6,323,787	5,412,197	-	5,412,197
Housing management		3,666,180	3,561,151	-	3,561,151
Grants	6	1,294,993	-	798,392	798,392
Other trading activities					
Investments	7	39,423	32,120	-	32,120
Other income	8	-	128,148	86,592	214,740
Total income and endowments	3	14,436,486	11,864,177	1,428,361	13,292,538
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	9	790,317	883,944	-	883,944
Operating activities:					
Refuge provision		6,081,515	6,338,856	330,161	6,669,017
Advocacy		3,699,863	2,753,250	344,437	3,097,687
Integrated services		2,342,235	678,158	88,051	766,209
Outreach and floating support		735,132	400,336	194,274	594,610
24 Hour Freephone National Domestic Violence Helpline		427,508	35,844	393,600	429,444
Public information		440,259	361,314	-	361,314
Specialist support services		63,424	1,047	52,858	53,905
Total expenditure	3, 11	14,580,253	11,452,749	1,403,381	12,856,130
Realised gains/(losses) on investments	15	20,106	6,440	-	6,440
Unrealised gains/(losses) on investments	15	(34,657)	58,812	-	58,812
Net income/(expenditure)		(158,318)	476,680	24,980	501,660
Transfers between funds	20,21	-	(8,964)	8,964	-
Net movement in funds		(158,318)	467,716	33,944	501,660
Fund balances brought forward as restated		5,154,828	4,080,760	572,408	4,653,168
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2018	20,21,22	4,996,510	4,548,476	606,352	5,154,828

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2018

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

	2018 Turnover	2018 Operating Costs	2018 Operating Surplus/ (deficit)	2017 Turnover	2017 Operating Costs	2017 Operating Surplus/ (deficit)
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Social housing lettings	3,666,180	3,744,168	(77,988)	3,561,151	3,583,231	(22,080)
Other social housing activities:						
Contract for supporting services	2,029,227	1,768,342	260,885	1,947,591	1,876,640	70,951
Other grants and contracts	457,742	457,742	-	422,973	330,162	92,811
Total social housing	6,153,149	5,970,252	182,897	5,931,715	5,790,033	141,682
Non-social housing activities	8,283,337	8,610,001	(326,664)	7,360,823	7,066,097	294,726
Total:	14,436,486	14,580,253	(143,767)	13,292,538	12,856,130	436,408

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

	2018 £	2017 £
Social housing income		
Rent receivable net of identifiable service charges	1,624,693	1,579,739
Service charges receivable eligible for Housing Benefit	2,102,612	2,018,049
Service charges receivable ineligible for Housing Benefit	228,111	221,902
Rent losses due to voids	(289,236)	(258,539)
Turnover from social housing lettings	3,666,180	3,561,151
Expenditure on social housing lettings		
Services	1,075,031	1,021,315
Management	1,487,631	1,318,813
Routine maintenance	105,507	73,636
Planned maintenance	45,723	47,904
Bad debts	48,839	169,339
Lease charges	980,753	951,540
Property depreciation	684	684
Operating costs on social housing lettings	3,744,168	3,583,231
Operating surplus/(deficit) on social lettings	(77,988)	(22,080)
Social housing units		
The number of supported housing units under management at the end of the period:	2018	2017
Owned and managed	8	8
Not owned but managed	293	288
	301	296

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2018

4. Donations and legacies 2018

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, as well as 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 2018

6. Grants

	2018 £	2017 £
	Restricted	Restricted
BBC Children in Need	43,173	27,597
Big Lottery Fund	57,918	35,086
Cambridgeshire	109,494	-
Comic Relief	122,270	50,000
City of London Corporation’s charitable funder, City Bridge Trust	11,750	27,700
Derby City Council	26,628	45,414
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport	77,784	-
Department for Work and Pensions	3,450	-
East Sussex County Council	57,967	-
Fenland District Council	-	50,779
Garfield Weston Foundation	50,000	-
Home Office	250,000	330,000
Huntingdonshire District Council	-	57,343
Job Centre Plus	-	8,448
London Borough of Hounslow	32,371	-
London Borough of Lewisham	25,017	-
London Borough of Redbridge	8,024	5,118
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames	108,376	-
London Borough of Southwark	13,310	-
London Councils	68,294	59,683
London Stock Exchange	-	20,000
Shropshire County Council	-	18,849
Southwark Council	-	42,375
Stratford Town Trust	7,500	15,000
The Evan Cornish Foundation	10,000	-
The Leri Charitable Trust	60,000	-
The Peter Minet Trust	-	5,000
Tides Foundation	151,667	-
	1,294,993	798,392

In 2017-18 Refuge received two grants from Big Lottery Fund totalling £57,918. The first grant of £38,756 is part of a three year award of £92,612, towards general running cost and salaries for outreach service in Redbridge. The second grant of £19,162 is part of the three year award of £499,935, towards general running cost and salaries for Eastern European Independent Gender Violence Advocacy service. During the year £49,491 of the grants was expended and £8,427 carried forward in restricted reserves as disclosed in note 21.

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2018

In accordance with section 37 of the Local Government Act 1989 the grant from London Councils of £68,294 was used in respect of the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018, 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.	68,294

7. Investment income

	2018 £	2017 £
Listed investments	24,804	18,585
Interest receivable	14,619	13,535
	39,423	32,120

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 was restricted.

9. Costs of raising funds

	2018 £	2017 £
Staff costs	464,102	516,993
Depreciation and amortisation	2,134	1,124
Other costs	324,081	365,827
	790,317	883,944

10. Governance Costs

	2018 £	2017 £
Auditors’ remuneration – current year fee (inclusive of irrecoverable VAT)	15,960	15,498
Auditors’ other services (inclusive of irrecoverable VAT)	7,476	-

Governance costs for the year which are included (inclusive of irrecoverable VAT) in support costs (note 11) are 15,960 (2017 - £15,498) representing less than 1% of our total costs.

11. Expenditure

2018

	Cost of raising funds £	Refuge provision £	Integrated services £	Floating support and outreach £	Advocacy £	24-Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline £	Public information £	Specialist services £	2017-18 Total £
Direct costs including operational support	648,203	5,003,031	2,160,453	617,241	3,279,267	326,054	277,117	56,434	12,367,800
Support costs*	142,114	1,078,484	181,782	117,891	420,596	101,454	163,142	6,990	2,212,453
	790,317	6,081,515	2,342,235	735,132	3,699,863	427,508	440,259	63,424	14,580,253

*Support costs include governance costs of £15,960

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 £15,498 (2017).

	2018 £	2017 £
Expenditure analysis		
Staff costs	8,527,301	7,356,628
Temporary staff	255,883	176,893
Consultants	151,145	139,587
Other staff costs	393,111	298,911
Property costs	2,013,735	1,789,582
Equipment costs	18,848	20,678
Telephone	429,460	388,410
Audit	17,008	15,500
Depreciation	52,883	43,084
Other costs	2,720,879	2,626,857
	14,580,253	12,856,130

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2018

12. Staff costs

	2018 £	2017 £
Wages and salaries	7,430,363	6,446,293
Staff benefits	26,152	22,735
Social security costs	750,035	630,114
Pension costs	320,751	257,486
	8,527,301	7,356,628

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

	2018 No.	2017 No.
Refuge provision	61	66
Floating support and outreach	17	10
Integrated services	39	19
Advocacy	70	65
24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline	8	8
Public information	3	2
Specialist services	2	2
Other Refuge services	44	43
	244	215

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:

	2018 No.	2017 No.
£60,001 - £70,000	2	1
£70,001 - £80,000	1	2
£80,001 - £90,000	2	1
£210,001 - £220,000*	1	1

*Includes keyman health cover and pension supplement from 2017.

	2018 £	2017 £
Pension contributions in respect of the highest paid employees above	25,734	23,683

Redundancy and termination payments	2018 £	2017 £
	26,036	4,285

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2018

12. Staff costs (continued)

	2018 £	2017 £
Emoluments of key management personnel		
The remuneration paid to key management personnel of Refuge (the chief executive, director of operations, director of communications and external relations, head of development, head of HR, and head of finance and IT was:		
Emoluments (including pension contributions, employer's National Insurance and benefits in kind)	694,193	702,847
The highest paid member of key management personnel has a personal pension to which Refuge contributed:	-	-

During the year no member of the council of management received reimbursement of travel expenses (2017 - £Nil).

No members of the council of management received any remuneration during the year (2017 - £Nil).

Remuneration policy - key management personnel

The remuneration of key management personnel is set by undertaking a 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

All changes are approved by council of management or by delegated authority of chief executive and the chair.

13. Tangible fixed assets

2017-18	Freehold Property £	Fixtures and Fittings £	Motor Vehicles £	Office Equipment £	Total £
Cost					
At 1 April 2017	34,173	329,266	-	138,516	501,955
Additions	-	12,068	-	15,506	27,574
Disposals	-	-	-	(3,947)	(3,947)
At 31 March 2018	34,173	341,334	-	150,075	525,582
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2017	13,682	312,666	-	109,107	435,455
Charge for the year	684	13,927	-	14,900	29,511
Disposals	-	-	-	(3,947)	(3,947)
At 31 March 2018	14,366	326,593	-	120,060	461,019
Net Book Value					
At 31 March 2018	19,807	14,741	-	30,015	64,563
At 31 March 2017	20,491	16,600	-	29,409	66,500

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 2018

14. Intangible fixed assets

2017-18			
Cost	Websites £	Software £	Total £
At 1 April 2017	21,841	105,173	127,014
Additions	8,859	12,194	21,053
Disposals	-	-	-
At 31 March 2018	30,700	117,367	148,067
Amortisation			
At 1 April 2017	7,427	85,610	93,037
Charge for the year	11,939	11,434	23,373
Disposals	-	-	-
At 31 March 2018	19,366	97,044	116,410
Net Book Value			
At 31 March 2018	11,334	20,323	31,657
At 31 March 2017	14,414	19,563	33,977

15. Investments

	2018 £	2017 £
Investments at market value at the beggining of the year	634,192	565,951
Additions at cost	109,162	20,061
Disposal proceeds	(109,760)	(17,072)
Realised/unrealised gains	20,106	65,252
Realised/unrealised gains	(34,657)	-
Cash held with investment managers	11,682	10,328
Market value at the year end	630,725	644,520
Comprising:		
Global fixed interest	110,573	113,260
UK equities and funds	270,877	300,229
Overseas equities and funds, property and alternatives	237,593	220,703
Cash	11,682	10,328
	630,725	644,520
Historic cost at the year end	575,699	580,409

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 2018

16. Debtors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2018 £	2017 £
Trade Debtors	1,021,472	483,104
Prepayments	342,996	310,175
Rent deposit	192,973	184,241
Other debtors	83,689	335,442
	1,641,130	1,312,962
Financial assets that are debt instruments, at amortised cost		
	2018 £	2017 £
	1,298,134	993,115

17. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2018 £	2017 £
Trade Creditors	1,259,807	1,235,504
Accruals	752,651	417,381
Deferred income (note 18)	1,538,560	1,241,776
Other taxes and social security	213,028	188,209
Other creditors	62,946	56,023
	3,826,992	3,138,893
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost		
	2018 £	2017 £
	2,075,405	1,708,908

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

2018	At 1 April 2017 £	Created £	Released £	At 31 March 2018 £
Deferred income	1,241,776	918,901	(622,117)	1,538,560
2017				
	At 1 April 2016 £	Created £	Released £	At 31 March 2017 £
Deferred income	598,646	1,099,173	(456,043)	1,241,776

19. Provisions for liabilities and charges

	2018 £	2017 £
Provision at beginning of the year	300,000	263,415
Created during the year	40,000	36,585
Balance at the end of the year	340,000	300,000

The provision at the beginning of the year of £300,000 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. The provision created during the year of £40,000 relates to possible future deficits concerning Refuge’s Admitted Body Status of Hertfordshire Constabulary LGPS scheme.

20. Unrestricted funds

	At 1 April 2017	Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers *	At 31 March 2018
	£	£	£	£	£
General	3,948,476	12,601,200	(12,767,534)	(77,561)	3,704,581
Designated	600,000	-	-	73,167	673,167
	4,548,476	12,601,200	(12,767,534)	(4,394)	4,377,748

	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

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. During the year a net transfer of £73,167 between the general and designated funds has taken place. This is made up of an additional £100,000 being set aside to provide for major repairs of leased and owned properties and a transfer of £26,833 from designated funds to general funds to cover diversification. The funds are expected to be utilised over the next two financial years.

Transfers *
2017-18: Transfer of £4,394 from unrestricted to restricted reserves represents the covering of expenditure relating to specialist support service provision.
2016-17: Transfer of £8,964 from unrestricted to restricted reserves to cover the deficit on the 24 Hour Freephone National domestic Violence helpline.

21. Restricted funds

2018	At 2018 2017 £	1 April Incoming £	Outgoing £	Transfers * £	At 31 March 2018 £
Refuge provision	478,472	354,924	(374,691)	-	458,705
Outreach and floating support	3,840	387,854	(391,694)	-	-
Integrated services	2,008	131,211	(133,090)	4,394	4,523
Big Lottery Fund - Eastern European (IDVA)	6,559	57,918	(49,491)	-	14,986
24 Hour Freephone National Domestic Violence Helpline	-	407,235	(383,573)	-	23,662
Specialist services	10,345	38,789	(48,437)	-	697
Advocacy	105,128	477,461	(466,400)	-	116,189
	606,352	1,855,392	(1,847,376)	4,394	618,762

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

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.

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2018

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.

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2018

22. Analysis of net assets between funds

2018	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total £
Tangible fixed assets	64,563	-	64,563
Intangible fixed assets	31,657	-	31,657
Financial investments	630,725	-	630,725
Net current assets	3,990,804	618,761	4,609,565
Provisions	(340,000)	-	(340,000)
	4,377,749	618,761	4,996,510

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

23. Commitments

At 31 March 2018 the company had annual commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as set out below:

	2018 Land and Buildings £	2018 Other £	2017 Land and Buildings £	2017 Other £
Operating leases which expire in less than one year	-	725	-	3,498
Operating leases which expire within one to five years	2,649,508	18,535	2,740,027	20,454
Operating leases which expire over five years	-	-	-	-
	2,649,508	19,260	2,740,027	23,952

Operating lease costs in the year amounted to £857,323 (2017: £724,395) in respect of land and buildings and £21,272 (2017: £18,229) in respect of other leases.

24. Related party transactions

During the year no trustee received reimbursement of expenses (2017 - £496).

Donations from trustees during the year were:

	2018	2017
	£	£
	-	496



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

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