



2024/25

Helpline Annual Report

Registered Charity Number 1089477

Overview

The Karma Nirvana Helpline continues to be a lifeline for those experiencing Honour-Based Abuse (HBA), forced marriage, and related forms of coercive control. In 2024/25, we responded to over 10,000 contacts, supporting **3,079 cases, which is the highest number of cases we have ever handled in a single year.**

This represents a 35% increase in case volume since 2021/22, showing not only rising demand for our service, but also growing trust in our specialist, survivor-led support. Alongside this, we responded to 10,846 total contacts, a 13.7% rise from the previous year reflecting the increasing complexity and persistence of the abuse our callers face.

We do not use the term “so-called” Honour-Based Abuse. To do so risks minimising the lived experiences of survivors. Honour-Based Abuse is real, it is abuse, full stop. This report shows its impact across communities, faiths, and backgrounds, and why specialist responses remain essential.

Our model of support is flexible, trauma-informed, and survivor-led and we're proud that so many people continue to reach out to us in moments of crisis, uncertainty, and risk.

As we lead the call for a statutory definition of Honour-Based Abuse, this data further reinforces why system change is not only needed, it's urgent.

About the Helpline

We established our helpline to bridge a critical gap in service provision for victims, survivors, and professionals. Our helpline offers assistance to anyone facing challenges related to Honour-Based Abuse.

Our commitment to combating Honour-Based Abuse and Forced Marriage is deeply rooted in data-driven insights. We understand the importance of accurate information to drive effective strategies and solutions. Here, we present key data points that shed light on the challenges and trends of Honour-Based Abuse and Forced Marriage.

Through these insights, we aim to raise awareness, inform policies, and inspire positive change, creating a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by victims and survivors, as well as on progress towards ending Honour-Based Abuse.

Our helpline offers long-term support as well as short-term support. We do not case manage on the helpline, therefore we continue to keep cases open, which allows us to continue to offer support to victims and survivors. In this report, we report on cases with active contacts for the year, which may be new or existing cases.

In our data, some categories have been merged to protect victim's identities. It is also important to note that not all data is captured, as this is based on what a victim chooses to declare on the call. For example, we're only able to report the age of victims on 42% of cases, and the type of client for 87% of cases.

Understanding the Difference: Contacts vs. Cases

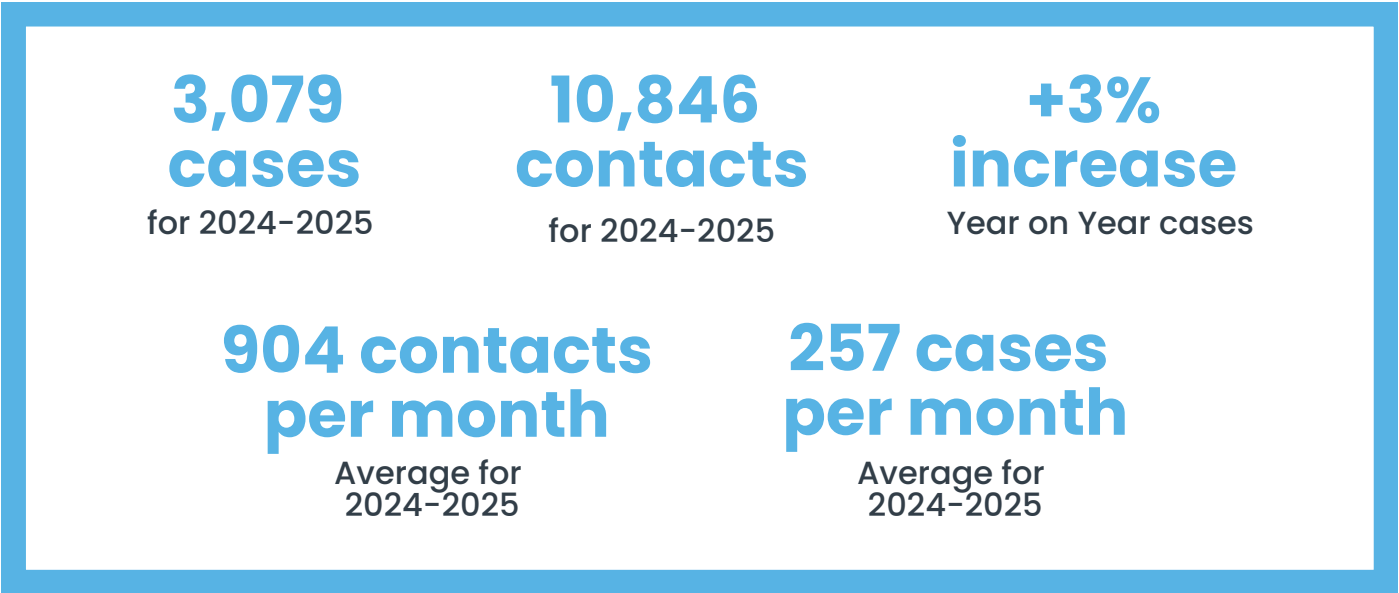
We received **10,846 contacts** this year, relating to **3,079 individual cases**.

Each case represents **a person or situation** receiving support. But one case can generate **multiple contacts**, for example, a survivor might reach out several times for emotional support, safety planning, or updates on their situation. Professionals may also contact us repeatedly regarding the same case as new risks emerge or support needs change.

This is particularly true for Honour-Based Abuse, where the risk is often ongoing, escalating, and complex. Survivors frequently require multi-agency involvement, repeat safeguarding action, or support at different stages of leaving or returning to risk.

2024-2025 overall

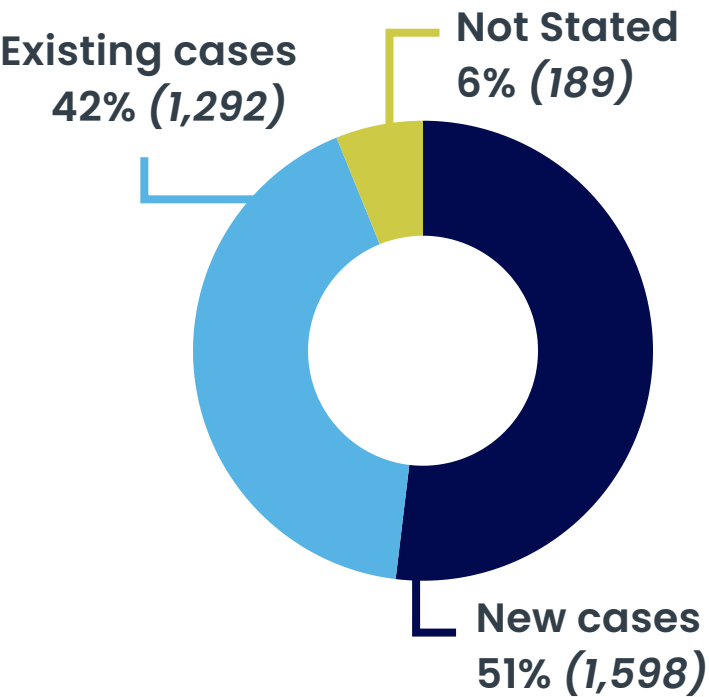
We had 10,846 total contacts made to the helpline in 2024/25 and saw 1,598 new cases. The majority of our contacts were calls to the helpline (62%), with 37% of contacts via email.



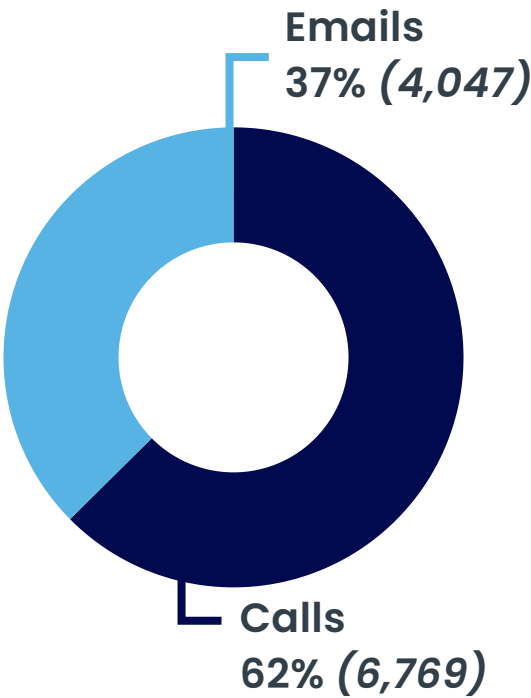
On average, we handled 904 contacts per month, representing 257 cases each month. Overall cases were up +3% compared to the previous year, with contacts increasing by 12% vs the previous year.

This represents a 35% increase in case volume since 2021/22.

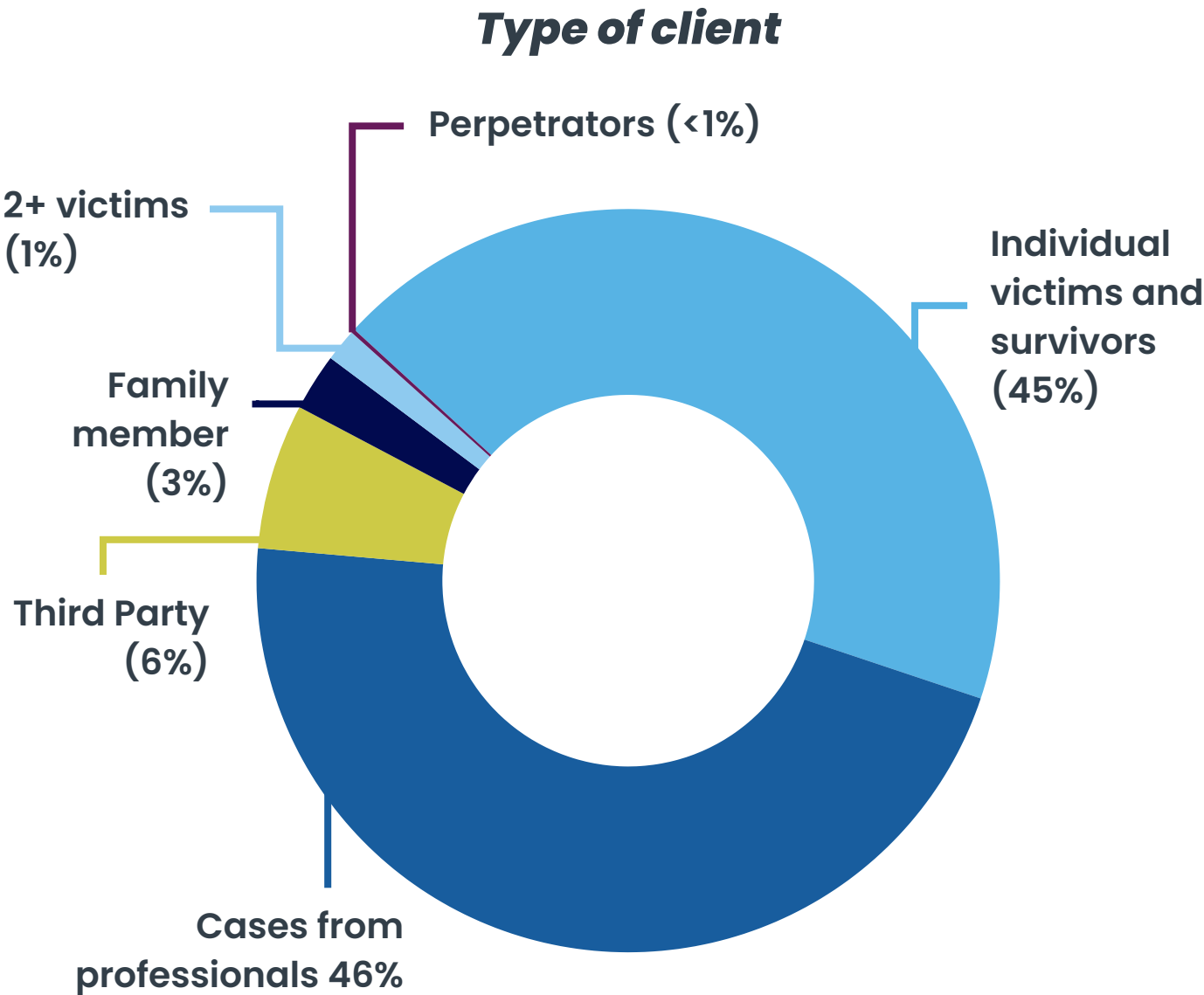
New vs Existing Cases



Types of Contacts



Types of Clients



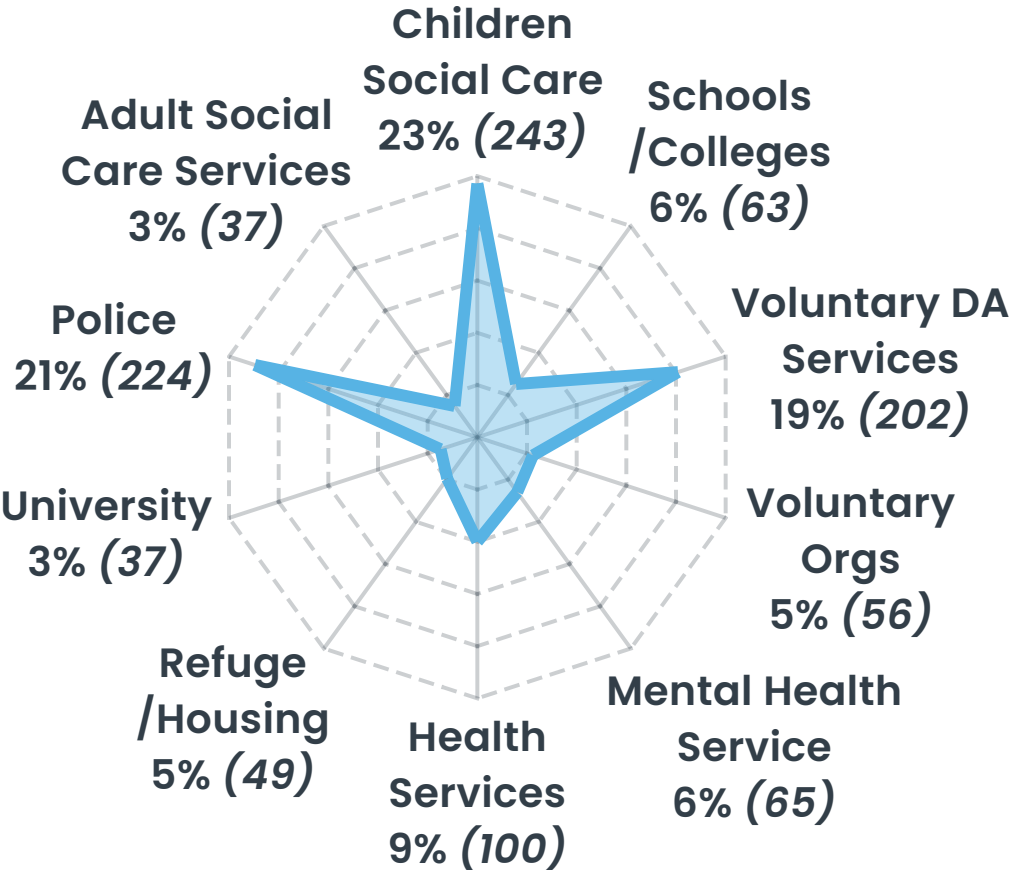
Professionals and victims represented the highest number of contacts, making up **46% of our case types each**. Individual victims represented a high proportion of cases, with 45% as single victims and 1% as 2+ victims.



+35%

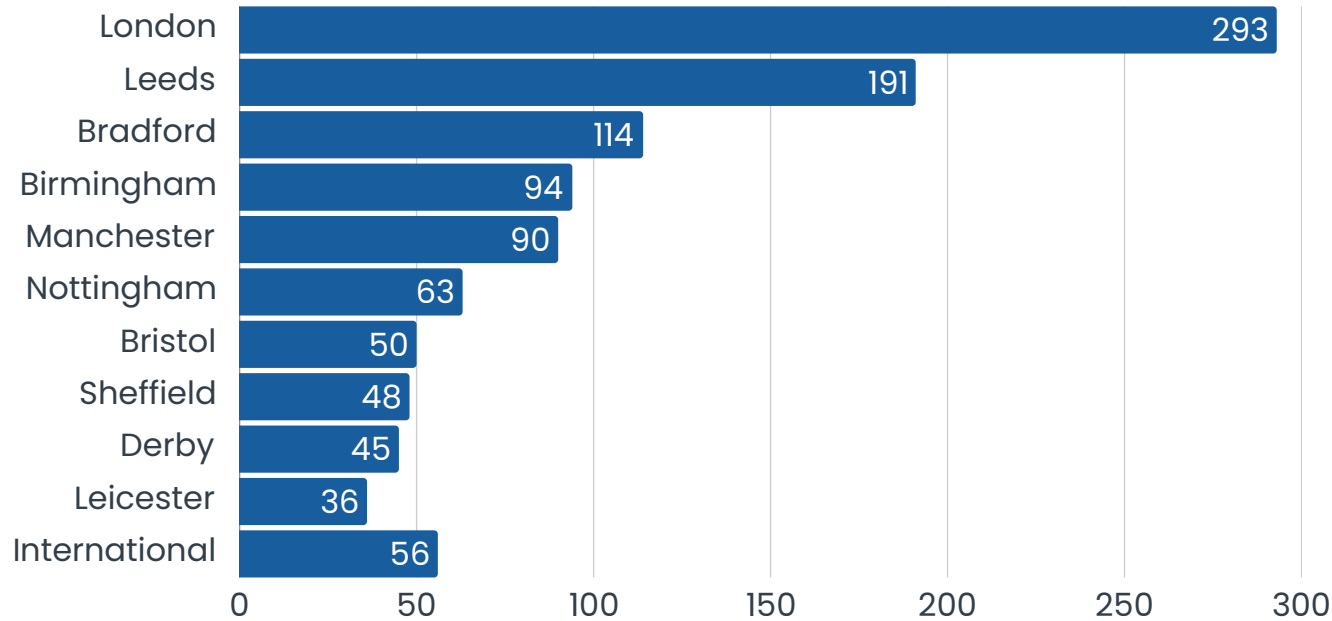
increase in case volume
since 2021/22

Types of professionals contacting us

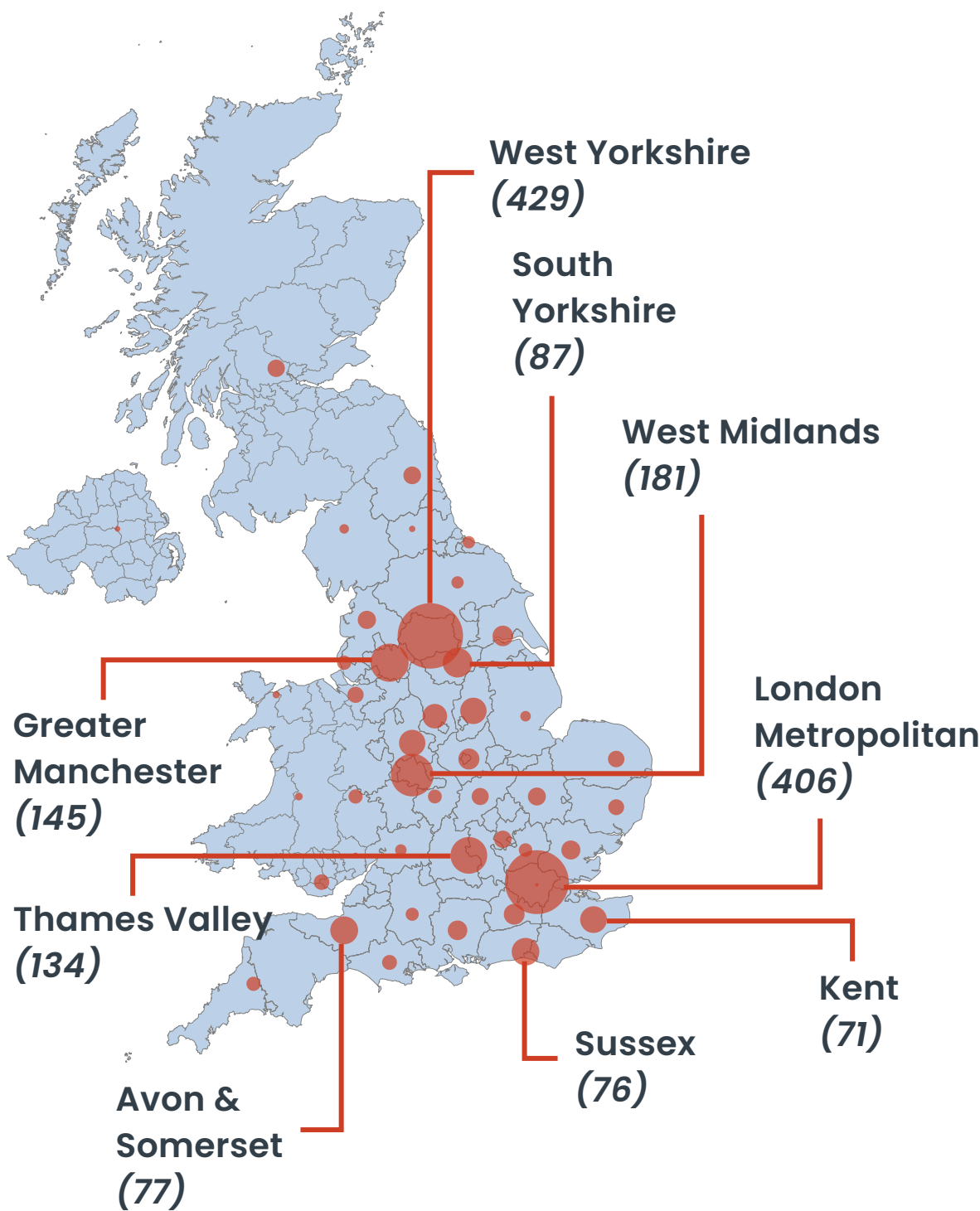


Children’s Social Care professionals were the most common type of professional contacting us, making up 23% of referrals. Police were the second highest referrer at 21%, with a wide variety of referral sources seen.

Cases by City



Cases by Police areas



The top 3 cities were London (293 cases), Leeds (191 cases) and Bradford (114 cases). West Yorkshire had the highest number of cases by police region (429 total), followed by London (406 total).

Helpline Feedback

Overall, the feedback on our helpline was very positive, with 81% of respondents rating being very satisfied with the service.

“

“[KN Helpline call handler] was very knowledgeable and helped me to make decisions based on her advice. Very friendly, understanding and I felt listened to.”

“The KN Team are phenomenal at what they do and the support they provide. So I’d like to take a moment to say Thank you.”

“Invaluable knowledge has been passed to me in my role as domestic abuse coordinator. I complete risk assessments with honour-based abuse victims and always make use of this service when I need advice or just want to talk through what has been done safeguarding wise and is there anything else I should consider. Every case and situation is so unique and I want to know I have done the best I can for those experiencing honour-based abuse. I believe this organisation is crucial to assist professionals in these often high-risk and complex situations. All of the people that have helped and guided me have been absolutely brilliant. The knowledge you all have is invaluable. Thank you so much and keep up the amazing work you do.”

“The call handler was friendly and informative, as a professional seeking advice it was incredibly helpful and has helped me to better understand how to support my client. Thank you.”

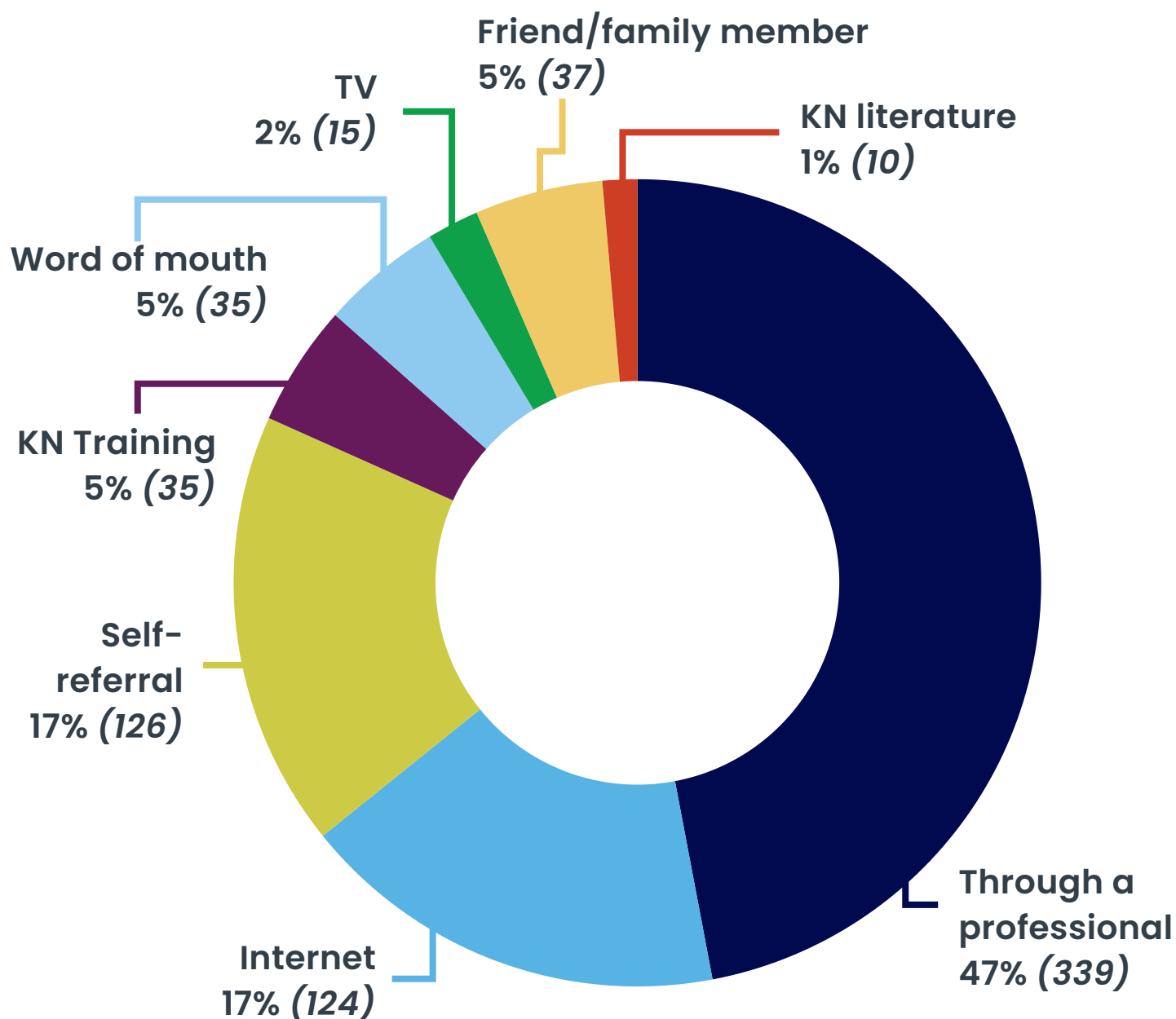
“[KN helpline call handler] was very helpful and gave useful direction and improved my understanding of intervention for those at risk of forced marriage and HBA.”

“Brilliant service with a wealth of information. As a professional, I needed this guidance and support to help someone with no recourse to public funds. Thanks for the guidance”

“Really useful service to have.”

”

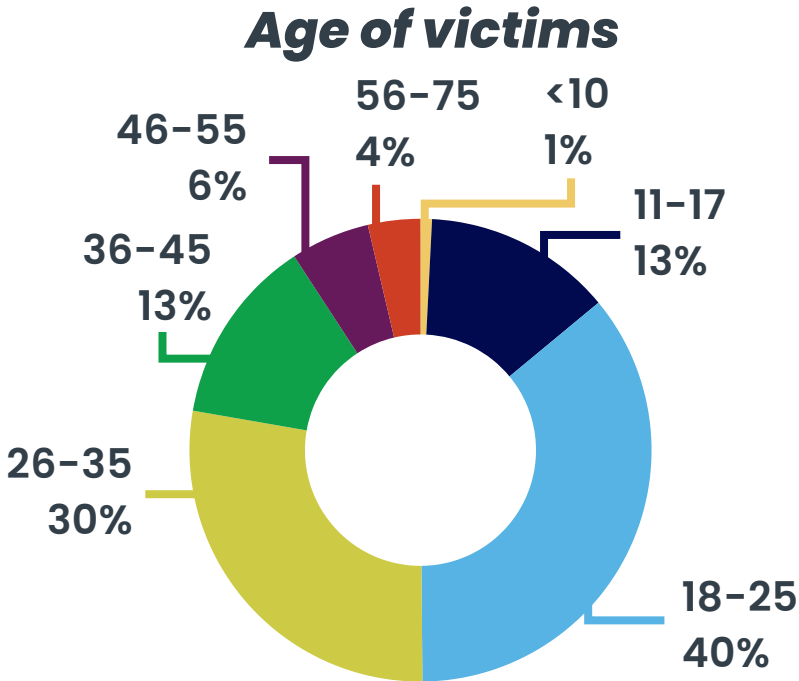
Where did you hear about the helpline?



The majority of people contacting us heard about our helpline through a professional (47%), but a significant proportion of individuals also found us through the internet or self-referred themselves to us (17% each). If combined with 'internet' (17%), self-referrals make up 34%, showcasing the importance and effectiveness of our outreach work.

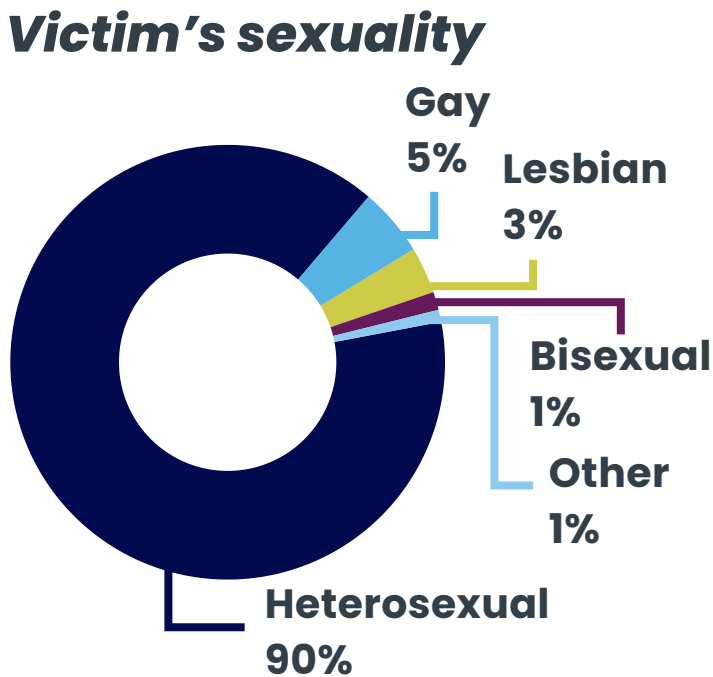
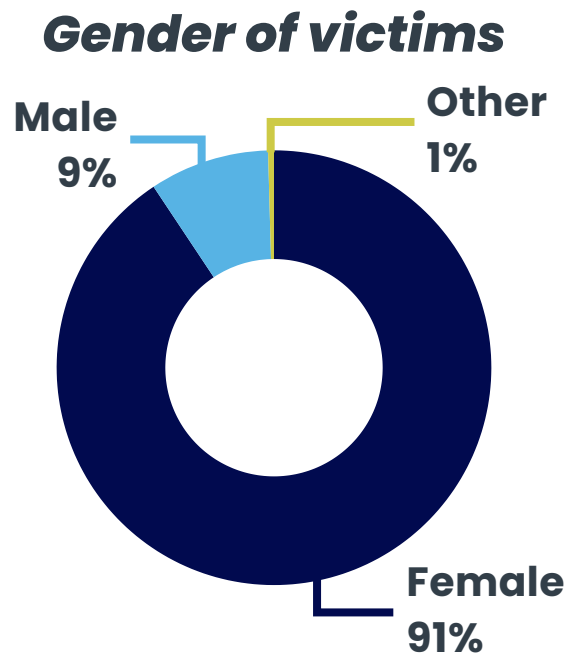
Who We Helped (Victims Demographics)

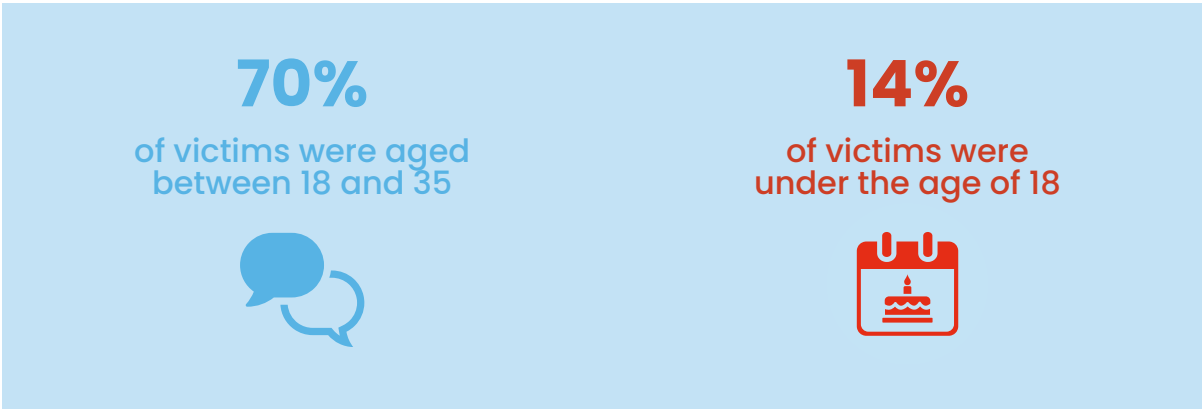
Overall, **70% of victims were aged between 18 and 35**, with the most common age range being 18-25 (40% of cases). While this was the majority, we saw a **wide variety in ages**, including victims aged <10 and up to 75. **14% of cases involved a victim under the age of 18**.



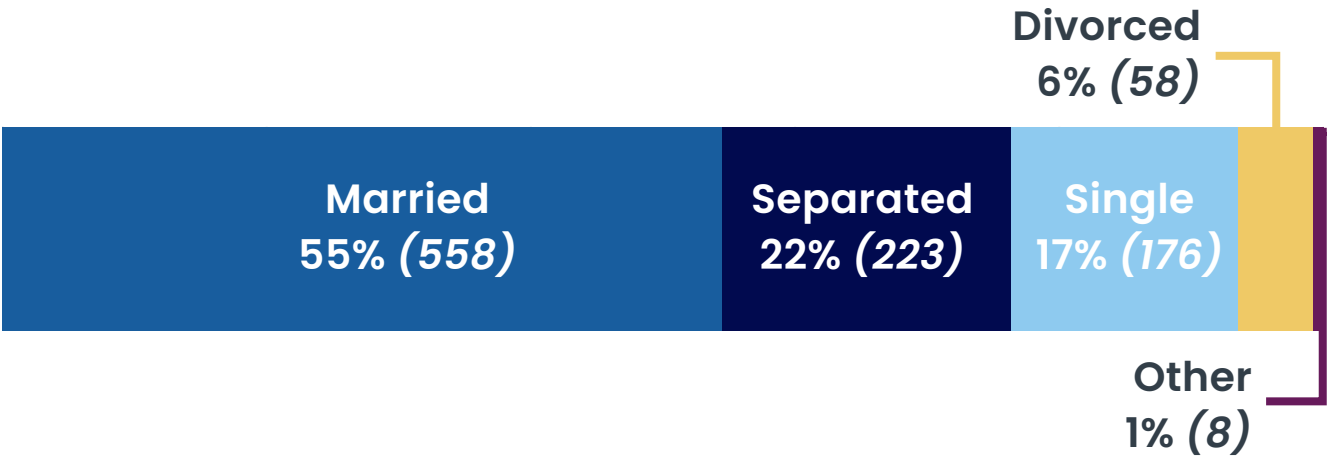
Similarly to previous years, **91% of cases were female and 9% were male**. The majority of cases involved a victim who identified as **heterosexual (90%)**.

Overall, this data highlights that HBA predominantly affects young adult women, who identify as heterosexual, but **victims span a range of ages, genders and identities**.





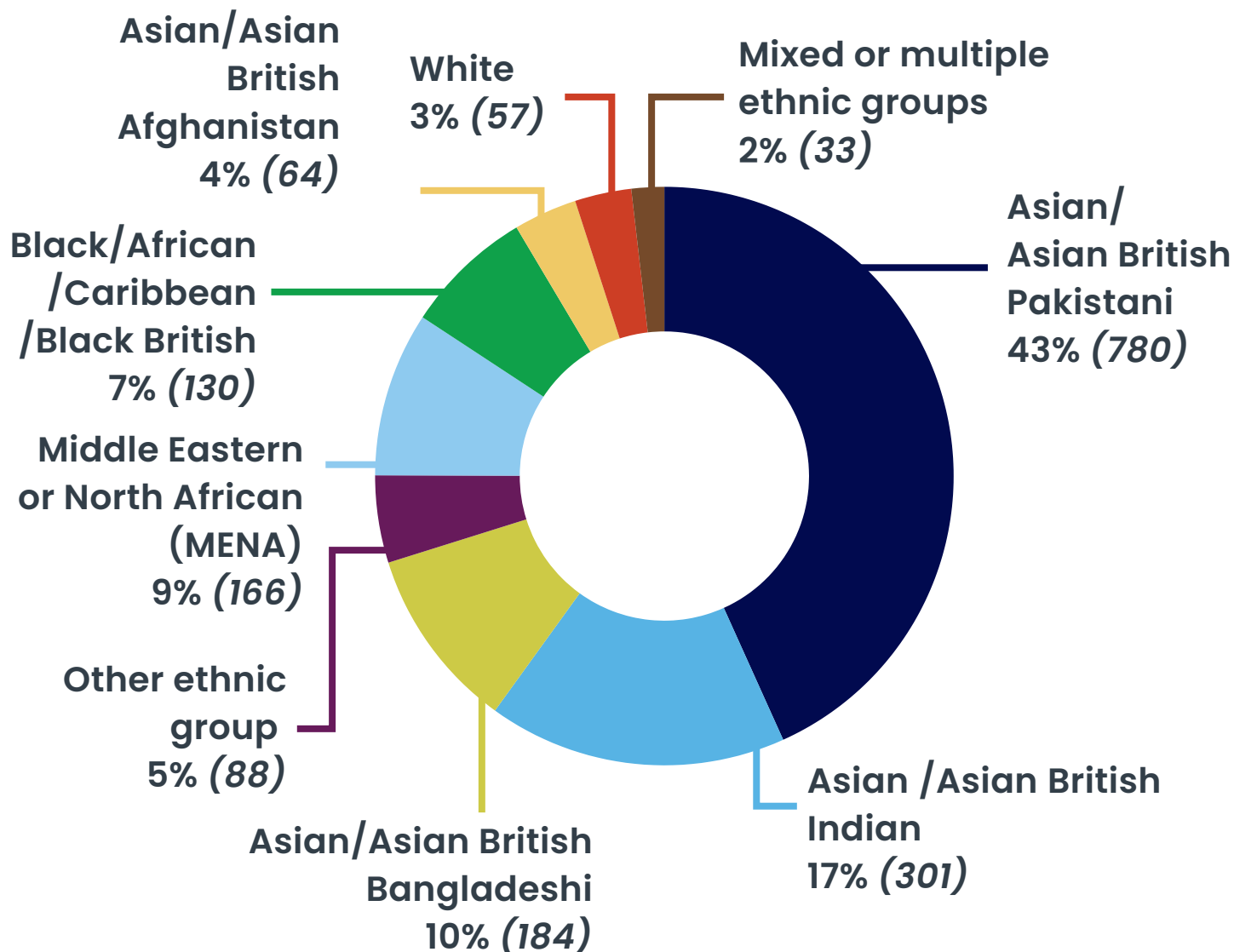
Victim’s marital status



The **majority of victims contacting us with known marital status were married (55%)**, with an additional 28% divorced or separated. This meant that 1 in 4 victims with known marital status were divorced/separated, and 1 in 2 victims were married when they contacted us.

I was supported by the police during an Honour-Based violence incident. Due to the guidance of Karma Nirvana, the police knew how to handle the situation and got me out and safe. They escorted my family away and kept me safe. I now live away and am untraceable by them. I have managed to move on with my life. I have a career and a beautiful family. I have 3 beautiful daughters who will never grow up to experience the life I lived. I credit my life to Karma Nirvana and the work they do. Without them, I would not be here.

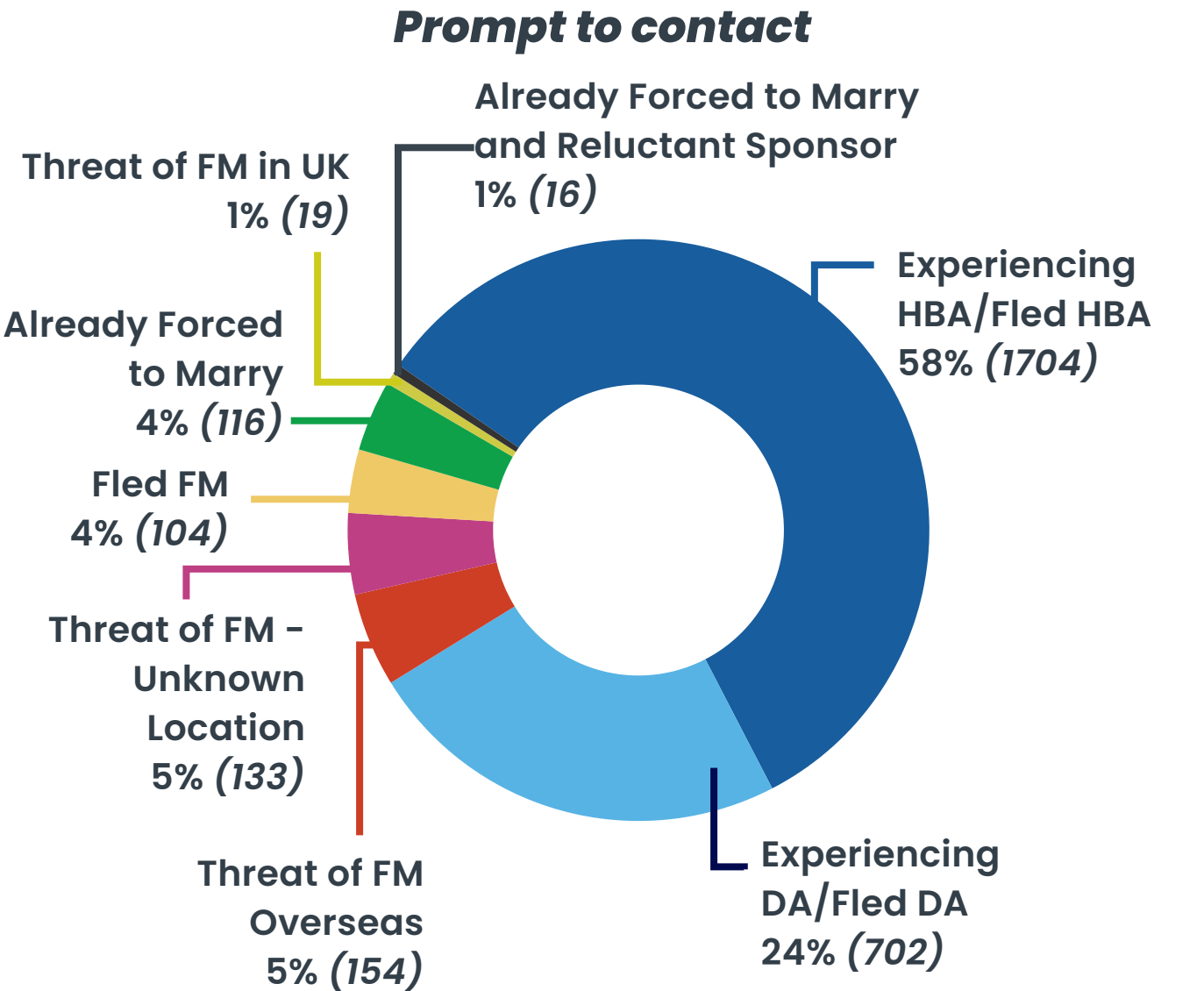
Ethnicities of victims



The most common ethnic groups contacting us were British Pakistani or Pakistani (43%), followed by Indian or Indian British (17%). Smaller proportions included Bangladeshi/British Bangladeshi (10%), MENA (9%), African/Black/Caribbean (7%) and Afghanistan/British Afghanistan (4%).

While British Pakistani/Pakistani service users represented the largest single group, we saw wide variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds among people reaching out for support. This included White (3%) and mixed ethnicities (2%), as well as a reasonably large 'other ethnic identity' group (5%), which represents any group with <1% or service users. Overall, the data indicates that victims come from diverse ethnic backgrounds, with notable representation from South Asian communities.

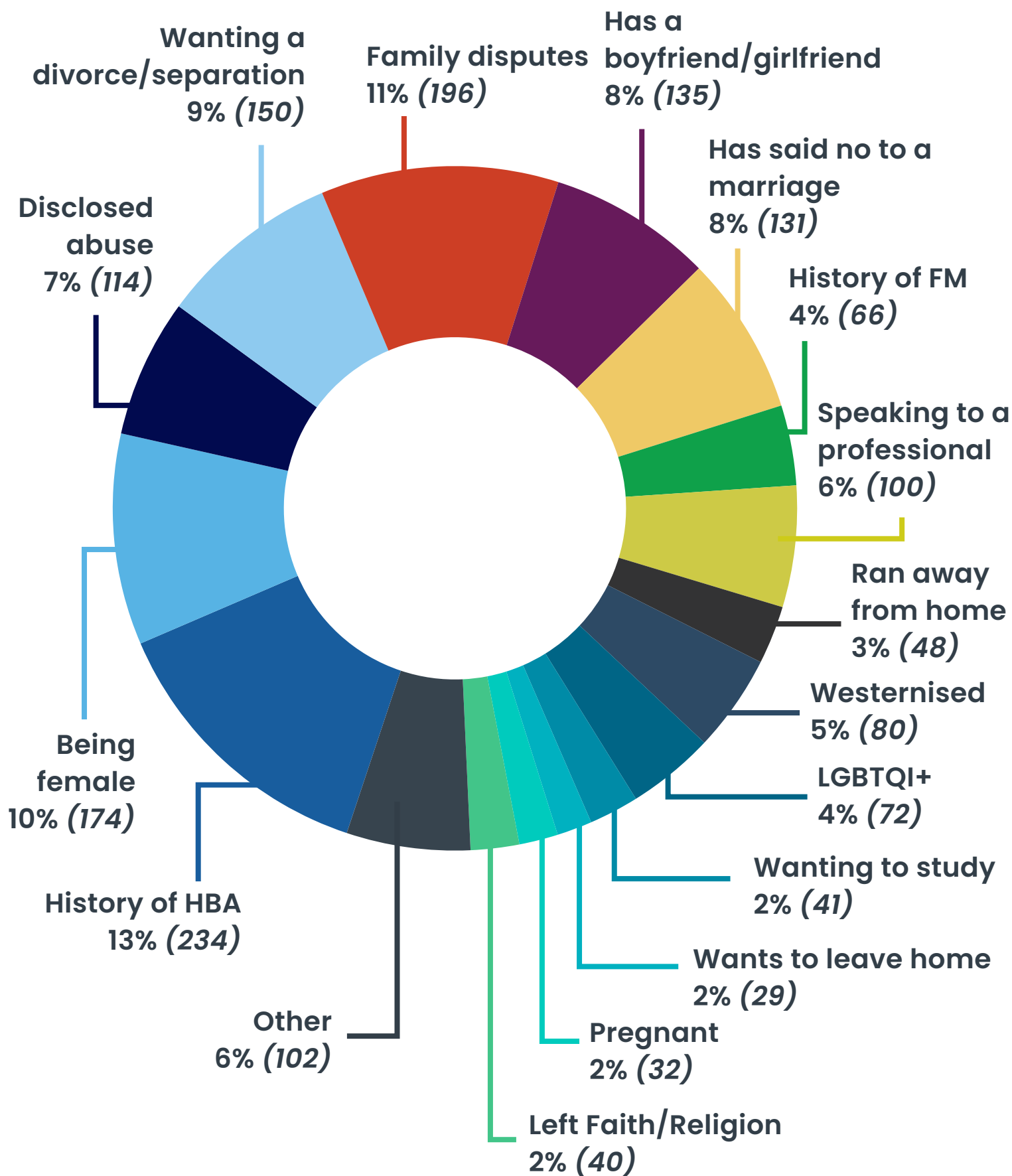
What Victims Faced



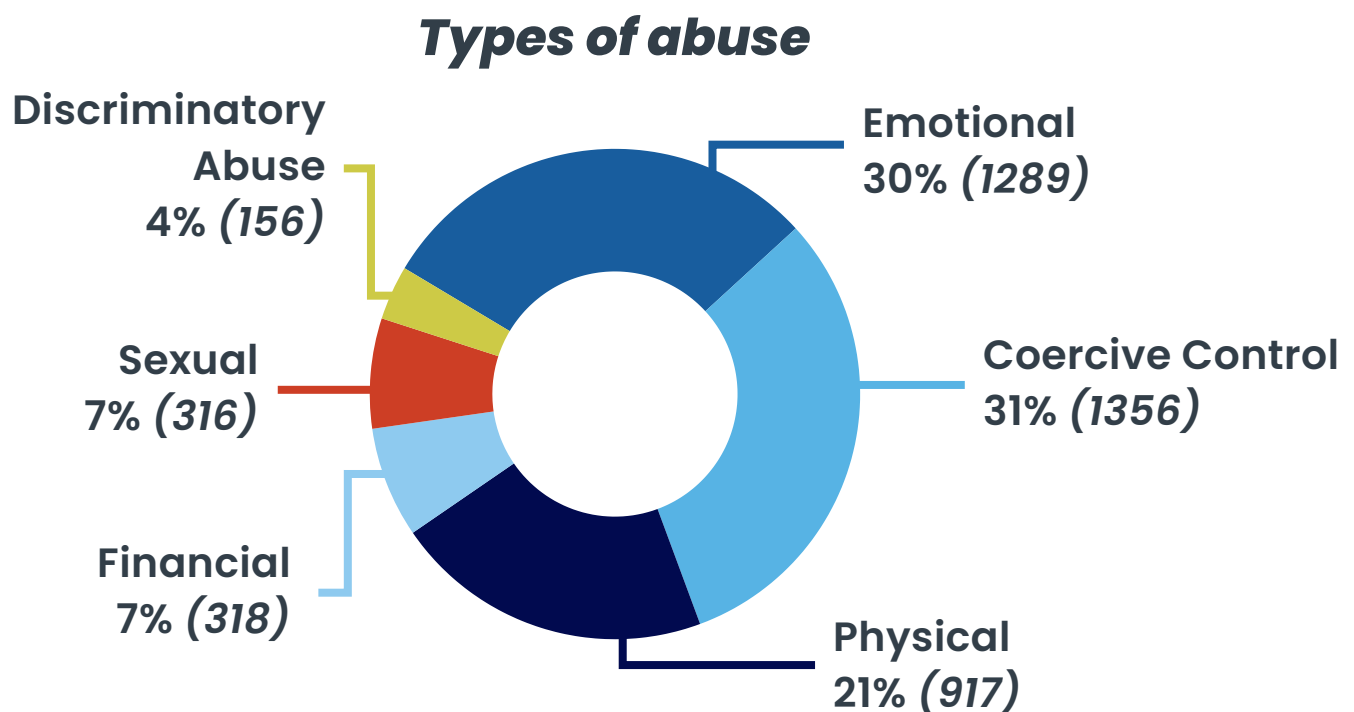
Our prompt to contact categories help us manage cases sensitively. While almost every case handled had an element of HBA (we had 117 out of remit cases), this data captures the key prompt for individuals to contact us at that time.

The majority of victims contacted us because they were experiencing HBA or fled HBA (58%). Experiences of domestic abuse, both ongoing and after fleeing, account for 24% total. Threats of forced marriage occurred both overseas (5%) and in unknown locations (5%), while 4% had fled a forced marriage and another 4% already been forced to marry. Cases of forced marriage in the UK or involving a reluctant sponsor were less common, at around 1% each. Overall, HBA is the most prevalent experience, with forced marriage (30%) and domestic abuse also significant but comparatively lower.

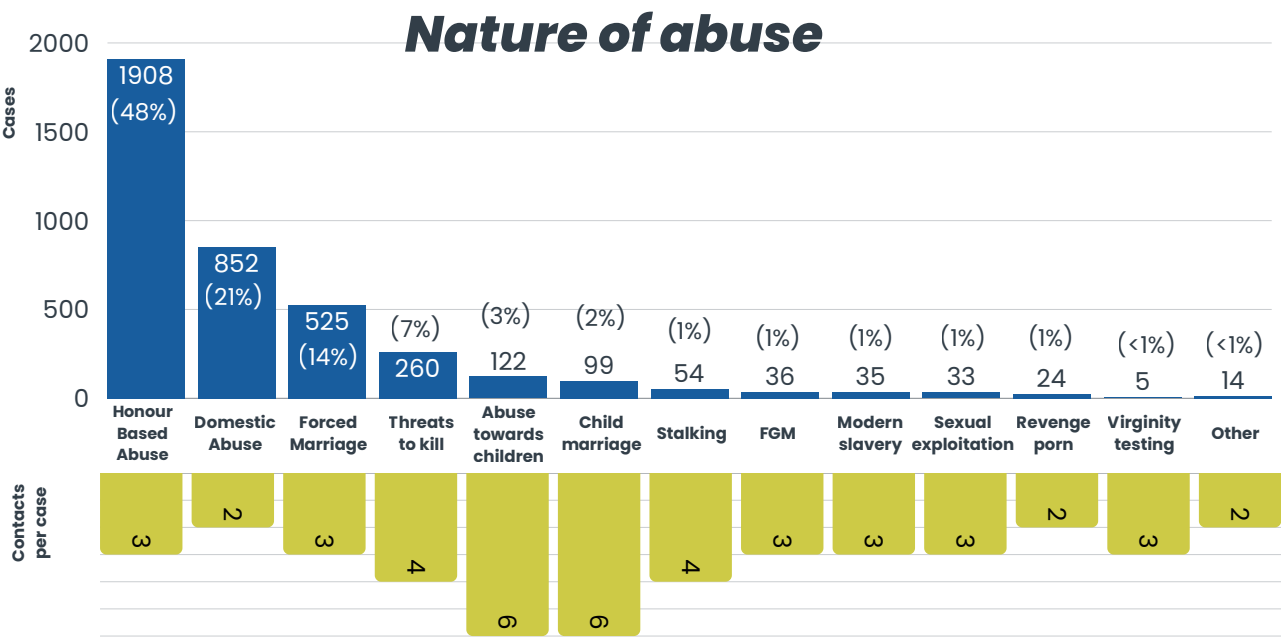
Triggers for abuse



The most common trigger for abuse reported to us by victims was **a history of HBA (13%), followed closely by family disputes (11%), and simply being female (10%)**. Other significant triggers included wanting a divorce or separation (9%) and refusing an arranged marriage or having a boyfriend/girlfriend (both 8%). Other triggers included speaking to a professional (6%), being perceived as westernised (5%), and an LGBTQI+ identity (4%). Overall, the data suggests that abuse triggers are often linked to gender, family dynamics, and challenges to expectations or authority.



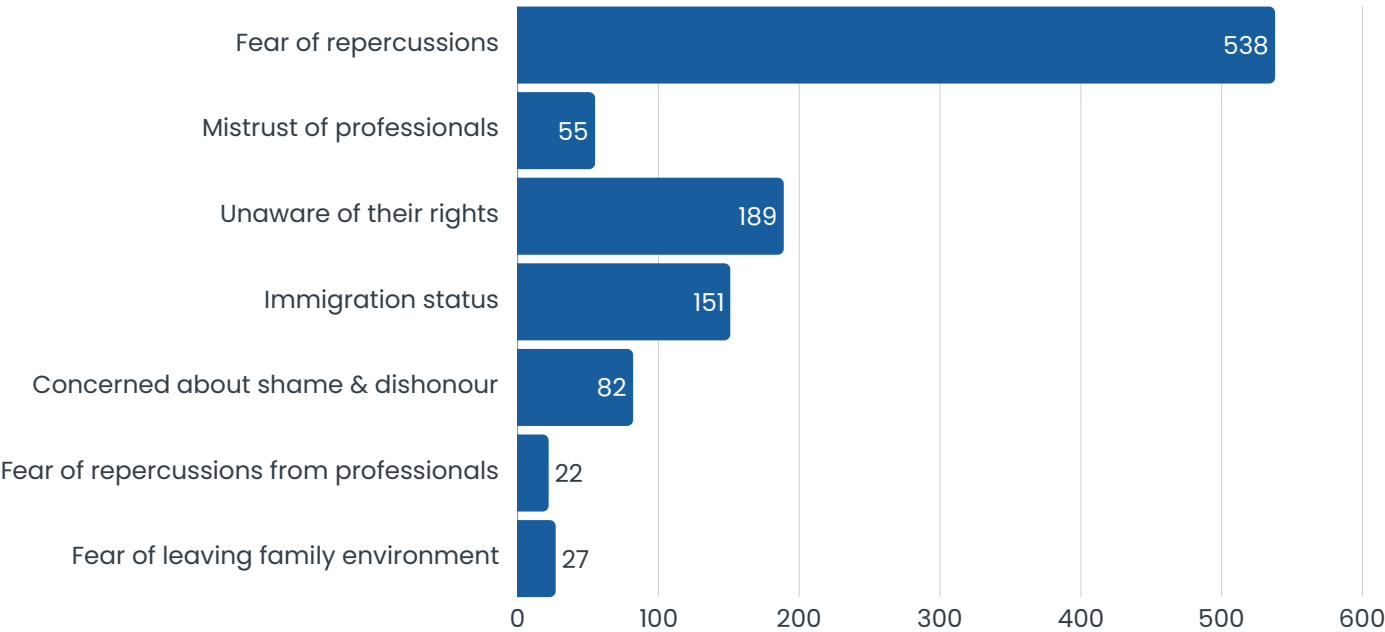
For our types of abuse data, multiple categories can be selected. The most commonly reported type of abuse victims experienced was **coercive control (31%)**, followed closely by emotional abuse (30%), together accounting for over half of all reported cases. Physical abuse made up 21%, while financial and sexual abuse each represent 7% of cases. Discriminatory abuse was the least reported type at 4%. Overall, the data highlights that **non-physical forms of abuse, particularly coercive control are the more commonly seen** in HBA.



HBA was the most common nature of abuse category, accounting for nearly half (48%) of all cases. These cases also required more engagement compared to domestic abuse cases, averaging three contacts per case, reflecting their complexity and risk. Domestic abuse (21%) and forced marriage (14%) followed, both averaging two to three contacts per case.

Cases involving threats to kill or abuse towards children showed the highest contacts per case (four to six per case), indicating the elevated safeguarding needs involved. While less frequent, issues such as child marriage, stalking, FGM, virginity testing, sexual exploitation and modern slavery remained serious concerns requiring more contacts per case on average.

Barriers to reporting



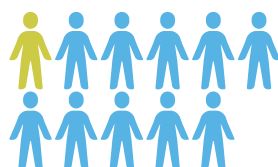
Fear of repercussions continues to be the most significant barrier to victims seeking help, cited in over 500 cases. Many victims also expressed being unaware of their rights or feeling unable to report due to immigration concerns. Shame and dishonour within family or community contexts further contribute to underreporting, as do mistrust of professionals and fears of being judged or misunderstood. These findings underline the need for trauma-informed, and well-trained support services that build trust and empower victims to speak out safely.

Perpetrators of abuse



1 in 4

*cases included
parents as
perpetrators*



1 in 11

*cases included
in-laws as
perpetrators*



1 in 3

*cases included
**partners or ex-
partners** as
perpetrators*

Analysis of perpetrator data reveals that abuse is **most often perpetrated by those closest to the victim**. One in three cases involved partners or ex-partners, while one in four included parents as perpetrators. In-laws featured in one in eleven cases, illustrating the collective nature of control and coercion often found in honour-based abuse dynamics.

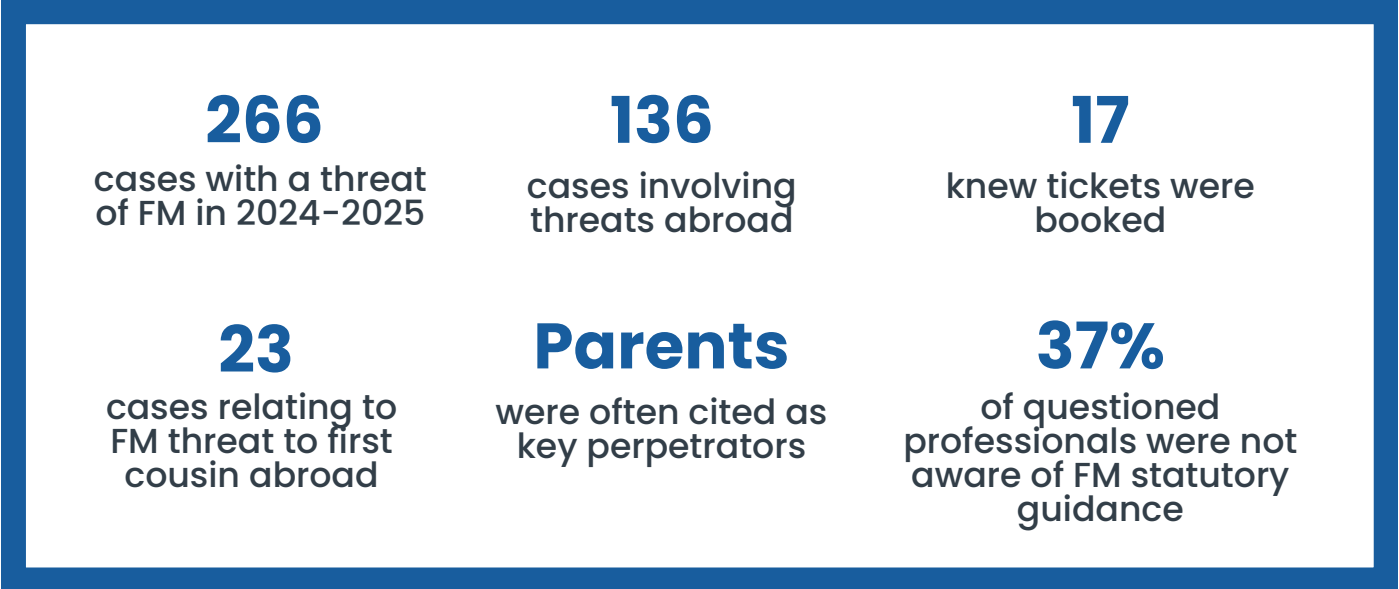
On average, each case involves around 1–2 perpetrators, suggesting that many victims experience abuse from multiple individuals rather than a single perpetrator. These findings reinforce the need for multi-agency responses that consider extended family involvement.



1.36

**perpetrators per case
reported on average**

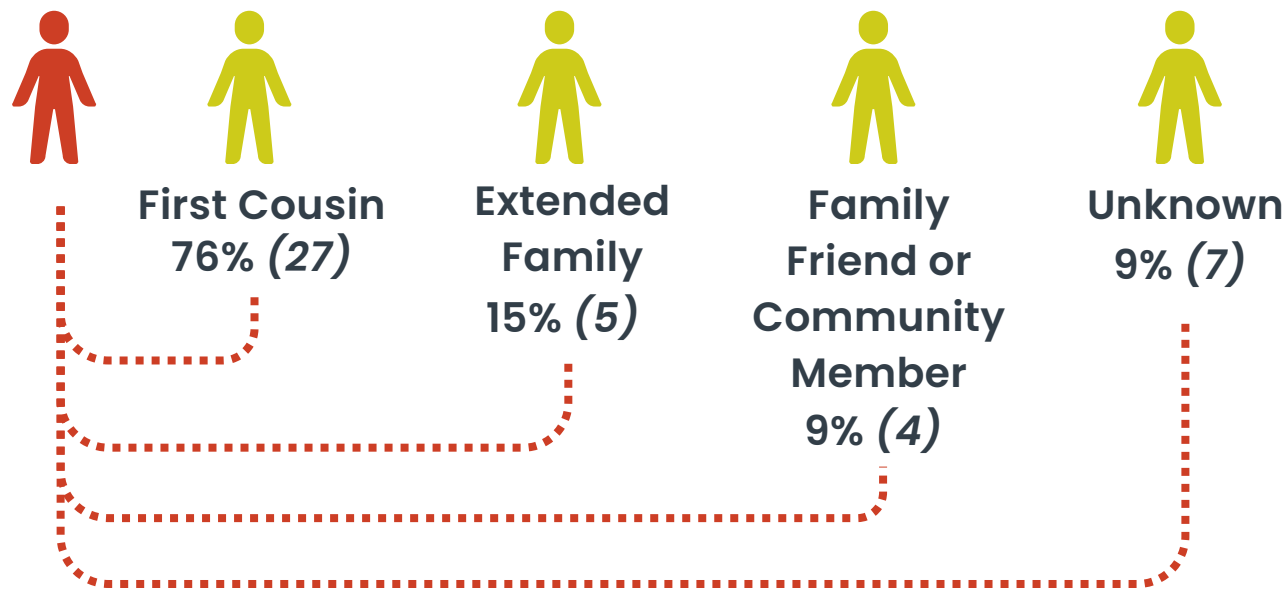
Threats of Forced marriage abroad



In 24-25, our helpline handled 266 cases with a threat of Forced Marriage, including 136 threats of forced Marriage abroad. The remainder of cases were unknown or taking place in the UK. Crucially, 37% of professionals were not aware of the forced marriage statutory guidance when questioned, which highlights the need for better awareness and training.

In cases involving forced marriage threats, **over three-quarters (76%) of victims reported being pressured to marry a first cousin**. A smaller proportion faced pressure to marry extended family members (15%) or family friends/community members (9%).

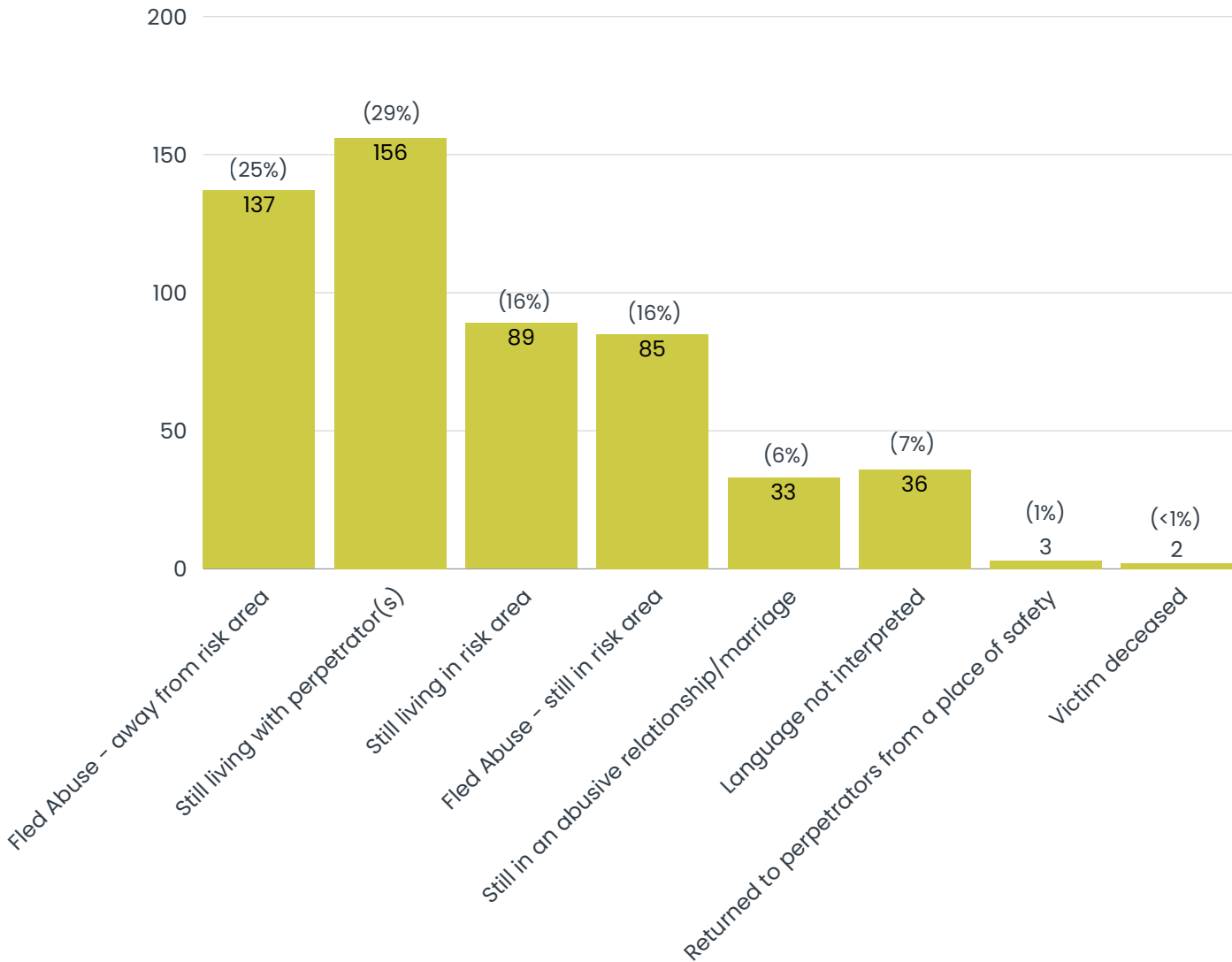
Threats to marry who



Victims Living Circumstances

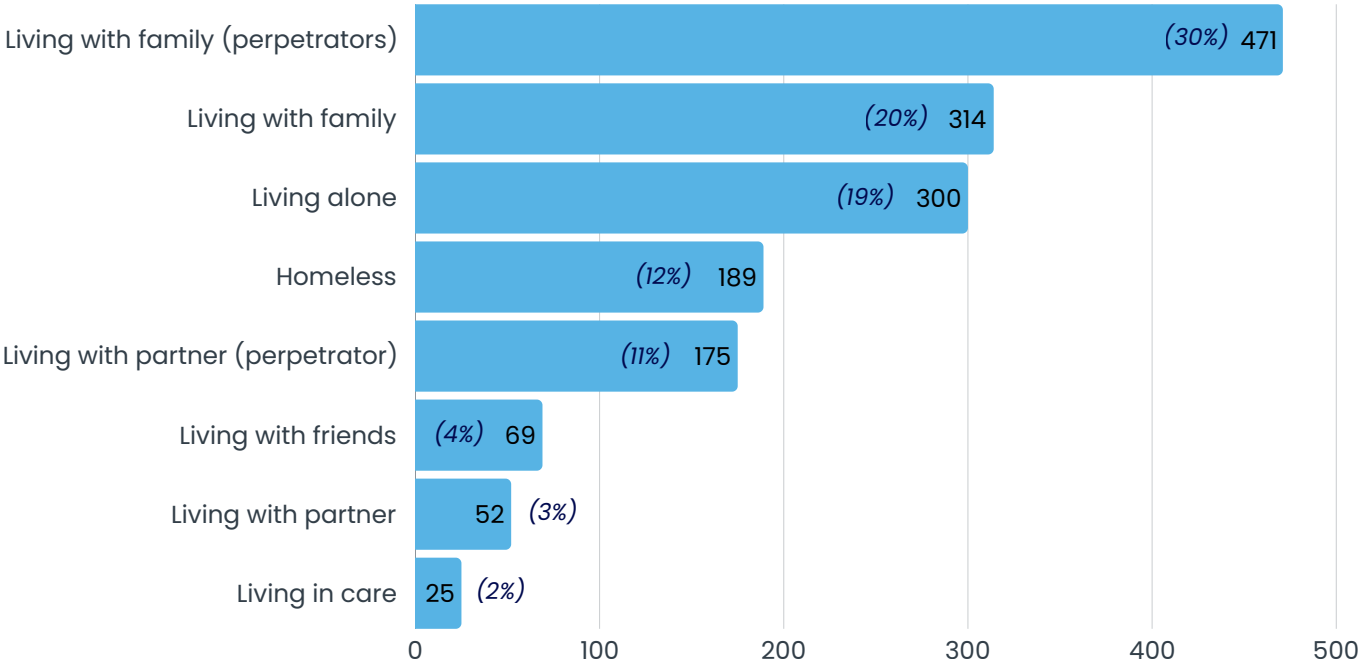
Victims’ reports shed light on the ongoing risks they face even after seeking help. **A significant number remained living with perpetrators or within the same risk environment.** Others reported being unable to leave abusive relationships or return safely to family homes. A smaller number described difficulties related to language barriers and lack of interpretation, underscoring the need for accessible, survivor-centred support.

What victims told us



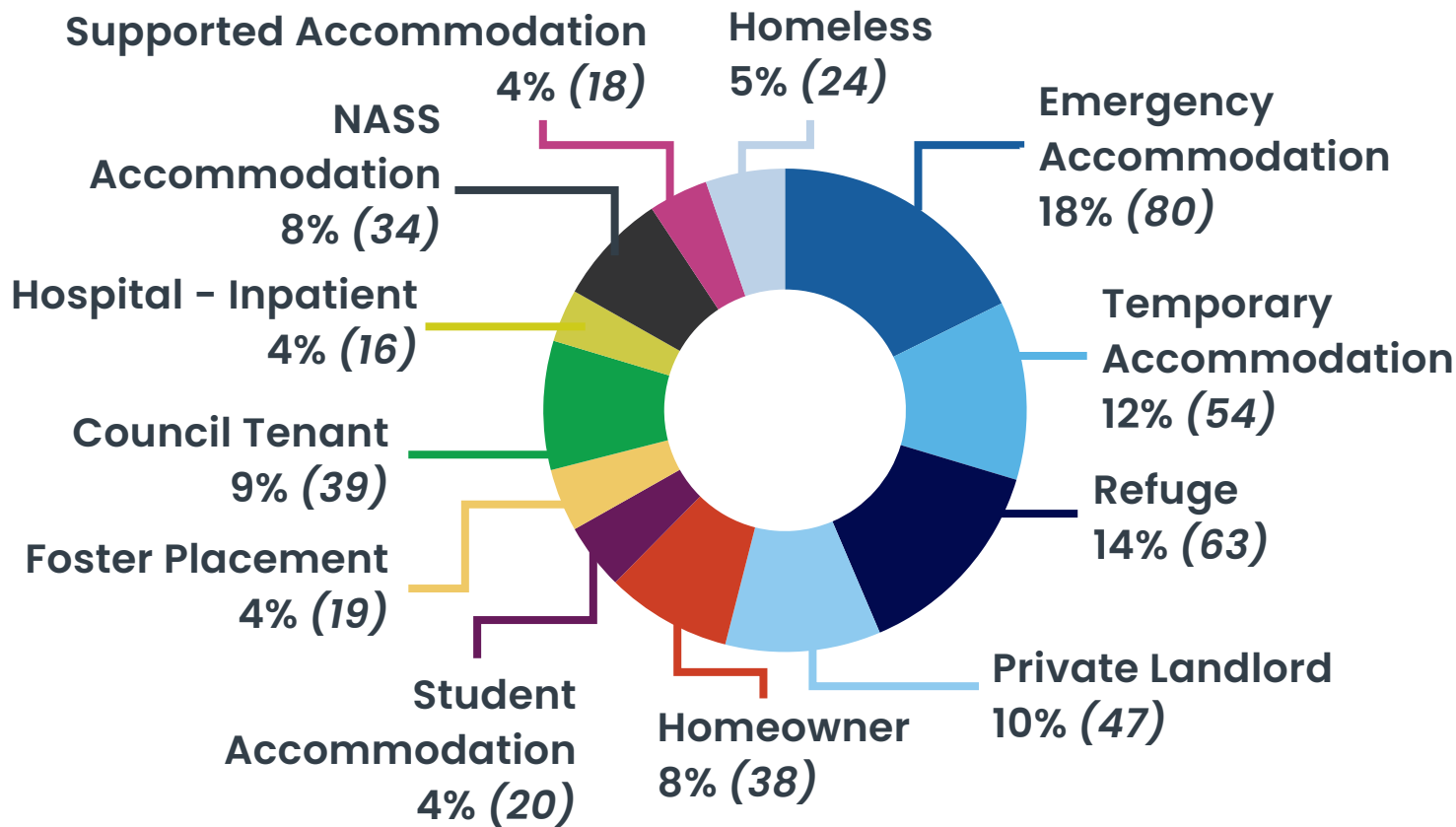
Nearly half of victims were living with family members who were also perpetrators, while many others remained within their family. Around 300 victims lived alone, while 189 were homeless at the time of contact. A smaller but notable proportion lived with abusive partners or were reliant on friends for accommodation. These figures highlight the instability victims often face and the urgent need for safe, long-term housing options for survivors of honour-based abuse.

Living Circumstances



Emergency and temporary accommodation were the most common housing types among victims, together representing nearly one-third of all cases. 14% were placed in refuges, while smaller numbers lived in council housing, supported or student accommodation, or under NASS provision. A small minority were homeowners or living in hospital or foster placements. The diversity of accommodation types reflects the varying stages of crisis and recovery that victims experience, emphasising the importance of stable housing pathways.

Accommodation Type



The **majority of victims contacting us were British citizens (61%)**, however 39% of victims had a different immigration status, with the most common visa type reported as a spouse visa (14%).

Immigration status

