



2024

FLAG DV Impact Report

*From Reflection Comes
Direction*

Executive Summary



2024 has been a year of real growth for FLAG DV our biggest yet. Every step forward has been driven by our core mission to ensure people experiencing domestic abuse can access free legal advice and support when they need it most. For those facing the fear and uncertainty of family court, we work to ensure they aren't doing it alone. Our aim is simple, to empower survivors with the information, support, and confidence they need to make safe, informed choices.

LAURA HUNTER - CEO

Key Achievements 2024:

- **Launching our new Family Court Support Service**
- **916 referrals for legal advice received — a 10% increase from last year**
- **70 Court Support referrals**
- **500+ solicitor volunteer hours donated**
- **1,279 children linked to those referrals — a reminder of the wider impact of abuse**

The impact of the services that FLAG DV provides is undeniable. To be able to demonstrate that impact so clearly in this report fills me with pride. This year has been our most successful year in terms of the amount of lives that we have made a difference to. In a year where it is estimated that in England and Wales, over 2.3 million people, aged 16 and over experienced domestic abuse, we are incredibly grateful to staff, volunteers and funders for their unwavering commitment to our core mission.

CASSANDRA CAPEL - CHAIR OF TRUSTEES



Contextualising the Need



For many survivors of domestic abuse, the Family Court is not a place of protection it is where the abuse continues.

A 2022 report from the Domestic Abuse Commissioner highlights the contradiction survivors face: the same court that grants protection orders often grants contact with the abusive parent, leaving survivors feeling disbelieved and unsafe. Proceedings are frequently retraumatising, with little support and few special measures in place.

Victims and survivors report a culture of disbelief, a lack of access to special measures, and limited availability of specialist court support like IDVAs. In many cases, the perpetrator's rights appear to take precedence over the safety and wellbeing of both the adult and child victims. Family Court is often not just a place of legal adjudication, but a space where coercive control continues through repeated applications and legal delay tactics, another form of abuse.

This context is made worse by the rapid decline in access to legal representation. According to the Law Society, 29% of survivors were forced to represent themselves in 2023 up from 15% in 2011. From April to June 2024 alone, over 1,500 people submitted domestic abuse related court applications without a lawyer. Legal aid eligibility exists on paper, but in practice, survivors struggle to access it due to legal aid firm closures, stringent means testing, and lack of provision in their local area.

Every year, thousands of survivors must navigate this complex system alone, afraid, isolated, and unsure of their rights.

Our Services at a Glance

"I once felt hopelessly trapped and consumed by fear, especially since my abuse extended to financial aspects, leaving me with minimal resources. Although I still have a long way to go and my journey will be challenging, I now have faith in someone who comprehends my circumstances and can advocate for my well-being."

Client



Free Family Law Legal Advice Clinics

Our Legal Advice Clinics connect victim-survivors with qualified family law solicitors for free, one-off advice sessions.

These sessions focus on key legal issues such as:

- Child arrangements
- Divorce and separation
- Protection orders (Non-Molestation/Occupation Orders)

These clinics help clients understand their legal rights and options, so they can take the next steps with clarity and confidence.

Family Court Support

Our dedicated Court Support Service provides emotional, practical, and moral support to victim-survivors engaged in family court proceedings. We help clients:

- Understand court processes and emotionally prepare for hearings
- Request special measures for safety and well-being
- Receive support before, during, and after hearings

Support is tailored to individual needs and delivered in person, remotely, or with the help of partnered professionals, depending on capacity and client preference.

Year at a Glance

Legal Advice



Referrals: 916



Legal Appointments 631

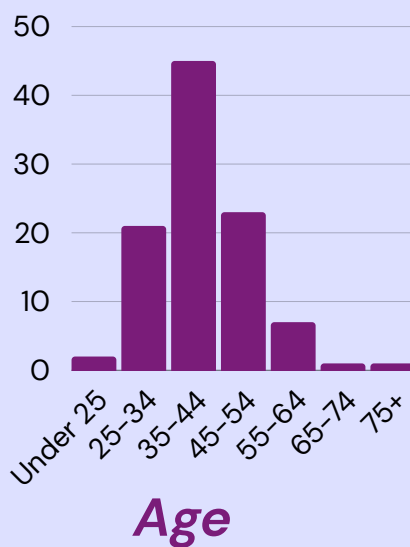
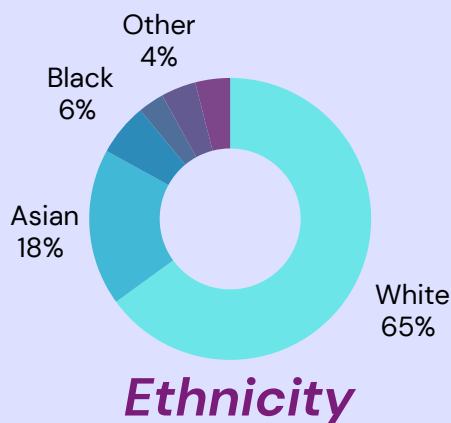


Children at risk: 1,279

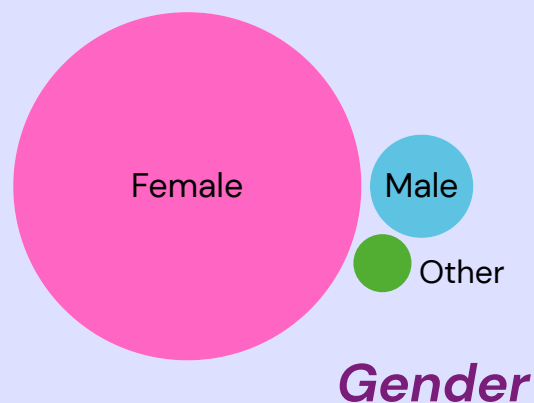
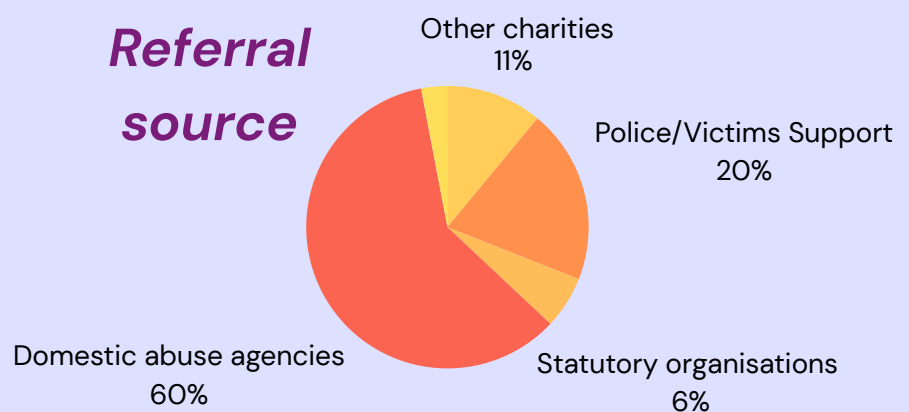


Interpreter appointments: 31

"Thank you so much for all your help. The appointment was excellent—really insightful for both me and my client. The solicitor was amazing: knowledgeable, empathetic, and helpful. FLAG DV provides an invaluable service that brings hope to survivors, empowering them with knowledge of their rights and a way forward." – Referral Agent



Referral source



Year at a glance

Court Support



Court cases supported: 70

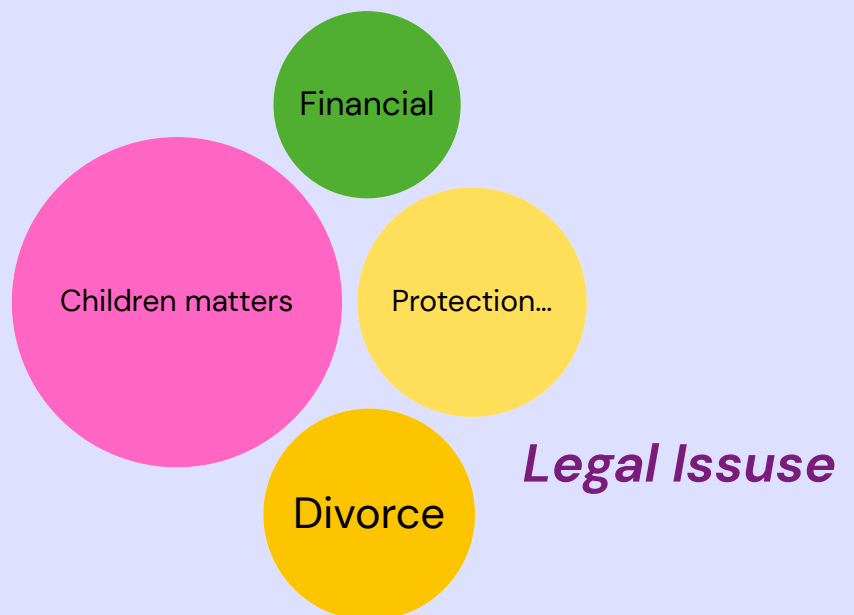
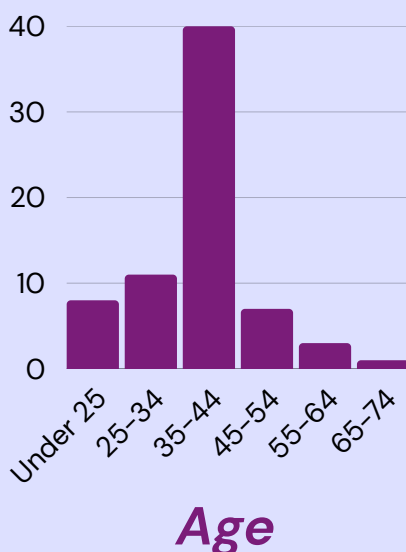
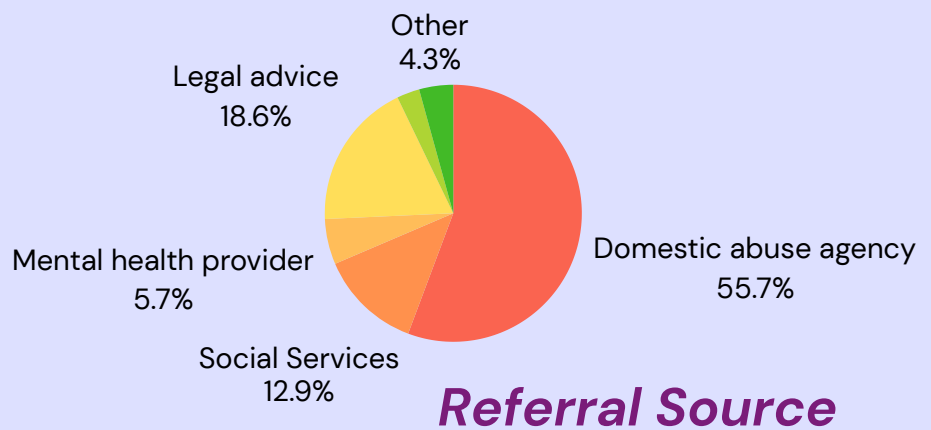
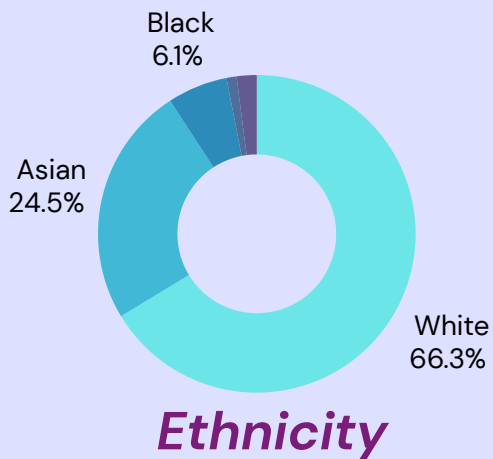


Remote support: 40+ hearings



In-person hearings: 72 hours

"I honestly don't think I could've attended my hearing without this support. I was checked in on regularly, had my questions answered, and was accompanied to court. Just knowing she was there made me feel safe and supported. Thank you to everyone, and especially to my court support worker, for being there when I needed it most." – Client



Outcomes and Impact



80%

indicate they got the advice
they needed

65%

report they feel more in
control following advice

47%

report a decrease in anxiety

500

Volunteer solicitor hours



At FLAG DV, our clients share a common experience in their abuse, whether it involves physical abuse or not, someone is exerting control over them. That control takes many forms, including coercion, manipulation, isolation, or fear and so does the trauma it causes. For many that control continues through the family court. Again and again, we hear from people who feel helpless, trapped in a system that re-traumatises and exhausts them.

We are passionate about helping people build the resilience they need to navigate the court process by giving them clear legal information and compassionate emotional support. 'We can't yet change legal outcomes or fix the national crisis in legal aid, but just because a problem is bigger than us, it doesn't mean we shouldn't do everything we can to make a difference.

Thanks to our incredible volunteer solicitors, who donate around 500 hours each year to our legal advice clinics, and to our resilient, compassionate staff who walk alongside every client with professionalism and care—we know that every drop in the ocean matters. Drops become ripples. Ripples build into waves. And waves, together, can become a tide for change.

Survivor Stories

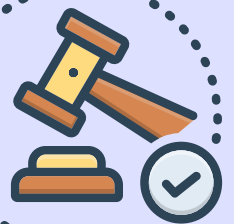
Ms. W's Journey: From Fear to Empowerment

A survivor's path through the Family Court, with the support of FLAG DV.

Early 2024 Ms W filed for divorce after years of abuse



The legal process became another means of control, as her ex-husband used delays and tactics to avoid financial responsibility and extend Ms. W's distress.



Despite legal representation, Ms. W felt overwhelmed by the Family Court, facing her abuser while struggling with financial and emotional distress. Berkshire Women's Aid referred her to FLAG DV for added support.



Lost in the legal system, Ms W turned to FLAG DV for the emotional support her legal team were unable to provide. Court Support provided the practical and emotional preparation that helped Ms regain her confidence to face her abuser in court



Though still in the legal process, Ms. W now faces it with resilience. With FLAG DV's support, she feels stronger, able to confront her abuser and advocate for her children.



"This service was invaluable to me. Helping someone rebuild their confidence and self-esteem can make all the difference in their journey through the Family Court system. Many victims of domestic abuse are like me and are often left financially and emotionally isolated. Without access to free support services, many victims face an uneven playing field in court"

Survivor Stories



Leaves abusive relationship

- Emotional & psychological abuse
- Hopes abuse would stop after leaving



Post-separation abuse

- Erratic adherence to child contact order
- Accessing home, ongoing control
- Mental health worsens



Reaches out for support

- Self referral following DA hotline query
- Wants to know legal options to prevent ex from direct contact



Legal Advice

- Advice on legal options to vary child arrangement order
- Mental health concerns raised



Safeguarding & Referral

- Safeguarding raised due to mental health concerns
- Client welcomed referral for further support
- Liaised with DA agency for mental health support



Recovery Pathway

- Signposted to support courses
- On waitlist for Power to Change
- Focus on autonomy & healing

Our Supporters This Year

Our Funders



Community Fundraising Highlights



**Legal Walk –
£1,815**



**Pub Quiz and Raffle –
£1,236**



**EOS Corporate Event –
£477**



**Yoga Fundraiser –
£660**



**Christmas Raffle –
£554**



**Other Events –
£367**

Your Support

What your support can fund

£30 covers the cost of a typical legal advice session

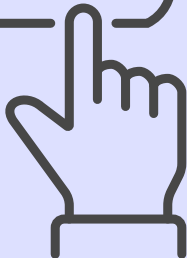
£40 pays for the onboarding costs for a new volunteer

£30 covers translation costs to ensure non-native speakers get vital legal advice

£200 covers the cost of attending court with 1 client

DONATE

Please consider supporting us



Help us fundraise



Join a challenge or run a fundraiser!

We prioritise direct service delivery. In 2024, over

85%

of our spending supported survivor delivery costs

Making a Difference



FLAG DV Volunteer Spotlight

Pavla Kalouskova

Solicitor, National Legal Service

Making a Difference Through Free Legal Advice

"Volunteering makes a positive impact on the lives of the vulnerable."

That's why Pavla Kalouskova, a dedicated solicitor with National Legal Service, volunteers her time to provide vital legal advice through FLAG DV.

Why She Volunteers

Pavla has long believed that everyone—especially the most vulnerable—deserves access to legal advice. *"I provide regular free legal advice to local charities and refugees,"* she shares. *"Helping those who cannot otherwise access legal support is something I deeply care about."*

Her journey with FLAG DV began through her firm's Head of Family Law, who highlighted the opportunity. Given her firm's strong commitment to supporting survivors of domestic abuse, getting involved was a natural step.

The Impact of Early Legal Advice

For Pavla, early legal advice is critical. *"It's important for survivors to know what options are available to them,"* she says. *"That advice gives them confidence, helps them feel safe and secure, and gives them the strength to get life back on track. I've supported clients in securing protective orders and safe child arrangements. Seeing them empowered to take control of their lives is why this work matters."*

Beyond the Clinic

Pavla has continued to represent some clients beyond the initial FLAG DV advice session, helping ensure continuity and stronger legal outcomes. Volunteering hasn't necessarily changed her view—she's been working in this space for years—but it's reinforced the harsh reality: *"Legal aid is hard to come by. The criteria are strict. That's why FLAG DV is such an important first step."*

"If you're considering volunteering with FLAG DV—do it. Your time and knowledge can genuinely change lives. FLAG DV is an effective first point of legal advice. It provides options for clients who may have nowhere else to turn."

How to Volunteer?

Volunteer your time



Volunteer as a Solicitor

Volunteer as a Family Law Solicitor

- 30-minute phone/video appointments
- We prep and triage cases for you
- Clients matched to your expertise
- Quick case update afterward
- Solicitors may also benefit from client referrals post-appointment.

“Just 1–2 hours a month can change a life — and expand your experience in family law.”

[Apply now](#)

Become a Trustee

Help shape strategy, guide growth, and oversee our mission

- Quarterly meetings (online), plus optional subcommittees
- Occasional in-person sessions planned in advance

We're especially looking for:

- 👛 Finance or accountancy
- ⚖️ Legal experience
- 📣 Marketing
- 💰 Fundraising

“Trustees help us grow with purpose and meet the needs of survivors from all backgrounds.”

[Apply now](#)

“I have put my next steps into action. I have put a C100 for in to ask the court to consider amending our Child Arrangements Order. I will be representing myself – which is TERRIFYING, but I now feel empowered to do it, compared to a few months ago where I felt powerless and trapped”

Our Vision



FLAG DV 2025–2026 Priorities

Strengthening Court Support

Over the next two years, we're growing our Court Support Project to include one-to-one and group-based support. Including a workshop series to help survivors build emotional resilience, understand the legal process, and approach court with greater confidence and control.



Financial Sustainability

To keep our services strong and free for those who need them, we are actively growing our partnerships with like-minded organisations, businesses, and community groups. We believe financial stability comes not only from funding, but from shared vision and we're looking to connect with partners who want to stand with survivors.

Volunteer Pipeline

We're exploring new ways to engage trainee solicitors, paralegals, and students—expanding support for survivors today while shaping a legal workforce that's informed, empathetic, and equipped to meet survivors' real-world needs.



Join Us

We know we can't do this alone. Whether you're a business leader, policymaker, professional, or survivor ally your support can shape a future where survivors feel safer, stronger, and more informed. Together, we can build a family court experience that doesn't retraumatise but empowers.