

Women on the Move: the journeyscapes of domestic violence

Older Women—similarities / differences

Briefing Paper 7

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Key points:

- Data from services provides evidence on women's help-seeking
- Women of all ages seek formal help due to domestic abuse
- Older women are more likely to have some additional needs and face additional barriers
- Older women are more likely to self-refer, but their options and help-seeking journeys depend on a range of issues

Data in this briefing from Supporting People Programme of housing-related support services.

Department for Communities and Local Government and University of St Andrews, Centre for Housing Research (2012) *Supporting People Client Records and Outcomes, 2003/04-2010/11: Special Licence Access [computer file]*. Colchester, Essex, UK Data Archive [distributor]. Available from: <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-7020-1>>

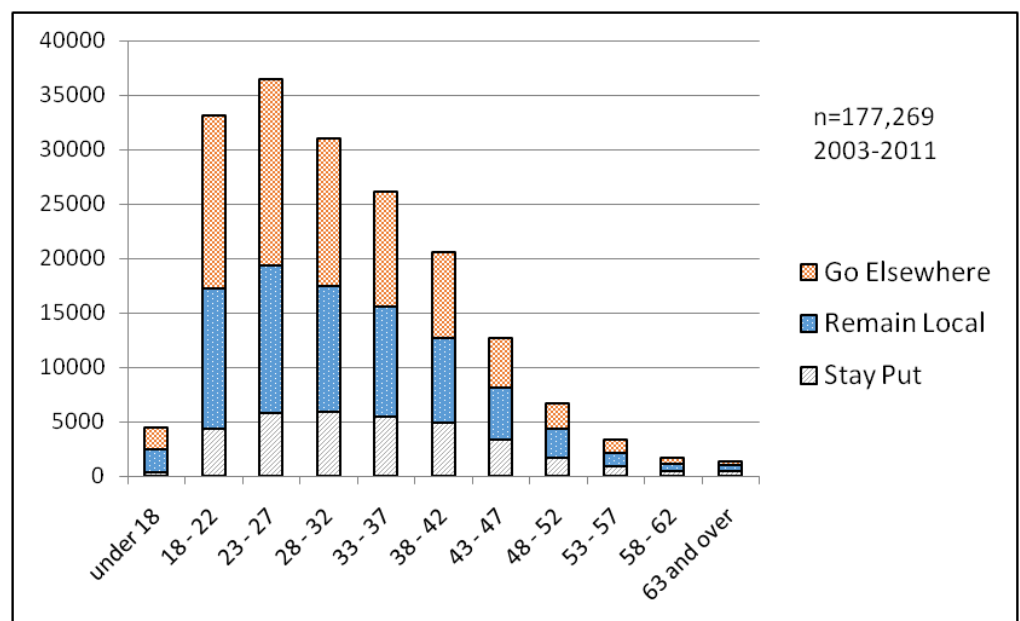
Older women seek formal service help in lower numbers

Each woman's journey to escape domestic abuse is unique, and only some include formal services in their help-seeking.

Older women do access services—the oldest in the administrative record of these housing-support services was 102.

Older women do use all three distinct strategies when women seek help:

- **Stay Put** — and seek help from support services
- **Remain Local** — relocate to access support, but within the same Local Authority
- **Go Elsewhere** — move to another Local Authority to seek help but they access services in lower numbers than younger women.



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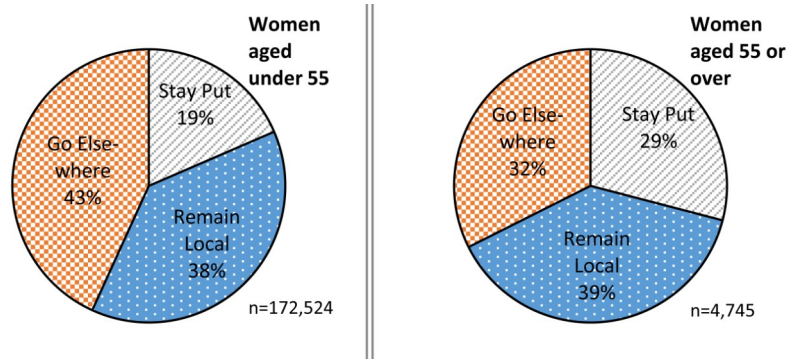
www.womensjourneyscapes.net



Older women are more likely to have additional needs and face additional barriers

Women aged 55 or over are significantly more likely to have physical health problems, including chronic or progressive illness; more likely to have mental health problems and are more likely to be disabled (including visual, hearing and mobility disability). Some of these issues may be due to experiencing years of abuse. However, older women are less likely than younger women to have drug problems and no more or less likely to have alcohol problems.

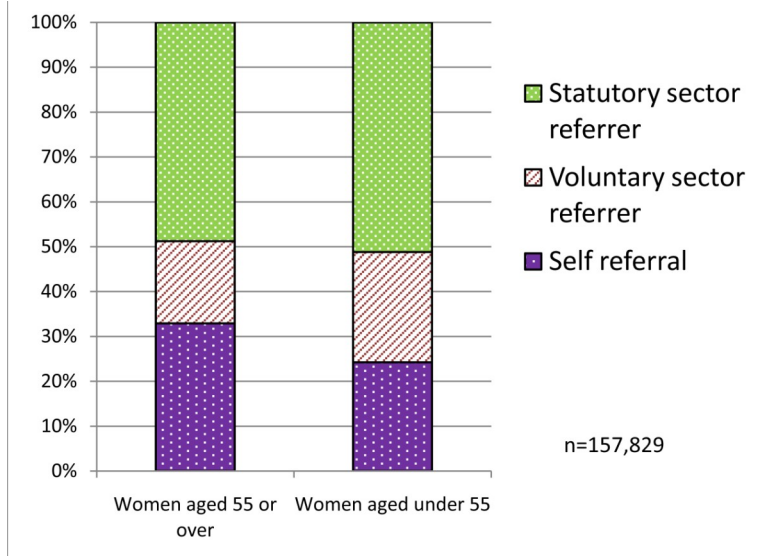
For a range of reasons, including that older women are more likely to be owner-occupiers, older women's help-seeking will reflect their own needs and resources—and the options offered them. They are similarly likely to remain within the same local authority if they relocate, but more likely to stay put (and less likely to go elsewhere) than younger women. However, when they go elsewhere, there is no difference in the average distance travelled.



Older women are more likely to self-refer than younger women

Women aged 55 or over are more likely to self-refer to support services than younger women—and less likely to be referred by voluntary sector agencies. Of the statutory referrers, they are more likely to be referred by Police or Health (rather than Social Services or Housing).

Older women are less likely to go to women's refuges than younger women, but women of all ages do go to refuges. And older women are more likely to have longer engagement with services—significantly more likely to stay in a service for 9 months or more.



Older women experience and escape domestic abuse, seeking help from support services—but their journeys may be different due to additional needs or barriers.