Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Office.

Exploration of domestic abuse service provision for children.

Webinar R2

Wednesday 21st May 2025



Agenda

Background
Overview
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Findings
Commissioners
Service providers
Further information

Contact:
Commissioner@domesticabusecommissioner.independent.gov.uk

Content warning: The presentation does not include any direct descriptions of domestic abuse. We will discuss the difficulties that child victims of domestic abuse experience when trying to access support which some people may find upsetting. Please take a break away from the presentation if you need to.



Background



Published: 29th April 2025

Government required to respond within 56 days

Policy recommendations

Practice recommendations





Seven key themes

Centring children's voices.

Stronger cross-departmental working and strategic leadership.

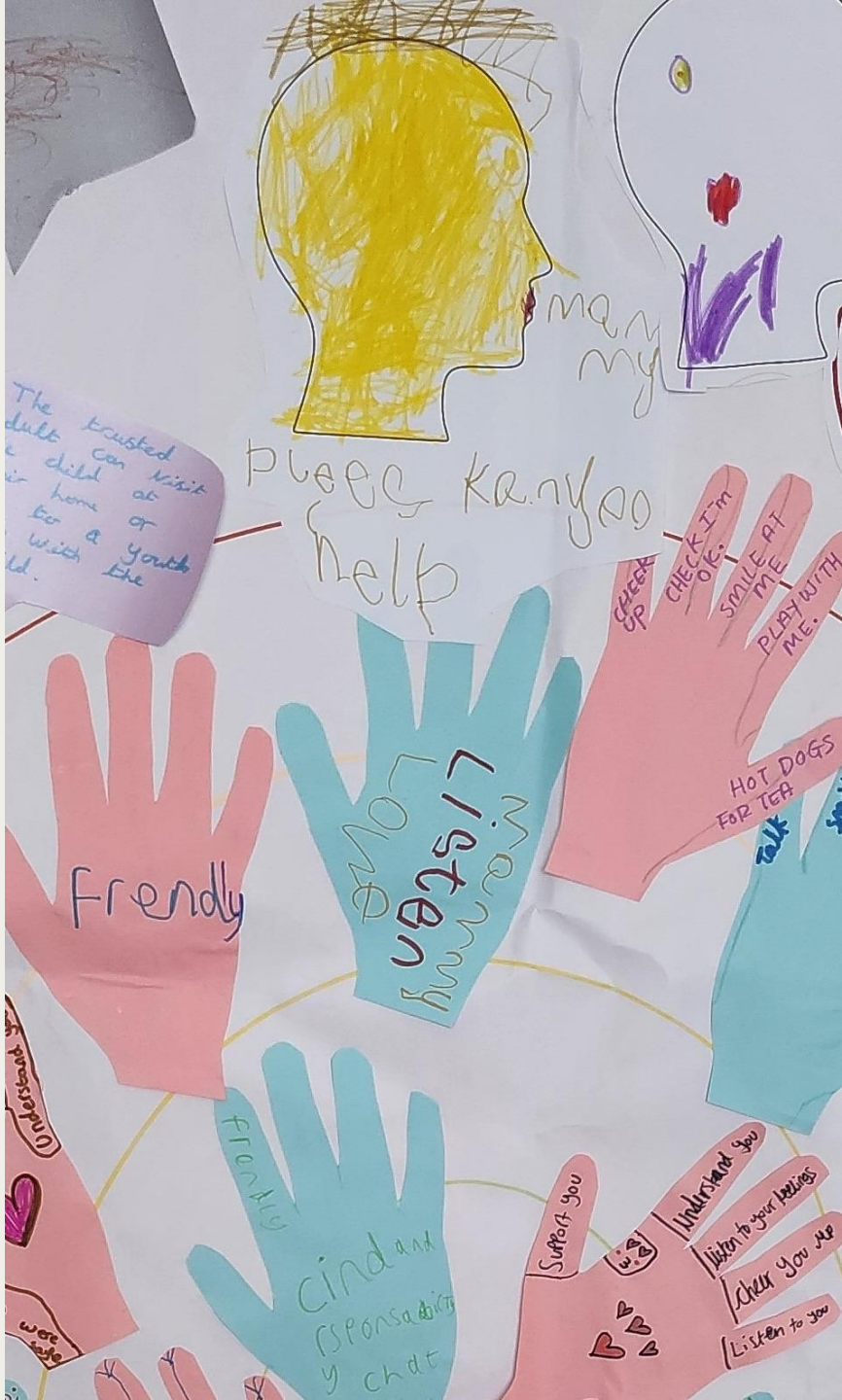
Holistic funding.

Data and evidence.

Specialist training for every frontline professional who may work with babies, children or young people.

Safeguarding.

Ensuring practice is informed by specialists



Only 29% of victims and survivors who wanted support for their children were able to access it.

Thresholds for intervention and support services are too high. Consequently, safeguarding responses tend to focus on physical risk rather than other forms of domestic abuse and only children exhibiting disruptive or problematic behaviour are referred for support.

Views of children experiencing domestic abuse are often marginalised when decisions are made about them.



Other reviews of domestic abuse services

A lack of therapeutic support to help children recover from trauma.

Low levels of funding for services specifically for children.

No dedicated funding for approximately 1-in-4 services.

Services having to reduce the number of children they can support.

Access to support dependent on:

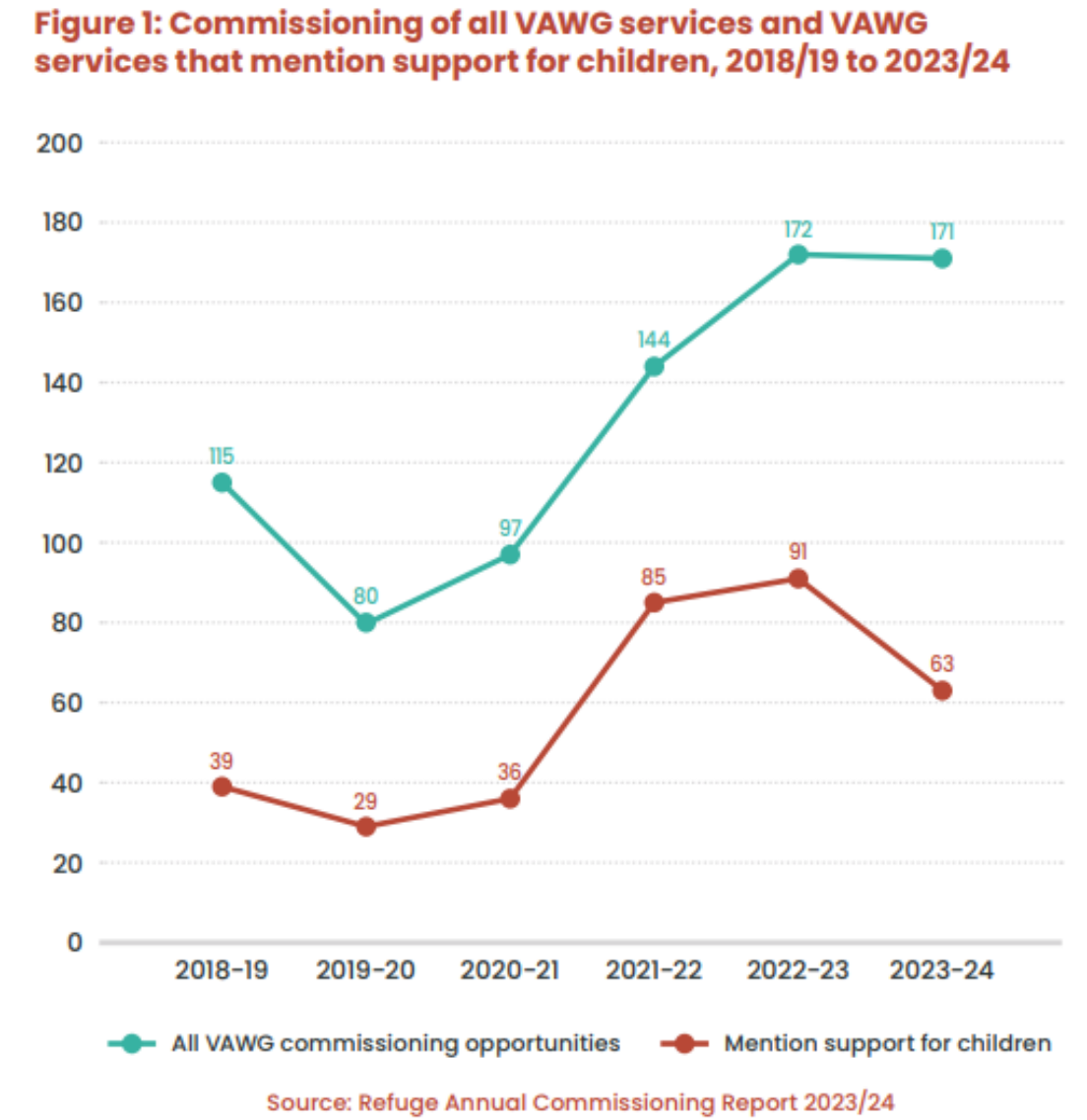
- specific postcodes or areas of deprivation.
- parent's engagement with the service.

Regional differences in support via safe accommodation.

Refuges unable to accommodate mothers with more than one child.

Limited information on local authority websites.

Commissioning trends



Commissioning of services that mention children has increased in past 5 years.

Less than half of services are specifically for children only.

Number of commissioning opportunities mentioning children reduced.

Support services for children affected by domestic abuse

TECHNICAL REPORT



domestic abuse commissioner

April 2025

Two surveys of commissioners and providers of domestic abuse support services to children held during 2024.

Methodology

Commissioner's Vision and Aims

"All babies, children and young people who are subject to domestic abuse should receive an integrated and comprehensive response, rooted in understanding, prevention, effective intervention and long-term support."

Aim 1: Improved identification, response to and shared understanding of children subject to domestic abuse.

Aim 2: Improved and increased support service provision for children subject to domestic abuse.

Tell Nicole: support for children

Children thought the Government could help by understanding what services help children affected by domestic abuse and ensuring that these are available.

Greater variety and availability of support services to enable recovery.

Choice over the length, location and type of support available to help them recover.

Commissioners of services – Feb to Mar 2024

Request was about **commissioned services** only.

- What types of services are available?
- Where are they located?
- Current funding arrangements
- Number of children helped

Respondents could be:

- Joint response from a community safety partnership
- Tier 1 or Tier 2 local authorities
- Mayors and Police and crime commissioners. PCCs should liaise with their local Violence Reduction Unit.

Service providers – Aug to Oct 2024

No list of providers of services to children and young people where children are the specific target of the intervention. Previous mapping indicated that many ‘services for children’ were merely an add on to interventions for their parent.

Survey will address themes provided by young people:

- Trust.
- Access whenever I need it.
- Anonymity.
- Feeling heard.
- Being able to talk freely.
- Not feeling judged.



Findings
Commissioner survey

Commissioning of services for children affected by domestic abuse

Figure 2: Does your organisation or local community safety partnership currently commission any services that are designed for children affected by domestic abuse?

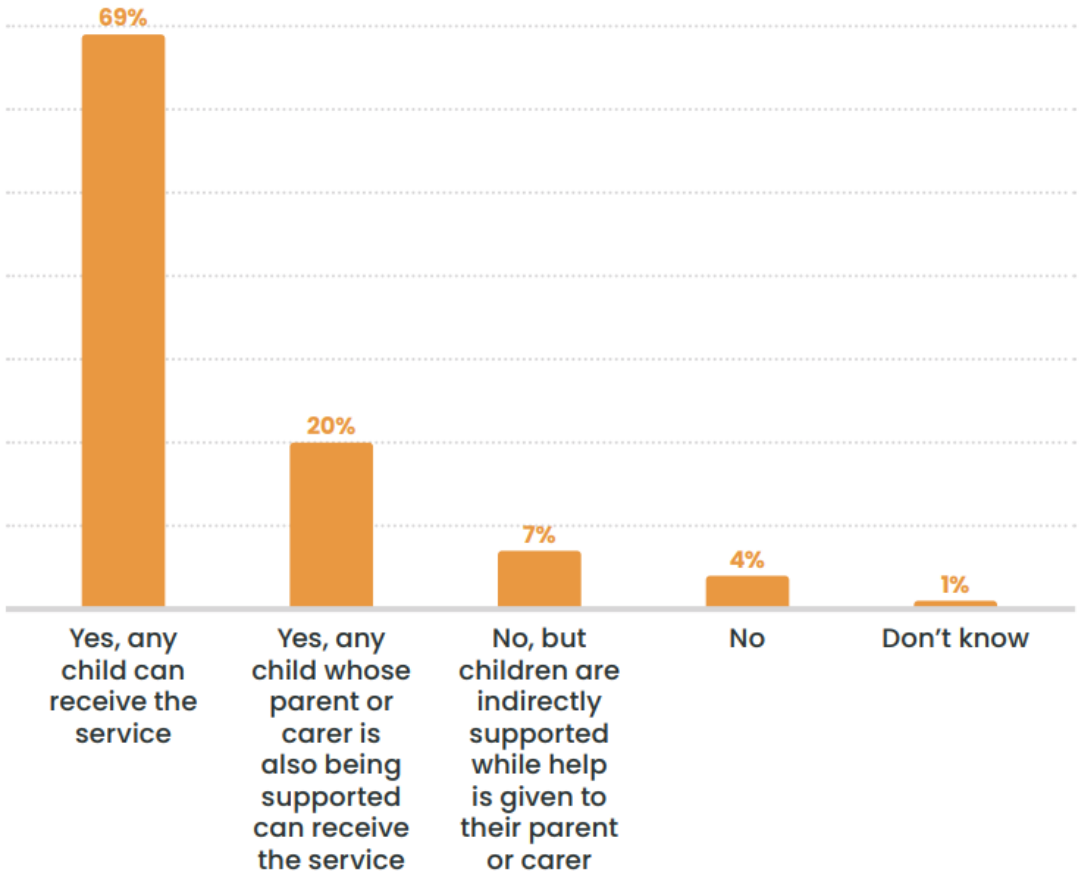
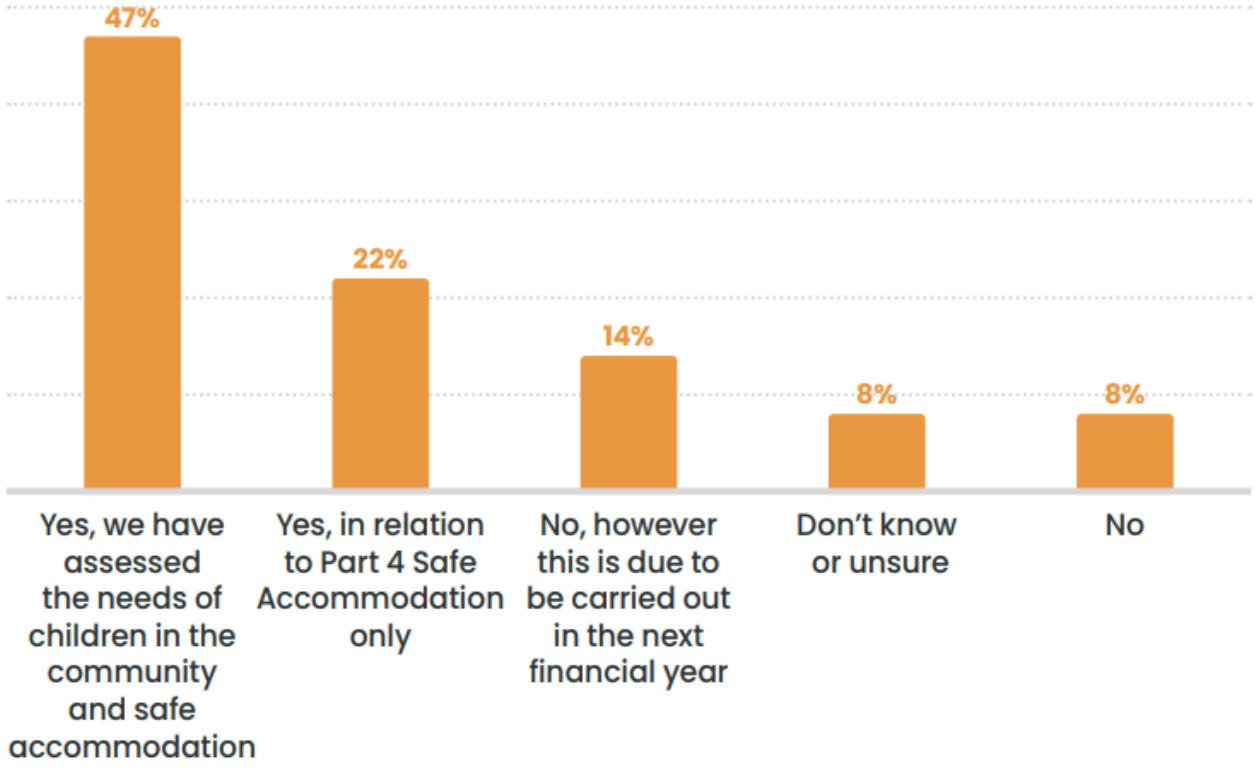
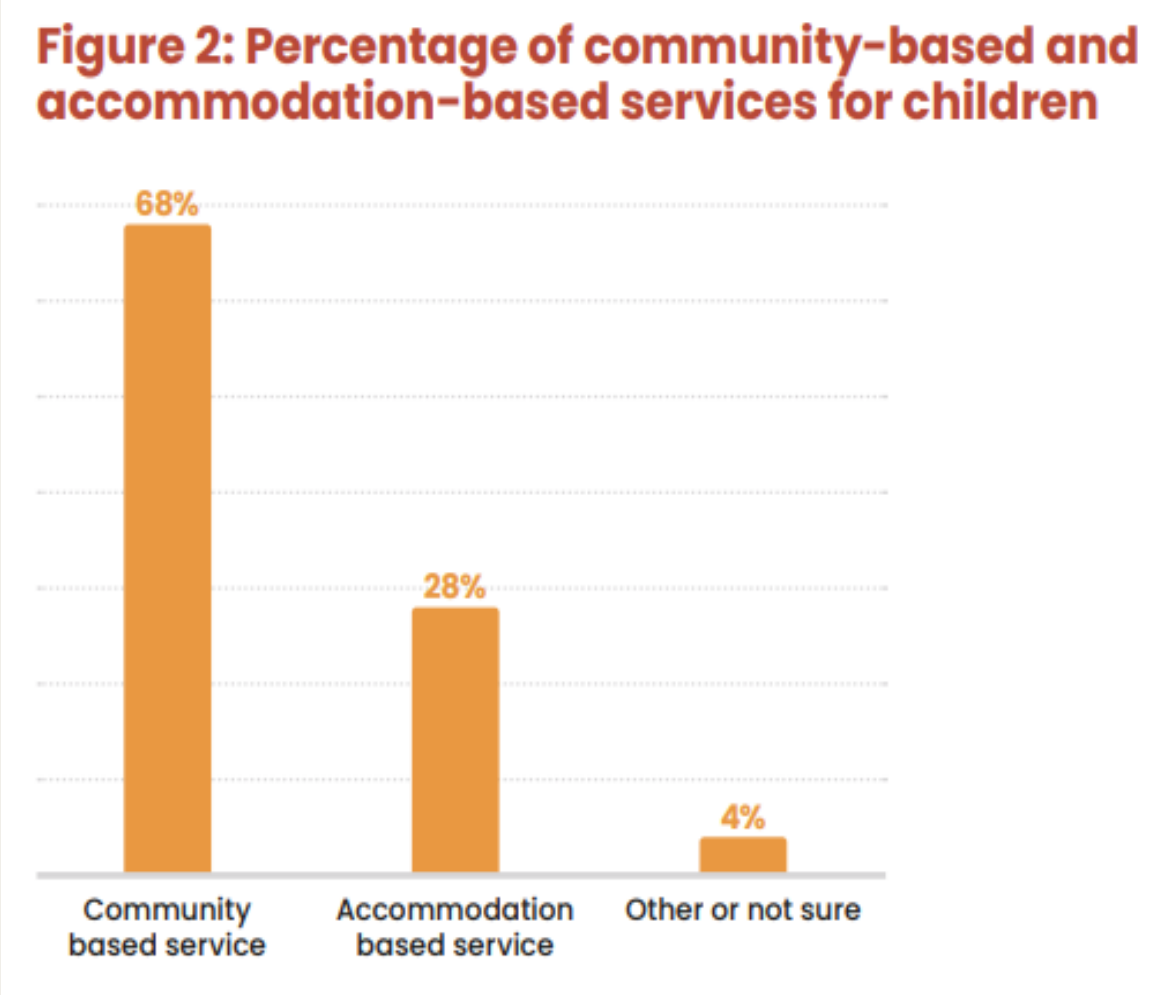


Figure 3: Has your organisation carried out a local needs assessment for domestic abuse that includes a comprehensive section on children and young people?



* Missing data (n=1) excluded from chart

What type of services are available?



Target populations

Children affected by domestic abuse within their parent/carer relationship.

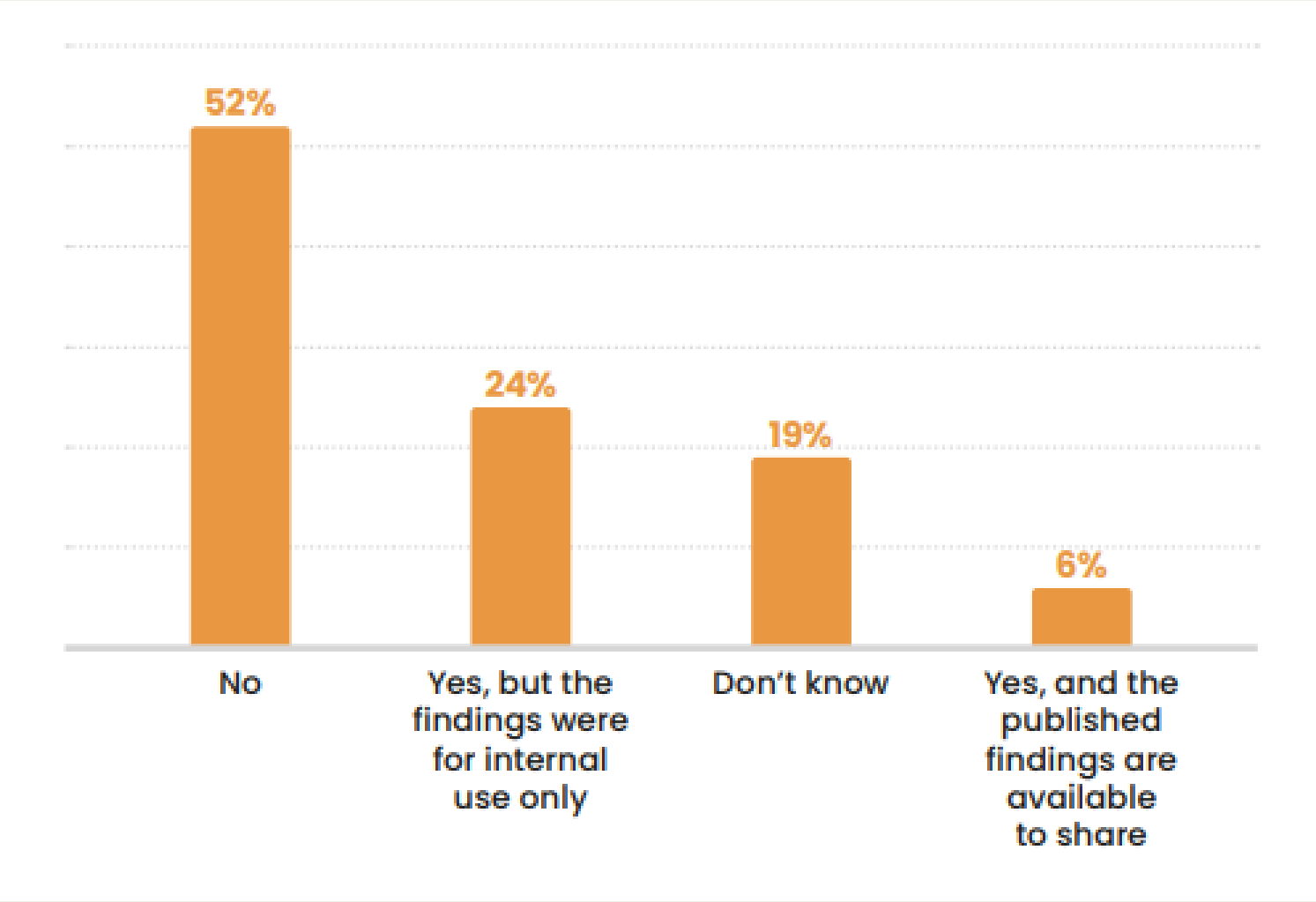
Multiple target populations.

Young people subjected to domestic abuse in their own intimate relationship.

Stage of intervention

Prevention
Crisis and support
Recovery

Most commissioned services have not been evaluated



6% services or interventions had published evaluation findings available.

Funding of commissioned services

Most funding periods are between one and three years.

Funding is skewed with far more services receiving smaller amounts.

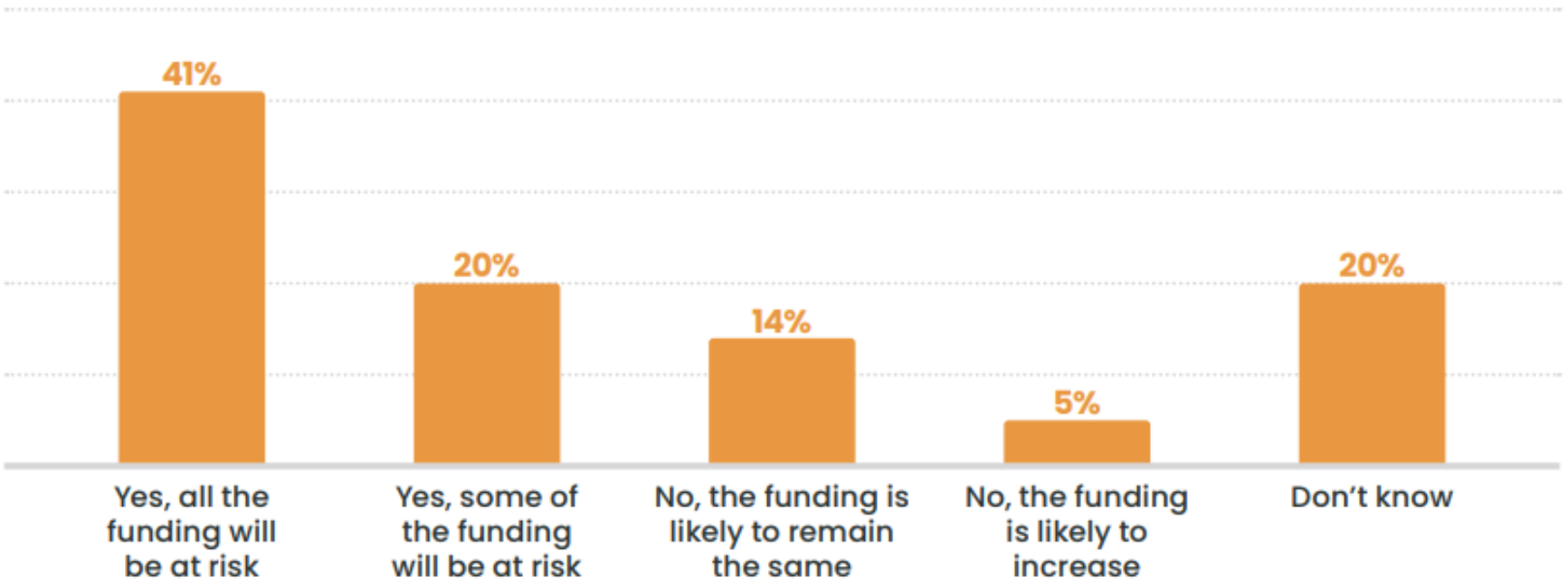
Median funding of community-based services less than 1/3 of the mean.

1 in 4 services funded by different sources for different time periods.

Table XII: Average funding per year reported by commissioners, according whether service is accommodation or community-based.

Service setting	Mean	N	Std. Dev	Min	Max	Range	Median
Accommodation based service	£106,552	152	£390,997	£2,691	£4,492,300	£4,489,609	£41,088
Community based service	£96,632	347	£404,905	£828	£6,500,000	£6,499,172	£27,889
Other or not sure	£110,429	20	£223,112	£5,925	£960,538	£954,613	£30,000
Total	**£100,069**	**519**	**£394,873**	**£828**	**£6,500,000**	**£6,499,172**	**£31,842**

Funding of domestic abuse services for children is at risk

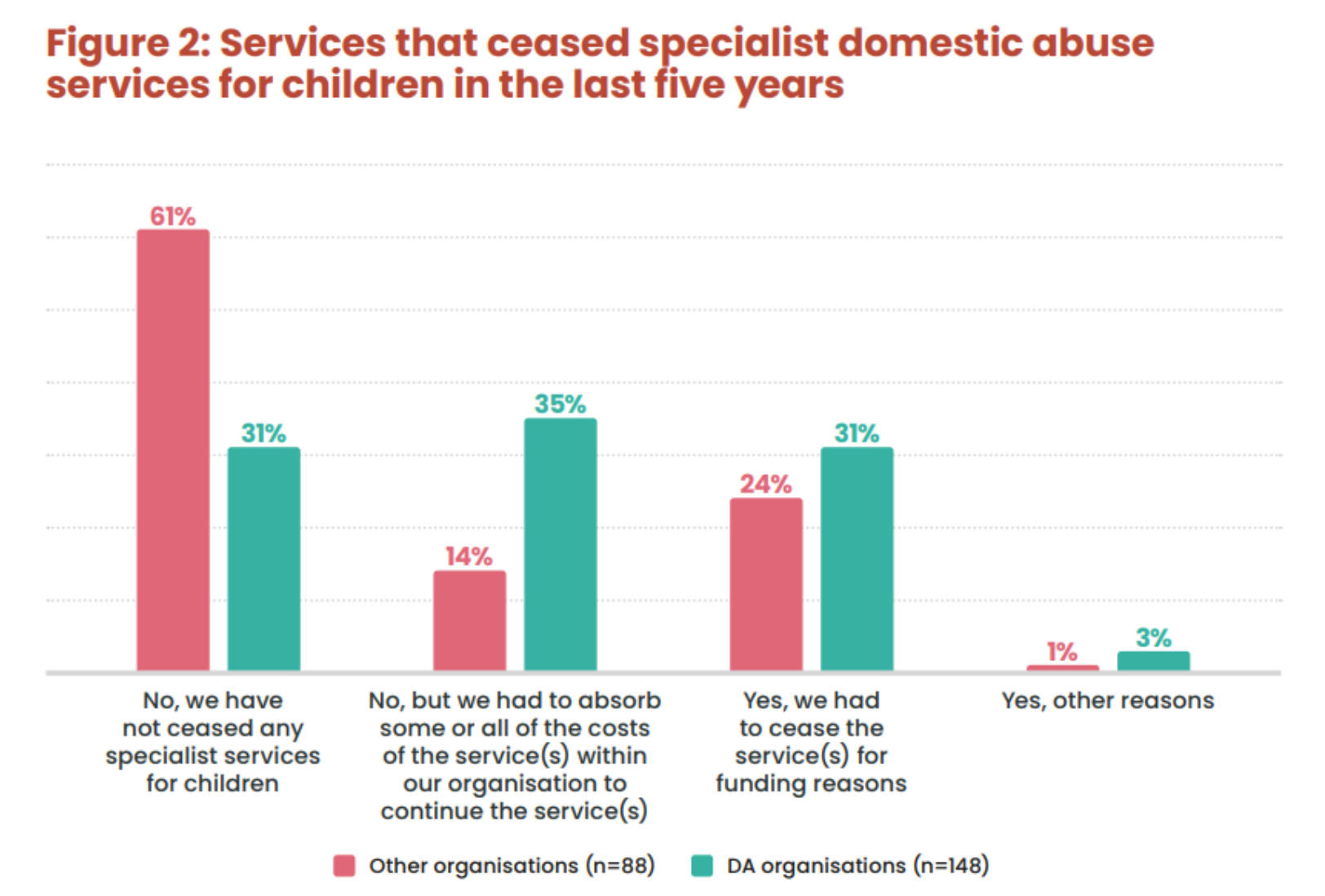


Only one in five commissioned services had secure funding arrangements.

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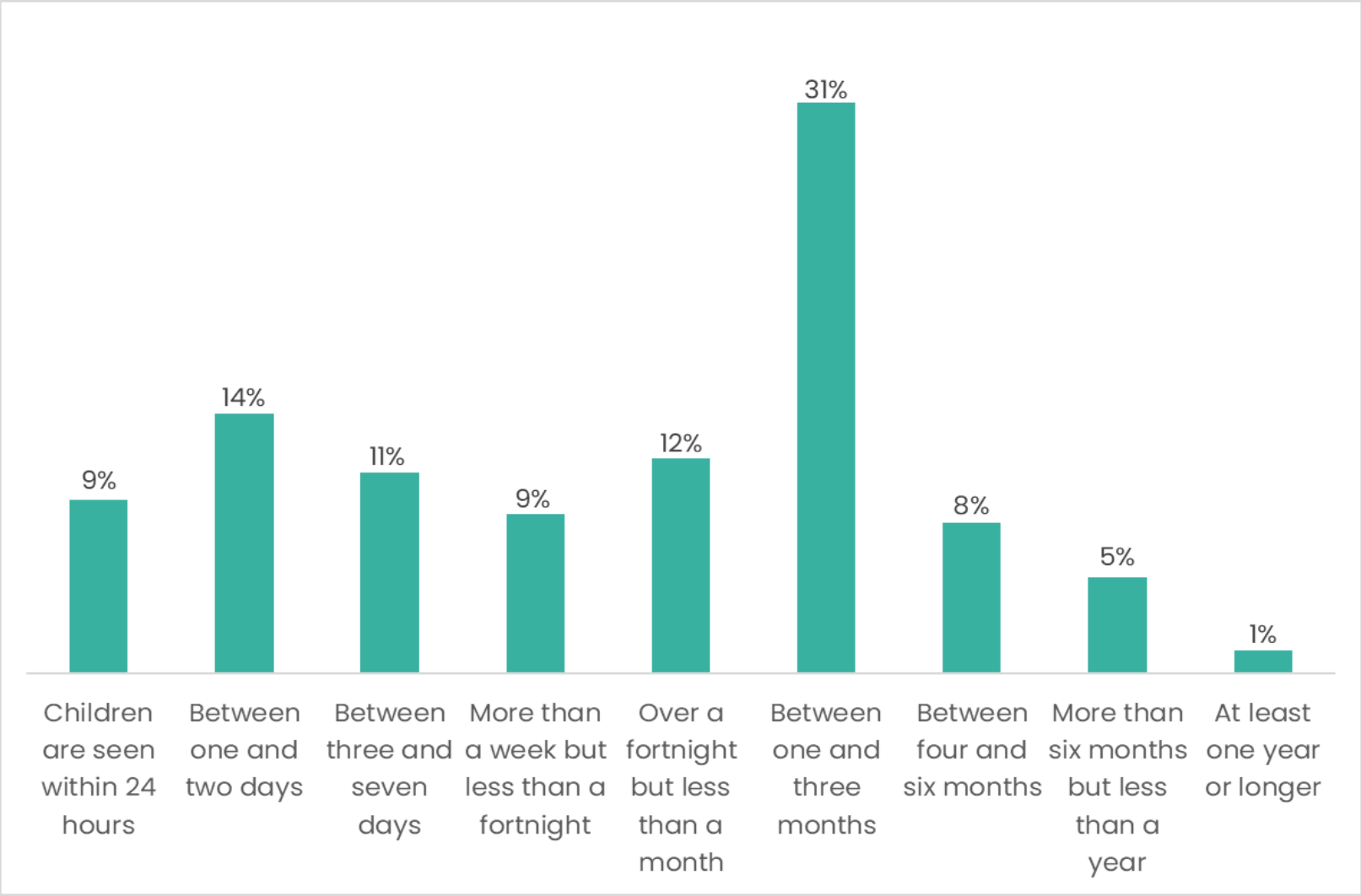
Findings
Service provider survey

Services within domestic abuse organisations at greater risk



Majority of domestic abuse services reported that in the past 5 years they had to cease a service a service for children or absorb costs to continue delivering it.

Children's access to services: waiting times



Over a quarter of services (27%) said that they had to turn away referrals because they received more referrals than they had the capacity or funding to support.



Children's priorities

Most organisations do not currently have arrangements for children's engagement.

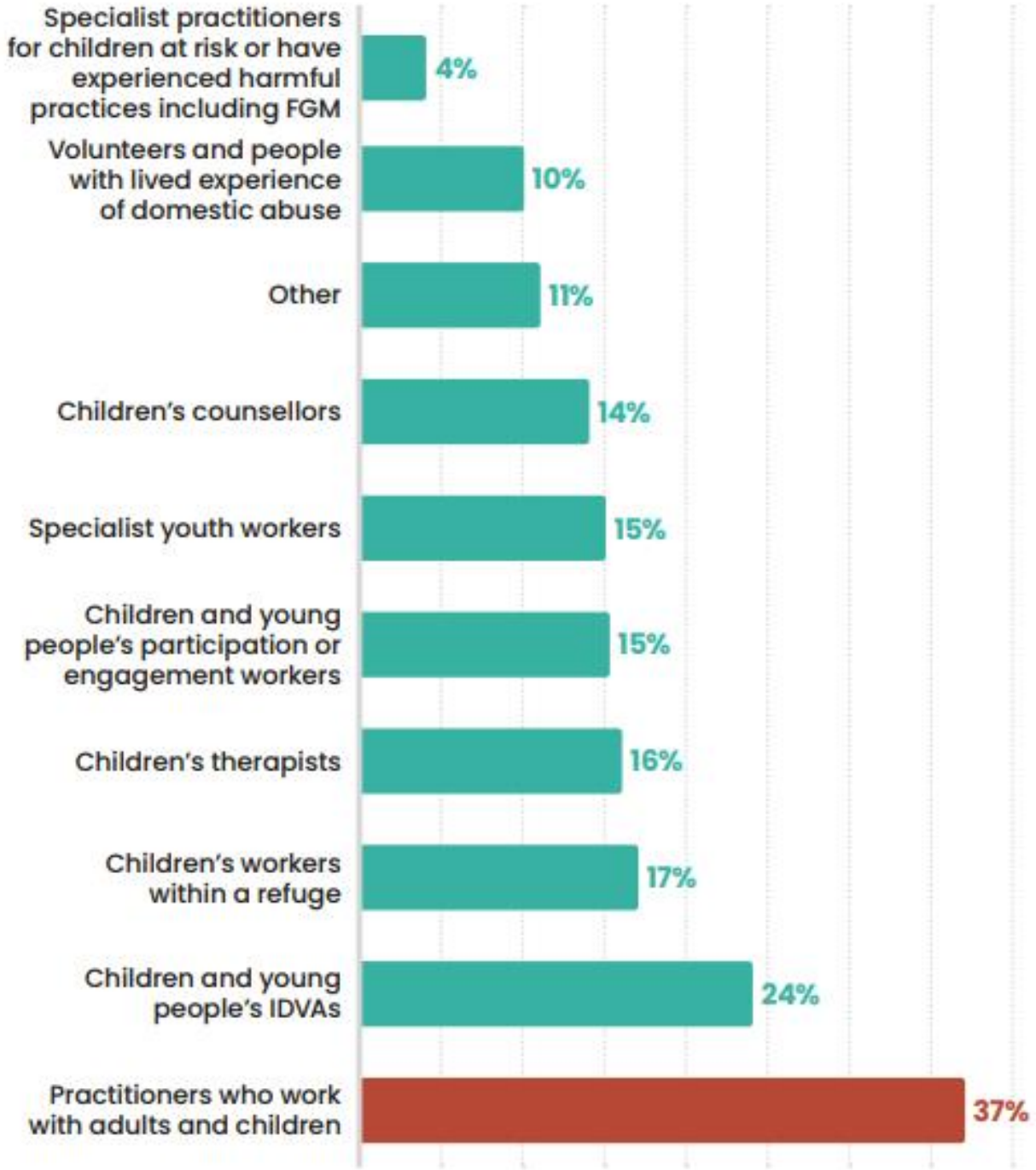
Nearly two-thirds of services help children to advocate for themselves.

Young people can access most services without the support of their parent or carer.

Workers who can relate to children.

Additional or intersecting needs.

Over a third of workers within specialist services for children work with both adults and children.



Population	Service is specifically tailored for this population	Service is accessible to this population and is used by them regularly	Service can be accessed by this population but is not used by them regularly	Another organisation provides a service tailored for this population, so we tend to refer people there	Service is less suitable for this population of children and young people	Do not know or Not applicable or Missing	Best and worst access
Black and minoritised children and young people	7%	48%	29%	0%	0%	16%	55%
LGBQ+ young people	1%	37%	41%	2%	1%	19%	38%
Non-binary Trans young people	1%	26%	48%	3%	2%	20%	27%
Children and young people with special educational needs including learning disabilities and/or are neurodiverse	3%	56%	20%	2%	2%	17%	59%
Children experiencing problems with drugs or alcohol	1%	18%	35%	15%	10%	21%	19%
d/Deaf children and young people	1%	9%	47%	11%	12%	21%	9%
Physically disabled children and young people	1%	19%	51%	6%	3%	20%	20%
Children and young people with mental health needs	10%	54%	13%	3%	1%	18%	64%
Girls and Young women	25%	55%	3%	1%	1%	17%	79%
Boys and Young men	18%	51%	7%	2%	3%	18%	69%
Young people needing support for spiritual abuse	4%	5%	35%	7%	17%	32%	9%
Young people needing support for so-called 'honour'-based abuse and harmful practices	5%	18%	36%	12%	9%	20%	23%
Children bereaved by domestic abuse-related death	3%	12%	32%	15%	14%	23%	15%
Children involved in the criminal justice system	5%	21%	30%	11%	12%	21%	26%


Questions?

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Find our reports and briefings on the Domestic Abuse Commissioner website: www.domesticabusecommissioner.uk

Contact us: Commissioner@domesticabusecommissioner.independent.gov.uk

