

Supporting victims of sexual and gender based violence who have no recourse to public funds

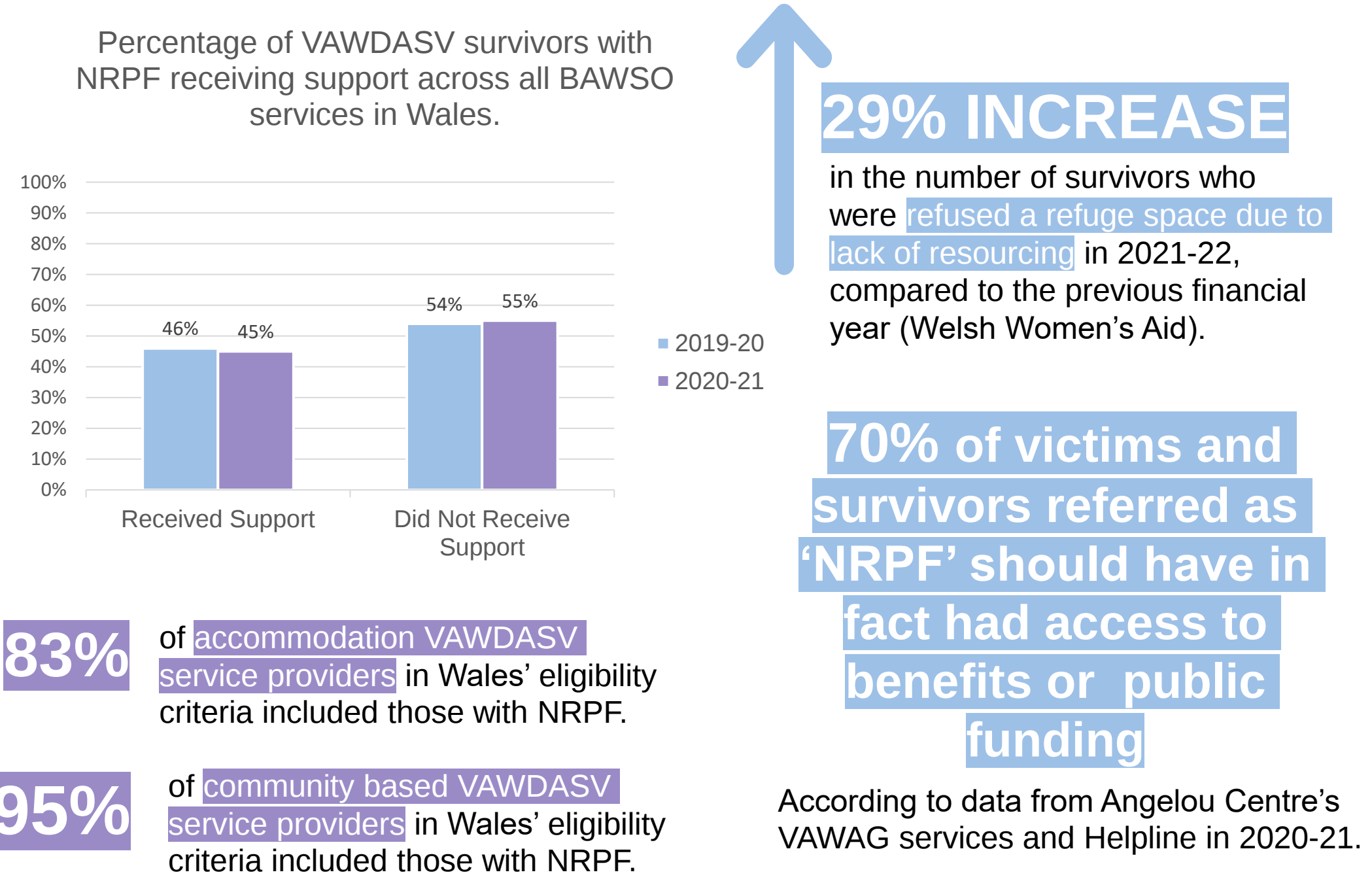
March 2023

Commissioned by: ACE Hub Wales | Author: Rebecca Woolley

Purpose

ACE Hub Wales have commissioned this independent report, to support the development of a fund in Wales that provides financial support to those who are victims of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) and who have no recourse to public funds (NRPF). It is being commissioned at a crucial time in the development of the evidence base and available literature. This report presents key elements from the literature, in the context of the legislation and guidance specific to Wales. It particularly addresses the fact that, despite the safety-net of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, survivors of VAWDASV with NRPF are still facing considerable barriers in accessing support.

Literature Review: Key Findings



Principles

5 KEY PRINCIPLES

Act quickly to support survivors regardless of their immigration status.

Enable easy access to services - offer support first, without lots of questions at the 'front end'.

Access regulated advice and support to quickly establish routes to eligibility for funding.

Monitor and evaluate new commissioned services, to learn from them, enabling more specific eligibility criteria in the longer- term, if this will be more effective.

Put a trauma-informed approach at the centre of the work - scrutinise the pathway, strategic plan, and services as they develop, asking at each stage if it is truly trauma- informed.

Access the report below

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Aims & Objectives

- Present a broad overview of the most recent/pertinent areas of the literature.
- Cite findings from the literature which are relevant to service design, improvement and forward planning here in Wales.
- Draw out key statements from existing guidance in Wales, to be clear about the legislative and operational context in which services are provided.
- Bridge the gap between research and practice, making clear links from legislation, guidance and literature, to practically inform steps towards a better system of support in Wales moving forward.

Barriers Accessing Support Services

- High degree of COMPLEXITY** Immigration policy is incredibly complex and interacts with several other policy areas. The primary legislation is not realistically accessible or understandable to mainstream service providers.
- High individual RISK** The risk of 'getting it wrong' for someone who has NRPF is very high. If someone subject to the NRPF condition claims public funds, they will be in breach of their conditions of leave to remain and could risk deportation. Also, only OISC regulated immigration solicitors or barristers are permitted to advise individuals on their immigration options.
- Low case FREQUENCY** The number of people who are victims of VAWDASV and who have NRPF will be comparatively small, and could be even smaller in some areas than others.

High Priority Practical Steps

1. Centralising an expert team, bolstering mainstream services to better support this group of people, aiming to break the cycle of 'high confusion/high risk/low frequency'.

2. Working with the centralised team and wider stakeholders to clarify a consistent pan-Wales pathway.

3. Investing in additional 'emergency access phase' support to ensure survivors are supported from Day 1, without question of their immigration status.

4. Supporting the long-term sustainable funding of 'access to specialist services phase' interventions by funding interventions over longer periods, built on evidence-based models of holistic support, provided by specialist 'by and for' providers.