

ENCOMPASS SNAPSHOT BRIEFING 2023



Over a week in October 2023 five specialist CSE organisations that are part of the Encompass Network supported **53 women** who have been involved in selling or exchanging sex or images.

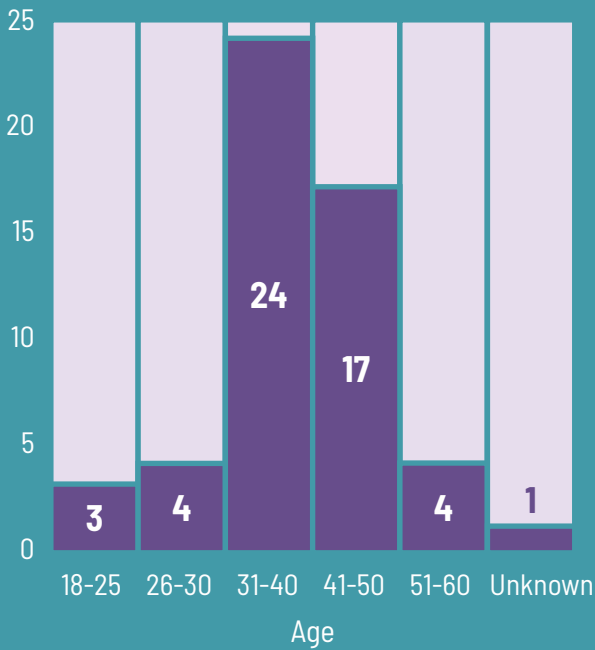
The Encompass Network is made up of seven organisations: Another Way (Edinburgh), Routes Out (Glasgow), Vice Versa (Dundee), Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (Perth & Kinross), Aberdeen Cyrenians, Alcohol & Drug Action Aberdeen and TARA.

From this snapshot we were able to identify the following characteristics about the women supported.

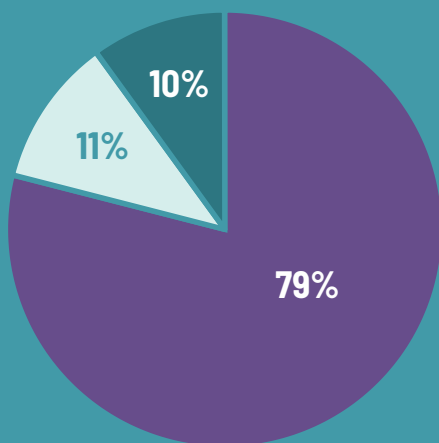


AGE RANGE

The majority of supported women (**45%**) were between the ages of 31 and 40, followed by the 41-50 age group (**32%**).



NATIONALITY



- **42** British nationals
- **6** Unknown
- **5** Non-British nationals (Brazilian, German, Chinese, Jordanian, and South African. Included asylum seekers, women with settled status, and student visa holders)

BACKGROUND INFO

80%

of supported women who had children (24 out of 30) disclosed that they had their children removed. This affected **43** children and young people.

77%

of supported women for whom the data is known (24 out of 31) have been a victim of a crime. This included offences of rape and sexual assault, robbery, domestic abuse, trafficking, gang rape and physical assault.

15 women had been in care as a child.

36 women had been homeless at some point in their life.

26 women disclosed they had a criminal conviction including breach of the peace, drug-related offences, assault, shoplifting, drinking in public place, and robbery. **5** of these supported women were convicted for prostitution-related offences.

“The woman experiences shame and worry of disclosing her involvement in CSE. Selling sex on-street caused her many health issues. She’s unable to explain to other people why she is unwell and in pain.” – Support Worker, Encompass Network

LINKS WITH OTHER FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- 35** women experienced domestic abuse.
- 32** women disclosed experiences of rape and sexual assault.
- 23** women disclosed experiences of childhood sexual abuse or exploitation.

“The woman we supported had issues related to housing and homelessness. Staff at the accommodation service made comments to other residents about her involvement in CSE. This woman was also sexually assaulted by another resident - she fled the hostel but was refused another place to stay. Eventually, our service supported her to access another local authority. We further provided multiple phones for safety planning.” - Support Worker, Encompass Network

HEALTH NEEDS



Out of 31 supported women for whom the data is known, **14** women had a suicide ideation and **8** women had attempted suicide.

47 women had disclosed a mental health issue. The majority of women experienced depression (68%) and anxiety (49%). **10** women experienced posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or complex-PTSD, and **6** women had a borderline personality disorder. Binge eating disorder and flashbacks were also reported.

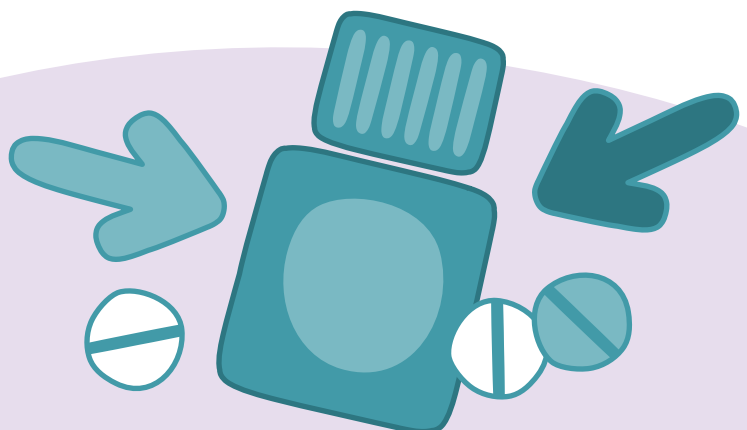
19 women had a physical disability. This included fibromyalgia (32%), epilepsy (16%), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), liver damage, nerve damage, brain injury, necrotizing fasciitis, microscopic colitis, arthritis.

3 women had disclosed they were assessed for a learning disability.

44 women (83%) disclosed that they were using substances. Most common substances were:

- Crack cocaine - **25** women
- Heroin - consumed by **22** women
- Valium or Street Valium - **22** women
- Cocaine - **10** women
- Alcohol - **10** women
- Cannabis - **6** women

Other substances included Gabapentin, Benzodiazepines, Amphetamine, Marijuana.



INVOLVEMENT IN COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

13 women disclosed that they were under 18 when they were first involved in selling or exchanging sex.

5 women disclosed that their involvement in commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) had links to organised crime.

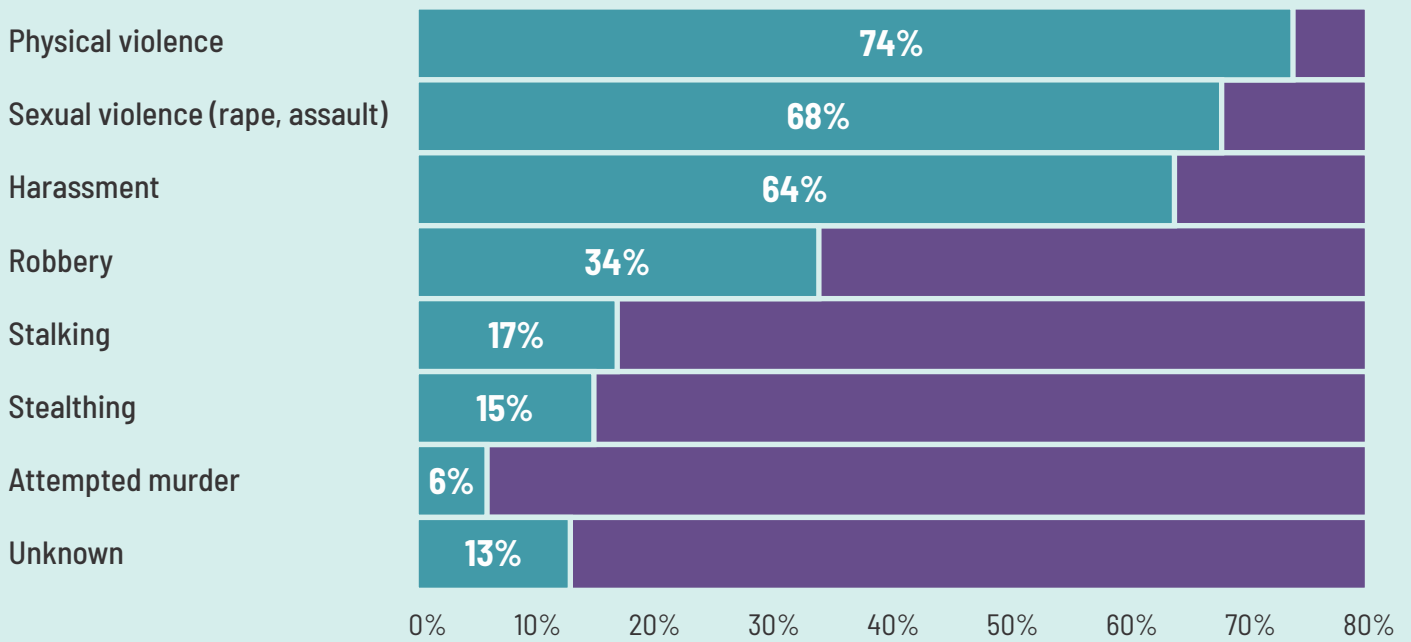
24 women expressed their wish to exit or were in the process of leaving the 'sex industry'.

Women were often involved in multiple areas of the 'sex industry', showing that the demarcation between on-street and off street isn't always as straight forward as is sometimes presented.

'SEX INDUSTRY' CONTEXT	NO. OF WOMEN	%
Survival or transactional (incl. 'sex for rent')	40	76%
Street prostitution	34	64%
Independent escorting	14	26%
Prostitution via brothels or saunas	8	15%
Trafficking	6	11%
Sexual entertainment venues	4	8%
Online - producing images (e.g., OnlyFans)	3	6%
'Sugar dadding'	3	6%
Escort agencies	2	4%
Web camming	2	4%
Phone sex chat lines	1	2%
Pornography	1	2%



Out of 46 women for whom the data is known, **43 (93%)** disclosed that they had experienced violence and abuse related to their involvement in selling or exchanging sex.



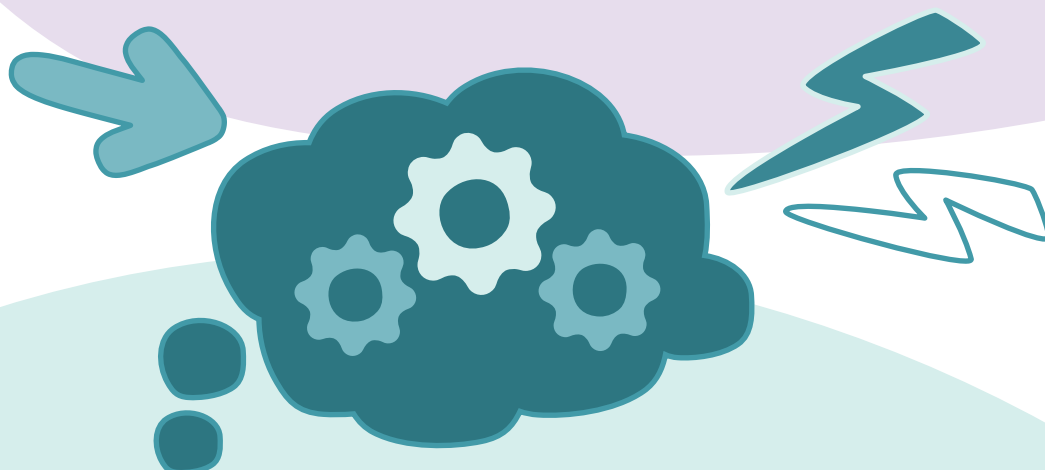
“The woman we support has experienced long-term homelessness due to fleeing domestic abuse. She could not be housed quickly due to poor mental health. We are advocating for appropriate healthcare and medication as woman’s needs are not being met due to substance use and lack of engagement.” – Support Worker, Encompass Network



SUPPORT NEEDS

The organisations identified the following as support needs for women.

SUPPORT AREA	NO. OF WOMEN	NO. OF WOMEN IN EVERY 10 WITH THE SUPPORT NEED
Mental health	45	
Safety	43	
Substance use	42	
Benefits	42	
Housing	37	
Physical health	35	
Practical assistance	31	
Finances	30	
Sexual health	24	
Debt	24	
Homelessness	21	
Criminal justice issues	19	
Intimate relationships	14	
Civil justice issues	10	
Digital access	7	



The following agencies were contacted to access support for women.

AGENCY	NO. OF WOMEN	NO. OF WOMEN IN EVERY 10 WITH THE SUPPORT NEED
Substance use services	36	
GP	32	
Mental health services	32	
Housing	30	
DWP	29	
Foodbanks	28	
Sexual health services	26	
Homelessness	22	
Police	20	
Welfare rights	18	
VAWG services	15	
Legal services	14	
Adult social work	8	



For more information on the work of the Encompass Network: www.encompassnetwork.info

The Encompass Network is managed on behalf of the participating organisations by the Women's Support Project, a limited company registered in Scotland. Registration number SC323918 and Scottish charity number SC021846.