

# **The extent and implications of women's forced migration journeys to escape domestic violence**

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## **ABSTRACT:**

Whilst policy-makers and practitioners focus on what works in particular local areas to tackle and prevent domestic violence against women, many individual women (often with their children) move away from their local area, either temporarily or permanently. Much of this migration is necessarily secret as they are escaping an abuser who intimately knows their habits, interests, friends and family, and may well try to track them down. Since the establishment of women's refuges in the 1970s, there have to some extent been places of safety to flee to; but many women leave the abuse without knowing this, or without being able to secure a place in a refuge, or go to informal contacts such as family and friends. In addition, refuge services face an increasing tension between the local basis of their funding and the fact that most women accessing their services have, of necessity, travelled from elsewhere.

This research generates and uses a wide range of data sources - administrative data, surveys, interviews, and creative groupwork - to explore the extent and the implications of the journeys women make to escape domestic violence. Quantifying women's journeys to access services throughout England provides a measure of the extent of migration journeys, the distances travelled; and mapping indicates the geographical patterns and helps explore the processes. Women's experiences, provided via interviews and photography, evidence the degrees of force and agency within different stages of their journeys; and the practical and emotional impacts of their relocation.

The research provides a new conceptualisation of women's domestic violence journeys; relating them to understandings of forced migration. It provides measures of the extent and implications at a range of geographical scales: individual, Local Authority and nationally within the UK. It also draws out specific consequences of these conceptual and evidential developments for service provision and policy within the UK.

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## Chapter 1. Introduction

*"I think I've made - it's the best journey ever! It's full of bumps, bruises, tears and all that stuff; but - at the end of the day - there's a light at the end of that tunnel. It's a journey that I'll never regret doing in my life."*

*[Gloria]*

Women's domestic violence journeys, as the above quote exemplifies, incorporate both literal journeys as women travel to escape an abuser and metaphorical journeys as women move on emotionally from the abuse. This research draws on what is already known about such journeys, and generates new evidence of the extent of such journeys within the UK, and the implications at a range of scales - from the individual to the national. It brings together the literal and the metaphorical journeys to achieve greater explanatory power. It reconceptualises the journeys as more than simply individual stories of escape, but rather as migration processes, forced on women and children by the abuse.

The United Kingdom is not generally considered to be a country of forced migration - with Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). United Nations reports evidence the UK as a country that receives refugees from elsewhere; not as a state that fails to prevent its own citizens from being forced to flee within the country. The conclusions of this research therefore raise significant questions for the UK Government in terms of international responsibilities, as well as in terms of legislation, policy and practice at the national, regional and local scales.

It is timely to be raising such questions. This research draws on a wide range of data sources generated from 2003 up to 2012, covering a period of significant political and policy changes in the UK; several of which affect aspects of women's domestic violence journeys. Notwithstanding their circumstances within the relationship, escaping domestic violence brings many women in contact with public services in a new, and often acute, way; and in numerous and varied ways through different stages of their journeys. The extent to which

such contacts enable or constrain women's attempts to achieve safety away from the abuse is discussed throughout this research. However, significant elements which are evidenced as necessary for women's journeys are currently under pressure; especially women's refuges which are discussed particularly in Chapter 6, and options for rehousing which are discussed particularly in Chapter 7. The impacts of reductions in support services, in availability of social housing, and of changes in social housing tenancies are beginning to be felt, and the implications are discussed particularly in Chapter 8; with recommendations to address the identified risks to women's ability to escape abuse. However, there are future changes, such as fixed-term social housing tenancies, the cap on Housing Benefit, and the introduction of Universal Credit which could further impact the possibility of women's journeys. A greater understanding of the nature, extent and implications of such journeys is therefore essential to understanding the impact of the policy and practice context, and identify how negative impacts could be avoided or mitigated.

This research provides such an evidence base. Chapter 2 reviews the existing literature on both women's experiences of leaving domestic violence, and on migration journeys within the UK and internationally. It identifies the lack of empirical evidence on women's domestic violence journeys within the UK, but also concepts that can be brought to bear on the evidence generated in later chapters. The methodological underpinning for this research is discussed in Chapter 3, leading into the mixed methods research design and details of the range of methods employed. Analysis of the data generated and accessed is discussed in the following four empirical chapters, each focused on identified journey stages.

Chapter 4 discusses 'Leaving', evidencing the numbers of women and children involved in domestic violence journeys, and their demographic characteristics, as well as the process, practicalities, and experience of leaving. Chapter 5 discusses the 'Travelling', in terms of the patterns, distances, and nature of journeys for both places and people; and the practicalities and conceptualisations for women themselves. Chapter 6 discusses a key 'Waiting'

stage of women's journeys in women's refuges, involving practicalities, feelings, and emotion and mind work by women both individually and collectively. Chapter 7 discusses the 'Settling' stage of women's journeys, and the extent to which it can be achieved both practically and emotionally.

Chapter 8 draws out the implications of the empirical evidence, identifying these at a range of scales: individual women and children, agencies and practices, places, policies and legislation; and specific recommendations are outlined. The thesis concludes, in Chapter 9, with the reconceptualisation of women's domestic violence journeys, and draws on the reviewed literature to locate the reconceptualisation within wider debates around four themes: forced migration and spatial churn; exile, diaspora and imagined communities; boundaries; and the significance of scale. Methodological reflections lead into the identification of prospects of future research on women's domestic violence journeys.

## **Chapter 2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Introduction**

Within the literature on domestic violence there has been a recognition of women's help-seeking, including the possibility of escaping the abuse by leaving the abuser. Understandings of 'leaving' carry with them questions of location - the places women leave and the places women arrive in - as well as questions about the journey. However, this has tended to remain implicit within the literature, and there has been little about the processes of travel: neither the nature and extent of the journeys, nor the implications for women and children, for services and authorities, or for society as a whole. The domestic violence literature focuses on leaving the abuse, the role of services such as women's refuges, and resettlement after abuse; but it has not examined the journeys between these points. As a result, an engagement with a wider literature of mobility and migration is necessary to enable a conceptualisation and greater understanding of the domestic violence journeys women make within the UK.

This wider literature has therefore been reviewed, drawing on a broad model chronology of journeys - leaving, travelling, waiting, and settling. This review brings questions of women's domestic violence journeys together with a literature from a wide range of disciplines that can enable concepts, questions, theories and understandings.

### **2.2. Leaving**

In considering who leaves domestic violence, research since the 1970s has highlighted the gendered nature of domestic abuse - with inter-personal violence as predominantly male violence against women - particularly if incidents of physical abuse are considered within the context of power and coercive control within an intimate relationship (Davies et al., 1998; Stark, 2007). Early research, such as Dobash and Dobash (1980) focused on women who had left abusive relationships with men, and accessed help such as women's refuges, and

highlighted that such leaving was a process rather than a one-off event. Research was primarily carried out by, or closely with, feminists also involved in activism and provision of services to women (Binney et al., 1981; CRAWC, 1988). The focus on women leaving abuse continued, with a large literature on this process of leaving from NiCarthy (1991) on supporting women in 'getting free' from abuse, through books engaging with the difficulties, in both practical and emotional terms, of leaving an abusive partner (Kirkwood, 1993; Glass, 1995); and highlighting the strength of survival (Kelly, 1988). More recent research has included small scale studies on the specifics of women in particular circumstances of experiencing, resisting, or leaving abuse, such as Davis (2002) on women's inner resources, Burke et al (2001) proposing stages in the process of leaving, Hydén (2005) and Goodman et al (2005) on women's strategies, and Zink et al (2003; 2006) on women coping with abuse over long periods of time. However, studies over thirty years have lacked a focus on the spatial: on the 'where?' of the leaving and on how women use space to escape abuse.

The concept of leaving domestic violence raises questions of private and public spheres, which have been explored in research on women's safety and fear. Drawing on her earlier work on women's fear of sexual violence (Pain, 1991), Pain has questioned the spatialising of crime and fear to particular locations of urban areas, rather than the grounding of violence in social relations (2000, p.381). She emphasises that the vast majority of incidents of violence against women take place in the home or other private and semi-private spaces (Pain, 1997, p.233), and has recently highlighted the ongoing nature of fear of an intimate partner, potentially continuing long after separation or leaving (Pain, 2012). However, though the gendered nature of fear and violence in public and private places (Koskela & Pain, 2000; Moser, 2004), the blurring of boundaries between public/private (Duncan, 1996), and the possibilities of resistance (Koskela, 1997), have been areas of geographical research that have considered domestic violence, very few geographical studies have addressed domestic violence in any detail. A notable exception is Warrington's research into the spatially restricted lives of women who had left domestic violence and accessed women's refuges in East Anglia (Warrington, 2001), exploring how spatial

constraints continue despite women leaving the abuse. She concludes that “only when gendered power relationships within the wider spaces of society are confronted will women be safe within the micro-spaces of the home” (Warrington, 2001, p.379).

Whitzman draws on Warrington’s work to problematise public/private divides, and to engage with concepts of home, stating that “Warrington (2001) begins her article on the geographies of private violence by wondering why there is little attention paid to the annual internal migration of 50 000 refugees from domestic violence within England. For her, the policy emphasis on danger in public space helps exclude the experiences of women for whom the ideal of home as haven falls short” (Whitzman, 2007, p.2720). Ideals and realities of home have been widely explored in research and literature (see reviews, such as Mallett, 2004; Blunt, 2005); with much feminist work resisting the idealisation of home for women (Rose, 1993). Domosh (1998, p.280) argues that “the home is rich territory indeed for understanding the social and the spatial”. Particular studies of home include Goldsack (1999) and Wardhaugh (1999) challenging the notion of home as haven by highlighting women’s experience of domestic violence, Giles (1999) exploring how ideas and images of home, and gendered roles within the home, are mobilised in war, and Bartlett (1997) exploring home moves due to poverty within the USA. However, in her research on domestic violence in South Africa, Meth argues that ideas about the home often remain unexamined in research on domestic violence, and that “the variable materiality of the home needs to be addressed more fully” (Meth, 2003, p.326). Mallett (2004, p.84) concludes her review of the literature on home by stating that “Clearly the term home functions as a repository for complex, inter-related and at times contradictory socio-cultural ideas about people’s relationship with one another, especially family, and with places, spaces, and things”.

If domestic violence research has under-examined the home, it has examined the people, with a large literature on differences and similarities for women with different socio-demographic characteristics within the UK. Many studies which have addressed women’s ethnic origin have highlighted specific needs,

including additional risks within communities and discrimination or inappropriate services responses (Mama, 1989; Southall Black Sisters, 1990; Belgrave Baheno, 1995; Rai & Thiara, 1997; Rai & Thiara, 1999; Minhas et al., 2002; Burman et al., 2004). Research on disability has been more limited, but Hague et al (2008) highlight specific forms of abuse as well as additional barriers to seeking help. Disability may also be directly connected to the domestic violence, with the Women's Aid survey of women in services highlighting that for a third of women with physical or sensory disability the disability was a result of the abuse; and that for 72 per cent of women with mental health problems these were a result of the abuse (Women's Aid, 2009). Research has also focused on the experiences of children, and of women as mothers (Morley & Mullender, 1994; Hague et al., 1996; Hester et al., 1998; McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002), including a study by Scottish Women's Aid which asked children about their experiences of relocation journeys due to domestic violence (Stafford et al., 2008). The interviewed children (aged 10-16) highlighted the stress and disruption of the moves, especially if they had received little explanation, but also emphasised the relief of escaping the situation of abuse, and the opportunity of a new start. However, for some children there may be ongoing contact with their fathers, not necessarily positive, and studies such as Radford et al (1999) and, more recently, Coy et al (2012) have detailed abusive men using contact applications to try and track down and continue to threaten women and children.

Studies of socio-demographic factors have tended to identify the interaction of different factors and identity categories, and have pointed to the value of a more intersectional approach (Crenshaw, 1991; Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Nash, 2008; Lewis, 2009; Walby et al., 2012), recognising the constitutive processes of social inequalities. Paterson (2009, p.131) argues that "Women are much more likely to draw on private rather than public resources to resist violence", which highlights that how concepts such as ethnic origin and disability affect structural positioning, and therefore resources, may be more significant than seeing them as fixed identity categories. Demographic categories used in survey research and administrative data can therefore be

argued to be contingent, as well as requiring caution on more technical grounds (Sabater & Simpson, 2009); however they do enable useful analysis of large data sets. Women's Aid, for example, carries out annual surveys (Women's Aid, 2009), providing detailed descriptions of the women and children accessing support, and this can enable comparison with smaller research samples on broad demographic characteristics, whilst recognising the importance of more nuanced analysis. As Valentine argues, "The existing theorization of the concept of intersectionality overemphasizes the abilities of individuals to actively produce their own lives and underestimates how the ability to enact some identities or realities rather than others is highly contingent on the power-laden spaces in and through which our experiences are lived" (2007, p.19). A notion of how individuals move through power-laden spaces is highlighted in Massey's concept of power geometry of time-space compressions: that "some [people] initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it. [...] [There are] groups who are really in a sense in charge of time-space compression, who can really use it and turn it to advantage, whose power and influence it very definitely increases. [such as jet-setters and the business elite] But there are also groups who are also doing a lot of physical moving, but who are not 'in charge' of the process in the same way at all" (Massey, 1994, p.149). She therefore emphasises both the movement and the degrees of agency within such journeys.

An engagement with the interaction of demographic characteristics of identity and contingent social positioning highlights the need to consider both force and agency in women's experiences of leaving domestic violence. In a Canadian study, Fry and Barker (2001) outline a framework of action and inaction for women's coping strategies and responses to violence and abuse (the majority being domestic abuse), highlighting that women expressed more regrets for inaction than action. MacCannell and MacCannell (1993) criticise Foucault's equation of power with freedom, operating with neutrality, and emphasise that in situations of domestic violence the abuser's power is constraining because it is backed up with the threat of violence. Many studies have also explored the extent to which women experiencing abuse internalise the threats and limit



their own behaviour, for example Holland et al's characterisation of the "male-in-the-head" (1998, p.11). McKenzie-Mohr and Lafrance (2011) in their study of how women express their experiences of rape or depression, highlight the difficulty of communicating degrees of force and agency, and characterise women as using "Tightrope talk". They discuss how language such as 'decision' invites an exclusive understanding of agency, whereas women struggled to explain the extent to which they tried to do something, or how recovery was not "simply a matter of choice" (McKenzie-Mohr & Lafrance, 2011, p.60). There is an extensive literature engaging with debates about force and agency, victims and survivors, particularly in the areas of sexual violence, prostitution and trafficking (for example, Lamb, 1999; Doezma, 1998; Kampadoo, 1998; Pickup, 1998; Kelly, 2002). More directly related to research on women's domestic violence journeys are debates over forced and voluntary migration (for example, Turton, 2003; Tunstall, 2006; Gill et al., 2011), with King concluding in a recent overview that "The distinctions between forced and voluntary, temporary and permanent, and legal versus illegal migration are more self-evidently compromised by the blurred reality of migratory phenomena and behaviour. Nevertheless, they remain heuristically useful to define the opposite poles of spectra along which individual, and changing, migratory situations can be positioned" (King, 2012, p.137).

The extensive research literature on migration, has increasingly engaged with gender since the 1970s, providing edited collections such as Willis and Yeoh's on 'Gender and Migration' (2000), and with overviews such as Sinke's (2006) on the closer attention to gender dynamics in migration. Studies on gender-related persecution leading to forced migration (for example, Gilad, 1999; Buscher & Makinson, 2006; Lebrun & Derderian, 2007) can also be related to debates over a gender-essentialism which risks constructing women as simple victims. However, the legal system of claiming refugee status requires narratives of persecution and victimisation, and authors such as Torres (2002) and Spijkerboer (2000) have engaged with such tensions between force, persecution, dependency and agency in women's experiences of migration. Both Indra (1999) and El-Bushra (2000) root the gendering of forced migration in the greater recognition

of gender in development studies, conceptualising the force that causes relocation within a wider context of inequality, and this is similarly outlined in terms of internal displacement by Benjamin and Fancy (1998), and transnationalism by Glick Schiller et al (1995). The gendering of migration studies also reflects a bringing together of large scale quantitative studies with smaller qualitative studies of the meanings for individuals and groups within migration flows (Piper, 2006); and there are many studies sensitive to the gendered nature of migrant and refugee experiences (for example, Ellis et al., 1996; Matsuoka & Sorenson, 1999; Matlou, 1999; Lawson, 2000; Fouron & Glick Schiller, 2001; Sørensen & Stepputat, 2001; Evergeti, 2008). Drawing on such small scale dynamics, authors such as Lawson (1998) and Donato et al (2006) highlight that decisions to migrate are made within a larger context of gendered interactions and expectations between individuals and within families and institutions; contextualising the interrelationship between force and agency. Such gendered interactions have also been theorised by Mahler and Pessar (2001; 2006) in their conceptual model of 'gendered geographies of power' incorporating geographical scale, social location, personal agency and mind work in understanding transnationalism. They extend an analysis of social location, which tends to incorporate gender, class, race and ethnicity to imply low degrees of agency of women in transnational spaces, and emphasise women's "corporal and cognitive" agency, "given their own initiative as well as their positioning within multiple hierarchies of power operative within and across many terrains" (Mahler & Pessar, 2001, p.447). In her overviews of how feminist geographers have contributed to migration studies, Silvey (2004; 2006) highlights insights into the gender dimensions of the social construction of scale, the politics of interlinkages between place and identity, and the socio-spatial production of borders. All these areas are applicable to women's domestic violence journeys, as well as Lawson's (1998) focus on the household scale, and the need to analyse the hierarchies and power relations within it.

Whilst there are many studies of households, family and lifecourse in migration, there is clearly a need to unpack the family. Kofman's (2004) review of family-related migration distinguishes between four main processes: family

reunification, family formation, marriage migration, and family migration; however, she does not conceptualise migration to escape a partner or family. She is focusing on international migration to Europe, but the links between family context and migration outcomes have also been highlighted in studies on internal migration (Smith & Bailey, 2006; Smith, 2011). Within the UK, several studies have related family and household dynamics to different geographies and internal migration, such as Duncan and Smith (2002, p.471) on geographical differences in the “‘traditional’ male breadwinner/female homemaker family”, and Finney (2011, p.468) on how “Gender [and ethnicity] mediates the relationship between residential mobility and partnership formation”. Whilst such studies using census data can reveal patterns of migration, Smith and Bailey also emphasise the need to relate quantitative and qualitative analysis, concluding that “our empirical analysis cannot address the ‘why’ questions of such differences [in migration], and this dimension requires qualitative research” (2006, p.1340). Boyle et al (2008, p.219) investigated whether migration or residential mobility might lead to relationship separation, but they recognised that the data did not allow them to “examine the reasons why a couple separated or who stimulated the decision”. In the USA, Waltermaurer’s (2007) analysis of the National Crime Victimization Survey identified an association between residential change and Intimate Partner Violence for women, but was unable to identify whether women had moved to escape violence, or with an abusive partner who was enforcing social isolation by such a move. In the UK, Flowerdew and Al-Hamad (2004, p.348), were only able to identify an “interesting tendency for women to move in the years immediately preceding divorce” (which they could not explain), whilst men tended to move following divorce. Qualitative research may have been able to indicate the meanings of such patterns; for example that women may be moving out to escape abuse, and subsequently seek a divorce, whereas, in the case of divorces without abuse, women (as primary care-givers for children) may be more likely to remain in the house.

It is clear, therefore, that migration studies have not addressed women’s journeys to escape domestic violence, despite the engagement with gender and

the dynamics between force and agency in particularly international migration. Whilst gendered forced internal migration has been recognised in studies in other countries, the concept of forced migration has rarely been considered in the UK context. Fyfe and McKay (2000, p.77) highlight that “most empirical work [on forced migration] focuses on the developing rather than the developed world, and on the international rather than intranational movement of forced migrants”; whilst going on to use concepts of forced migration in their research on witness protection in Scotland. They argue that “these displaced witnesses would appear to fit well within existing typologies of forced migration which emphasize the social causes of movement and the limited decision-making autonomy of forced migrants” (Fyfe & McKay, 2000, p.78). They also emphasise the importance of “intensive, qualitative research strategies that allow the voices of forced migrants to be heard” (Fyfe & McKay, 2000, p.77). The many domestic violence studies which have allowed women’s voices to be heard in terms of escaping the abuse have not, however, addressed women’s journeys, apart from Phillips’ unpublished small-scale study (2010) and Warrington’s (2001, p.365) research into women and children “forced to leave their homes” due to domestic violence.

Overall, therefore, the domestic violence literature has engaged with women’s help-seeking, including socio-demographic differences within that, and included women’s accounts of degrees of force and agency in escaping abuse. However, it has not examined how women use space to escape, and has neither quantified nor conceptualised their journeys. Migration literature does include conceptualisations and quantifications of journeys, including engagement with gender and degrees of forced movement, but has rarely applied these within the UK. In considering women leaving abuse, therefore, the literature provides pointers for analysing and conceptualising across disciplinary boundaries.

### 2.3. Travelling

The lack of domestic violence literature on women’s literal journeys means that migration literature needs to be reviewed in terms of engaging with women’s

travelling. Migration theory and modelling has tended to focus on economic and labour force drivers of large scale flows (Smith & King, 2012), and on transitions at the macro scale (Skeldon, 2012). However, King (2012) outlines four paradigmatic trends in the study of migration - the mobilities turn, transnationalism, diaspora studies, and gendered approaches - and these all have elements which could be applied to women's domestic violence journeys. Transnationalism and gendered approaches have been considered above, and concepts of diaspora will be considered later. The mobilities turn was encapsulated in the editorial of the first issue of the journal 'Mobilities' (Hannam et al., 2006), which engaged with inequalities of mobility, including drawing on Massey's (1993) power-geometries of everyday life. Explicitly critiquing notions that places push or pull people, Sheller and Urry (2006, p.208) announced a new mobilities paradigm; arguing against the travel itself being seen as a "black box, a neutral set of technologies and processes". Cresswell (2010, p.21) echoes Massey's power-geometries in emphasising "the ways in which mobilities are both productive of such social relations and produced by them". He unpacks the power relations within the black box of travel by arguing that "A man and a woman, or a businessman and a domestic servant, or a tourist and a refugee may experience a line of a map linking A and B completely differently". This also raises the dilemma of how such different journeys can be mapped, as explored in the literature of mapping meaning (for example, Corner, 1999; Cosgrove, 1999). However, the 'mobilities turn' has been limited in its engagement with forced mobility, indeed Urry (2002, p.271) explicitly excluded "coerced mobility" such as "the corporeal travel of escape - *from* the co-presence of torturers, child molesters, violent partners, exploiters, sources of poverty, famine and so on" from his discussion of mobility and proximity.

Drawing on the gendered approaches discussed earlier, feminists such as Massey (2005) have cautioned against an over-celebration of movement; and have continued to emphasise the importance of place. She reconceptualises place as a "negotiation of multiplicity" (Massey, 2005, p.141), posing political questions and challenges in the configuration of practices and characteristics. Such politicised places have also been a focus of studies of internal migration within

the UK, many of which draw on census and health service data to describe and model the processes of commuting and migration travel. The interplay of characteristics of people and places is encapsulated in the development of indices of place, such as DEFRA's Rural-Urban Classification (DEFRA, 2009), the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (DCLG, 2007), and the Area Classification of Local Authorities (Office for National Statistics, 2001a; 2001b). Dennett and Stillwell (2008; 2010a; 2010b) provide several studies of indices of the characteristics of place, and of migration flows between such places, and Raymer and Giulietti (2009) use the Area Classification of Local Authorities to consider internal migration of different ethnic groups. Other research focuses more on the people who are moving, such as studies on the patterns and distance of ethnic minority migration (Stillwell & Duke-Williams, 2005; Finney & Simpson, 2008; Simpson & Finney, 2009; Stillwell, 2010); however there has been less focus on gender and internal migration in the UK. Whilst including the census category of sex in their modelling of internal migration, Fotheringham et al (2004, p.1655) highlighted that "there was generally very little difference in model performance between the two sexes", and research has highlighted distance, economic factors and age/lifecycle as far more important influences on migration in the UK (Champion et al., 1998; 2002; 2005; Catney & Simpson, 2010; Stockdale & Catney, 2012). In his recent overview of migration in Britain, Fielding (2012) argues that economic drivers of migration are paramount, and he does not detail any forced migration within the UK. He relates any gender differences to "gender-specific social mobility and family formation behaviours" (Fielding, 2012, p.127); however identifying that at the inter-regional level "the differences are extremely slight" (2012, p.14). Fielding (2012, p.27) also identifies that, at the County level, there is a striking positive correlation between in- and out- internal migration rates, though London has an overall net loss (more than counterbalanced by international in-migration). In the literature, London is frequently argued to be distinctive in terms of internal migration, with young adults moving into central London from elsewhere in the UK, or abroad, and tending to move to outer London, and then outside London with age and lifecycle changes (Ford & Champion, 2000; Buck et al., 2002; Rees

et al., 2010). However, the extent of these movements have varied with economic conditions (GLA, 2010; 2011).

In general, therefore, the literature does not identify distinctively gendered migration flows in the UK, nor has internal migration been conceptualised as forced within these studies. In as much as there has been some recognition of dynamics within families, it has been about forming partnerships and a suggestion that the “trailing wife” effect (Cooke, 2008, p.256) (of a woman moving with her male partner because of his migration decision) is no longer so relevant (Fielding, 2012, p.126). There has been no identification of something more like a ‘fugitive wife’ effect of women escaping abuse. It is therefore only the small scale studies such as Warrington’s (2001) that have engaged with any specifics of women’s travel in these circumstances in the UK, giving fragmentary indications of places and distances. Of the 27 women she interviewed “five had moved to a refuge in their home town, and of the rest, the nearest distance moved was 10 miles, and the furthest was 215 miles; the average move was one of 78 miles” (Warrington, 2001, p.375). Wilcox (2006, p.730) researched community support networks for women experiencing domestic violence in two areas of the UK, and estimated that “Most of the women (and children) in my research had been forced to flee from ten to seventy miles to escape violence (only two had remained in their own homes)”. In a study of access to advice services for a range of issues (including domestic violence), Patel et al (2008) identified that whether or not, and how, individuals accessed advice depended on actual and perceived distances to services, as well as access to a car; with people without a car significantly more likely to do nothing about civil justice problems. In the context of access to employment, Dobbs (2007) highlighted gendered inequalities in travel resources which constrained women’s mobility, and which are likely to apply in terms of other journeys women need to make. Distance and access issues have also been identified in studies of domestic violence in rural areas (McCarry & Williamson, 2009), as well as the nature of rural communities raising issues of confidentiality and safety. Other studies which suggest some urban/rural effects include Reeve et al (2006) finding some evidence of women who became homeless in rural areas travelling to larger

towns and cities in order to access the homelessness provision available there; and Little et al (2005, p.160) highlighting barriers for women experiencing domestic violence in rural areas. However, overall, these studies give only a fragmentary picture of distances and places for women's journeys.

The lack of evidence on women's literal journeys is despite an increasing literature on embodiment; such as Mehta and Bondi (1999) on fear of violence and Bürkner's (2012) assessment that recent feminist migration studies show wider recognition of the embodiment of migration. The domestic violence literature has been far more likely to employ metaphors of travel than research actual journeys. Examples are studies which explore women's emotional journeys (Queen et al., 2009) and healing journeys (Smith, 2003), and those which engage with women 'moving on' from violence (Morgan, 2006). Whilst such metaphors may be positively engaged with, there is a risk that they also obscure the actual movement of women and children around the country. For example, a recent policy report on domestic abuse from the Centre for Social Justice (which is closely associated with the UK Coalition Government) (Farmer & Callan, 2012) contained no references to women's journeys, travel or relocation due to domestic violence, but numerous references to women and children needing to move on from the abuse. In an early paper on the deployment of metaphors of travel, Wolff (1993, p.235) cautions against the potentially conservative effects of metaphors of movement and mobility in relation to gender, whilst emphasising that metaphors of exclusion - "borderlands', 'exile', 'margins'" - may be more relevant to women, because "we are not all on the road together". However, some literature brings together metaphorical and actual journeys, such as Hanson and Pratt's (1995) engagement with spaces and places as both constraints and resources for women. They outline containment stories, mobility stories, and situated theories and emphasise gender as contingent, non-static and place-specific. A more recent example is Munt's reflections (2012, p.556) on how she used "The iconic metaphor of the journey" in her "Journeys of Resilience" course with refugee women in the UK, drawing on their both embodied and emotional (as well as gendered) journeys.



Overall, therefore, whilst migration literature provides some pointers to potentially important factors affecting travelling, such means of transport and actual and perceived distances, neither quantitative studies, nor conceptual work around mobilities, have focused on forced migration within the UK. Modelling which engages with the characteristics of places has not tended to identify specifically gendered processes of migration, whilst smaller scale studies of women's experiences of domestic violence have not been able to generalise about distances and directions travelled. In fact, domestic violence literature has been far more likely to employ metaphors of journeys than examine literal journeys.

#### **2.4. Waiting**

Both domestic violence and migration literatures include notions that the initial leaving may not lead directly to resettlement in a destination. Whilst not examining the travelling, domestic violence research in the UK has considered women's experiences of waiting within women's refuges or other temporary accommodation. Many studies have explored the role of women's refuges and the distinctiveness of such services, over and above the provision of accommodation with a high priority on safety from the abuser and physical security. These include early studies, such as Dobash and Dobash (1992) on different models of refuge provision, and Ball (1994) on the practicalities and funding of provision; as well as more recent research, such as Abrahams (2006; 2007; 2010) into the process of support in refuges which enables women to recover from the abuse. Burman and Chantler (2004) highlight that the physical and emotional space, and the structural positioning, of a refuge could tend towards Augé's (2008, p.63) notion of an impersonal, isolating "non-place". They argue that refuges need to counteract this in how they work, tackling discrimination and supporting a sense of belonging. However, standards, funding and capacity of women's refuges within the UK have changed over the decades; and recent studies have also highlighted the uneven geographical distribution of services (Coy et al., 2007; Coy et al., 2009). Overall, Quilgars and Pleace (2010, p.15) identified 445 accommodation based services in England specifically

designed for households at risk of domestic violence (88% of which were refugees); which offered over 4,000 household places (an average of 0.96 household places per 10,000 population). However, definitions are difficult and the nature of refuge provision varies; and Warrington (2003) has highlighted changes in the nature of refuge provision, from its feminist roots. The pros and cons of ‘professionalization’ of violence against women services are also addressed in Htun and Weldon’s (2012) study of developments in violence against women policy in 70 countries over the years 1975-2005, whilst they conclude that feminist mobilisation in civil society produced more significant developments in social policy than other governmental or economic factors. However, the context of women’s waiting continues to change, and Towers and Walby’s (2012) recent study of services to prevent violence against women and girls identifies significant cuts, and potential future cuts, in provision.

A focus on women’s waiting in the context of domestic violence journeys also enables an engagement with women’s waiting in the research literature on migration. The United Nations defines a “Protracted Refugee Situation” as where “Their lives may not be at risk, but their basic rights and essential economic, social and psychological needs remain unfulfilled after years in exile” (UNHCR, 2006, p.106), and Hyndman and Giles (2011, p.361) identify this as a situation of “permanent temporariness”. They argue that this contributes to a feminisation of refugees, who are constructed as immobile and passive as they “stay put and wait for a solution to their plight” (2011, p.364); and that “Refugees in long-term limbo are stuck within a shrinking humanitarian space” (2011, p.366). In an earlier paper, Hyndman (1997, p.154) contrasts the relative immobility of migrants, particularly refugees, across borders with the mobility of humanitarian aid. She uses Massey’s (1993) power-geometry to contrast the accelerated movement of powerful people and money, arguing that those “who are uprooted from their homes and forced to flee their country with few resources experience migration in a very different way”. Hyndman and Giles’s paper is in a themed section of Gender, Place and Culture on ‘waiting’ and Conlon (2011, p.353) introduces it by highlighting that “Waiting is a banal and ubiquitous practice that is linked in myriad ways to mobility and (im)mobility in

the contemporary era. Yet, to date, experiences of waiting have received scant conceptual and/or research attention among scholars". She emphasises that "waiting is actively produced, embodied, experienced, politicized and resisted across a range of migrant spaces" (Conlon, 2011, p.355). In the same issue, Mountz (2011) focuses on the sites of waiting for asylum seekers, engaging with the specific locations, and viewing them as liminal spaces of struggle, action and political possibility. She characterises such sites as "Neither here nor there, sites in between signal movement and stagnation, transgression and disruption and ambiguous forms of belonging that map onto partial forms of citizenship and statelessness" (Mountz, 2011, p.383).

Hynes (2011) uses similar concepts of liminality to explore the experiences of asylum seekers within the UK, discussing the policy (since 1999) of dispersal; and processes of social exclusion within it. She also identifies resistance, exploring how some asylum seekers use their social networks to resist the impact of the policy and create their own senses of belonging. A wide literature on asylum in the UK includes policy evaluation, such as the National Audit Office's (2005, p.1) conclusion that "Providing suitable accommodation for asylum seekers is one of the most complex and difficult tasks Government has to do", and engagement with the practices and meaning of policies for workers within the system and asylum seekers themselves. Darling (2011, p.266) focuses on the governmentality of the "systems of ordering mobility and differentiating claims", arguing that "The mobility and insecurity associated with asylum housing is therefore one which creates discomfort and disorientation, while the knowledge that accommodation is only ever temporary, subject to eviction, movement and inspection at any time, acts as a means to control and constrain those awaiting decisions" (2011, p.268). Gill (2009a, p.186) explores the experiences of asylum seekers in detention, arguing that "The constant moving and repositioning of asylum seekers means that they are depicted as transitory, fleeting and depersonalised to those actors with the greatest degree of influence over them". As well as arguing how the forced movement depersonalises asylum seekers, he explores in another paper (Gill, 2009c) the impact on employees of the National Asylum Support Service (NASS), and the implications of the shift

from the local authority responsibilities for asylum seekers which existed before there was a national system of funding and decision-making. Gill (2009b, p.unpaged) also emphasises how both the dispersal and the waiting are forced upon asylum seekers, arguing that “Asylum seeker management is characterised by a complex combination of enforced stillness and enforced mobility of asylum seeking bodies, and resistance can also be understood in these terms”. This literature therefore provides parallels for exploring women’s forced waiting and forced journeys due to domestic violence, and the figures from formal accommodation indicate that there are significantly more women and children accommodated in refuges due to domestic violence than accommodated asylum seekers in the UK. In 2008-9, 16,750 women and 19,005 children (a total of 35,755 individuals) were provided with refuge accommodation in England (Women’s Aid, 2009). In comparison, the Home Office (2009, fig.2.4, 2.6, 2.7(tables)) recorded 17,090 applications for asylum support in 2008 (13,520 were single adults), of which 11,920 were for accommodation; and a total of 26,385 individuals (adults and children) were being supported in dispersed or initial accommodation (in the whole of the UK) at the end of 2008.

Overall, therefore, both the domestic violence and the migration literatures provide insights for exploring a stage of waiting within women’s domestic violence journeys. Research on women’s refuges examines the role of such services, over and above providing accommodation for women and children to wait in, as well as outlining developments, distribution, and cutbacks in such services. Waiting, especially the forced waiting of refugees and asylum seekers, is also highlighted within migration literature both internationally and in the UK. Concepts within this literature of liminal spaces, and a more negative concept of limbo, highlight the potential for both action and passivity by the people involved in such waiting; and point to the complexity of what they may be waiting for.

## 2.5. Settling

Much of the literature on refugees and asylum seekers emphasises the active nature of their waiting, and their resistance to both forced mobility and containment, which blurs the lines between waiting and settling. In her study with homeless people, Wardhaugh (1999, p.96) explores how “those who are abused and violated within the family are likely to feel ‘homeless at home’” and that some women can feel that temporary accommodation, such as a hostel, is more of a real home, enabling both privacy and freedom. Overviews of the literature on home, such as Mallett (2004) and Blunt (2005) mentioned earlier, and collections such as in *Cultural Geographies* (Blunt & Varley, 2004) and in book form (for example, Blunt & Dowling, 2006) engage with both material and symbolic homes, and tend to acknowledge the home as a site of violence and abuse for women, as a place that may be left. However, they provide little focus on practices of re-making home after violence.

The migration literature has engaged more with home-making practices and emotions after relocation, with a strong emphasis on the gendered nature of such work and experiences. Ahmed (1999) rejects an oppositional sense of home and away in narratives of migration, and emphasises the emotional work of being at home, wherever the location. In her book exploring notions of the stranger (Ahmed, 2000), she questions the relationship of identity, belonging and home, exploring feelings of having more than one home, and drawing on Brah’s (1996) diasporic imagination of home as both a mythic place that cannot be returned to, and as a lived experience in a current locality and everyday experience. In research on the experiences of refugees from Bosnia, Stefansson (2006, p.125) does not employ a gendered analysis, but explores the reasons why the restitution of housing to displaced people did not tend to lead to their permanent return to Banja Luka. He argues that the changed political and social context meant that people’s meaningful home - their “big home” - had gone forever, despite their houses - their “small home” - being returned to them. As a result, most people felt more able to recreate a sense of home where they had fled abroad, or in living transnational lives and only returning to their houses in

Banja Luka for summer visits. In the context of women migrating within Europe for economic reasons, Morokvasic (2004, p.7) argues that in order to maintain their life and families in Eastern and Central European countries, some women become “settled in mobility” as they cross borders for economic opportunities. She highlights that “their *leaving home* and going away, paradoxically, [becomes] a strategy of *staying at home*” (Morokvasic, 2004, p.7).

Much of the literature on creating a sense of home does draw on gendered analysis, whilst refusing a fixed gendered binary which roots women in the home and men in the outside world. Gedalof (2003) highlights the value of women’s work on home, place and community, recognising how they are often reproducing home in temporary places as they experience the exclusion and constraints of violence, dislocation and poverty. Young’s (1997, p.164) work on home-making similarly argues for “recognizing the creative value to the often unnoticed work that many women do”. Gedalof (2009) also focuses on women as mothers, researching the experiences of migrant mothers in London and identifying their practices in reproducing heritage, culture and structures of belonging, as well as the more widely recognised reproductive work of childbirth and mothering. Rather than an idealisation of home, she therefore highlights women’s practical and emotional home-making, drawing on bell hooks’ (1991, p.49) sense that “We can make homeplace that space where we return for renewal and self-recovery, where we can heal our wounds and become whole”. Pratt (1999, p.159) characterises the potential for home to be “the material anchor for a sense of agency and a shifting and fluid identity”, highlighting the interrelationship of home and identity. Practices of home and identity are also explored in many studies of migrant and displaced communities, such as Fortier’s (2000) research on institutional practices of group identity with Italians in Britain, and Hyndman and De Alwis’ (2004) research around ethno-nationalist identities in Sri Lanka. In contexts of homelessness in the UK, several studies have explored identity practices, such as May et al (2007) who delineate “alternative cartographies” of homelessness, identifying different gendered homeless identities. Wardhaugh (1999, p.102) states that, “Lacking access to that second skin, the home, the homeless body becomes the first and often only

line of defence against a dangerous world” and she argues that, “Homeless people engage in a range of identity work in an effort to ‘salvage the self’” (1999, p.104).

As Wardhaugh recognises, many homeless women are homeless because of domestic violence, and the domestic violence literature includes studies on identity work as women cope with and/or leave the abuse. MacCannell and MacCannell (1993) explore how abuse can fragment a woman’s subjectivity in a way that more objectively extreme stranger violence may not. The framing of domestic violence as coercive control (Stark, 2007, p.262) highlights how “Isolation undermines the moorings of social authority and identity, eviscerating a woman’s selfhood and constraining her subjectivity”. Stark (2007, p.215) emphasises the “dynamic interplay of agency, coercive control, victimization, and resistance in the lives of battered women”, and details the specific resources individual women draw upon. Other studies have included identifying the role of religion in promoting the recovery of integrity for some women (Flinck et al., 2005) and as a source of strength or comfort for them (Gillum et al., 2006); as well as broader concepts of regenerating social capital which had been reduced by the isolation of abuse (Larance & Porter, 2004). Concepts of social and cultural capital go beyond notions of personal resources, as capital is characterised as resources with convertibility, and therefore able to be deployed within new contexts - such as after abuse or migration (Erel, 2010). Erel (2010, p.656) considers migrants’ cultural capital as more than something they passively carry around with them, and argues that “Migration studies should move beyond a rucksack approach to analyse migrants’ creative agency in constructing new forms of migration-specific cultural capital”. A similar argument could be brought to understanding women’s agency in escaping domestic violence and Tedeschi (1999) outlines how survivors of violence may achieve positive changes in identity, philosophy and goals if they have opportunities to share their experiences, take actions and obtain justice. However, much research emphasises the time and resources needed to transform experiences of violence, and Kirkwood (1993) discusses how women are effectively bound into a web of emotional abuse and physical violence which

reduces the resources on which they might draw. She highlights the long process of leaving, beginning with the mind work within the relationship and not ending until potentially long after separation from an abusive partner.

Within both the migration and domestic violence literatures there is therefore a recognition of the embodied, emotional and practical elements within any concept of a settlement phase of journeys. In the UK context there is also a practice-focused literature on the process of resettlement and recovery after domestic violence for both women and children; for example the work of Abrahams which highlights both the role of refuges and life after a refuge stay (Abrahams, 2006; 2007; 2010). Humphreys and Thiara (2002) highlight the difficulties women face on leaving a refuge, such as isolation, lack of support, and financial hardship, and identify the role of outreach services in supporting women through the most acute difficulties of the first six months. In evaluation research on support services for homeless families (with domestic violence as the most common reason for homelessness), Jones et al (2002) identify that families accessed support for an average of nearly nine months (261 days). This enabled most to continue to sustain their housing after the support ended; with 82 per cent of families that had been out of contact with the service for nine months or more still being housed. Such support services are not, however, statutory and in Scotland, Edgar et al (2003) identified the fragmented nature of resettlement support for women leaving domestic violence; and proposed an integrated strategy of staged accommodation and support which would enable women to negotiate a coordinated pathway for their literal and emotional journey from abuse. In the absence of such support, they identified that many of the 39 women they interviewed were not able to resettle themselves and their children, for reasons of isolation, unsuitable housing and ongoing risk; with half of the women experiencing continued harassment from the abuser. Any identification of a stage of 'settling' is necessarily provisional, and the literature indicates that a range of processes and practices of 'settling' throughout the journey away from abuse may be more appropriate.



Overall, therefore, the domestic violence literature has explored the identity and emotion work and resources women draw upon to re-establish themselves after abuse, as well as the practical roles of services that support such resettlement processes. A wider literature on gendered home-making practices has also been used within migration research to explore resettlement, and senses of home and belonging. From the domestic violence literature that highlights the interplay of agency and abuse, victimisation and resistance, it can be concluded that a notion of degrees of settling may be more realistic than a final resettlement after a domestic violence journey.

## **2.6. Concepts of the journeys**

This review of literatures has therefore identified a gap in empirical research on women's forced journeys in response to domestic violence. The "black box" (Sheller & Urry, 2006, p.208) of travel between the processes of leaving abuse, and spending time in services such as refuges, has remained unexamined empirically and conceptually apart from a few relatively local studies in the UK. In addition, there are clearly fruitful possibilities from drawing on the literature of migration and displacement to develop an understanding of these domestic violence journeys, and to engage with the processes and practices of waiting and settling through the course of the journeys. A clarity of language from migration studies can also usefully be applied to women's domestic violence journeys within the UK, with 'migration' referring to a change of residence via a journey that crosses an administrative boundary; whereas relocation within administrative boundaries is referred to as 'residential mobility' (Boyle et al., 1998; Fielding, 2012). Boyle et al (1998, p.180) define forced migration as movement from home, across the boundary of an areal unit (whether within a state or across national borders), where "coercion has taken place and individuals have had to uproot themselves against their wishes"; creating refugees if the boundary is international, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) if the boundary is internal to a nation state (for example, a local authority boundary). However, the discussion above indicates that there is clearly also a

need to engage with the complexity of degrees of force and agency within individuals' decision-making and actions in mobility.

Such an engagement gives rise to a further, more conceptual, consideration of the literature, highlighting four domains where research into women's domestic violence journeys may contribute to more theoretical concerns. These are around processes and patterns of forced migration and spatial churn; concepts of exile, diaspora and imagined communities; consideration of boundaries and borders; and an engagement with the implications of scale.

### ***Forced Migration and Spatial Churn***

Because forced migration has rarely been considered as a process occurring in the UK context, there is no obvious literature to review in thinking about what patterns, directions or distances might be involved. Accepting the discussion above that forced and voluntary migration are not in clear-cut binary opposition to each other, it might be expected that women who relocate due to domestic violence might form a migration with the same patterns as other internal migration within the UK (as referenced above). However, two other potential patterns could also be considered, namely one which suggests that women's journeys are strongly determined by the availability of specialist services, and one which suggests that women's journeys are strongly individual and independent. The former would be indicated by women only able to leave with the assistance of services in their local area, and only travelling to areas where they could access formal services, with strong flows between such areas; whereas the latter would be indicated by women leaving and travelling everywhere, with a pattern of spatial churn and no strong flows. To engage with the literature, the former suggestion has parallels with Gill's (2009b, p.unpaged) work on the forced movement of asylum seekers to and from designated accommodation, whereby he argues that "the British state employs a range of strategies of mobility that serve to deprive asylum seeking communities of geographical stillness and, consequently, also often undermines their psychological stability". The latter suggestion engages more with the

metaphorical language of Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) rhizome whereby relationships and interconnections are made via lines of flow and flight, rather than spreading out from central origins or axes. The metaphor of a rhizome has been used in a varied literature, most relevantly here Cosgrove's (1999) edited collection on mapping meaning, and Corner's (1999) discussion within it of mapping as a cultural project which actively constructs social space. The empirical findings of this research will therefore enable consideration of these three suggestions via a conceptual engagement with the processes and patterns identified.

### ***Exile, Diaspora and Imagined Communities***

The migration literature includes discussions of specific diaspora communities and populations, such as Safran's (1991) definition of ideal type diasporas, and Cohen's (2008) and Esman's (2009) more recent overviews. However, there has also been a broader engagement with concepts of diaspora, such as Clifford's (1997) discussion of diasporic and hybrid identities and the appropriation of diaspora discourse in contrast to the norms of nation-states and arguments around assimilation of migrants and minorities. Essentially a diaspora has a group identity and consciousness defined by a shared relationship to a remembered or re-imagined homeland, and Brah (1996) highlights this in her contrast between exile and diaspora. She characterises exile as journeys of an individual away from somewhere, whereas diasporic journeys are about going somewhere and settling down to some extent, whether or not an ideology of return is sustained. Whilst a diaspora may not travel en masse, "multiple journeys may configure into one journey via a *confluence of narratives*" (Brah, 1996, p.183) as these narratives are lived and re-lived; so that a diaspora is produced, reproduced and transformed by shared group narratives. Woodward (1997, p.18) discusses how individuals invest in identities, creating an "imagined community" - imagined because it is not dependent on meeting as a community. This is paralleled in Anderson's (2006, p.6) definition of the nation as an imagined community, arguing that "It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them,

or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion". Blunt (2007, p.690) emphasises these imaginative (regardless of any material) connections of diaspora, arguing that "Cultural politics and practices in diaspora are mobilized and enacted over a variety of scales and chart both deterritorialized and reterritorialized spaces of identity, belonging and attachment". Such relational, historical and identity connections are also related to place by Augé's (2008) concept of non-places - where such connections are fractured or absent - travelled to via journeys that are indifferent to location (Bowstead, 2011). Diasporic connections are not therefore visible, and journeys of exile could become more diasporic, via the creation and re-creation of imagined communities. The empirical findings of this research will therefore enable consideration of notions of exile, diaspora and imagined communities within the processes and experiences identified.

## ***Boundaries***

Research on women's domestic violence journeys requires an engagement with boundaries; both in the categorisation of relocation journeys as either residential mobility (within Council, Borough or Unitary boundaries) or internal migration (crossing such boundaries) and in the differences of policies and services between local authorities. Boundaries matter in the Localism agenda in the UK, with its complex administrative structure which includes unitary and two-tier local authorities, devolved assemblies and governments outside England, and frequent boundary changes both on the ground and in terms of responsibilities. For example, the shift from local to national management of the asylum accommodation system in 1999 has been noted above; whereas social housing is now being shifted towards more local discretion (DCLG, 2010a), and therefore likely greater differences between neighbouring authorities. Boundaries are therefore conceptually and politically important in drawing conclusions from the empirical findings of this research.

However, the migration literature explored above (for example, Hyndman, 1997) also highlights the role of boundaries and borders in processes of inclusion and

exclusion, whereby globalisation is as much about raising borders as borders falling, creating “One spatial imagination for the powerful, and another for the rest” (Massey, 2001, p.15). Chen (2013, p.1) identifies these twin processes as “de-bordering and re-bordering, which reinforce borders as mutating spaces rather than fixed lines”, creating borderlands. More metaphorically, Pratt (1999, p.154) argues that identities are “boundary projects”, achieved through conflict and difference, which can tend to obscure the interdependencies of what lies on either side of the boundary. Boundaries therefore tend to create an ‘us’ and ‘them’; which Brah (1999) explored through the Punjabi words of ‘*ajnabi*’ (other, different), ‘*ghair*’ (strange) and ‘*apna/apni*’ (ours); highlighting the possibilities of crossing borders by identifying across difference in the diaspora space of London. She argues that the diaspora space of England “is continually reconstituted via a multitude of border crossings in and through other diasporic foundations” (1996, p.209) enabling a homing desire via “the lived experience of a locality” (1996, p.192). The literature of literal and metaphorical boundaries, borders and borderlands therefore enables an engagement with practical, emotional and identity-forming aspects of women’s domestic violence journeys in this research.

## **Scale**

Connected with the importance of boundaries is a necessary engagement with the variety of scales over which practices are enacted. There is an extensive literature and debate over the importance (or not) of scale (see, for example, Marston, 2000; Brenner, 2001; Marston & Smith, 2001; Marston et al., 2005). Manson (2008, p.782) asks whether scale exists, and concludes that scale is not a single measure, but that a continuum exists between the extremes of realist scale, which allows measurement and modelling of reality; and constructionist scale which highlights “the role of society in constructing and manipulating knowledge, space, nature, and scale”. Massey (2001, p.16) argues that “politics lies in the power-filled nature of the social relations at all levels”, and authors such as Moss (2005) and Pain (2009, p.475) argue that feminist work in particular jumps scales, enabling multiscale analysis which can bind “everyday experiences

to wider networks of power and privilege”, connecting the local with geopolitics. Hyndman (2004, p.307) argues that “Feminist geopolitics represents more accountable and embodied political responses to international relations at multiple scales”; which Silvey (2004, p.492) echoes for feminist migration research. She argues that it “investigates the construction and operation of scales - including the body, the household, the region, the nation and supranational organizations - as processes tied to the politics of gender and difference”.

Scale matters, in part, because organisations and authorities operate at particular scales. For example the division in the United Nations between the UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees), which deals with refugees, and the UNOCHA (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), which deals with internally displaced persons, has frequently caused difficulties in coordinating work with forced migrants (Angier, 2010). In the UK context, the division of responsibilities between national and local government is not fixed, and the Localism agenda (DCLG, 2010b; 2011) of the Coalition Government since May 2010 is shifting those divisions. This highlights Moore’s (2008, p.218) argument that scale should be treated as a category of practice rather than an entity of analysis, recognising that “the degree to which ‘scale’ shapes social life is an open question to be addressed empirically, rather than treated as a starting point of any research”. The deployment of a mixed methods approach to this research (as discussed in the next chapter) is a response to the need to consider women’s domestic violence journeys at scales ranging from the individual to the national; and within the context of international obligations.

## **2.7. Conclusion**

The domestic violence literature evidences women’s experiences of leaving abuse, accessing services, staying in refuges, and moving on to resettlement; including consideration of socio-demographic differences. However, it has not engaged empirically with women’s journeys between these experiences: with the places left or arrived in, or the distances and directions travelled.

Conversely, the migration literature around both internal and international migration provides empirical and conceptual engagement with places and journeys, but has not focused on relocation due to domestic violence, or on forced migration within the UK. An extensive literature has therefore been drawn upon to situate this research as analysing and conceptualising across disciplinary boundaries. Four stages of a journey trajectory have been explored via the literature: leaving, travelling, waiting and settling; which lead into the first four empirical chapters (Chapters 4 to 7) and the drawing together of the implications of these findings in Chapter 8. A more conceptual engagement with journeys in terms of forced migration and spatial churn; exile, diaspora and imagined communities; boundaries; and scale has been outlined from the literature and leads into the final conceptual conclusions in Chapter 9.

## Chapter 3. Methodology, research design and methods

### 3.1. Introduction

Whilst the initial research question prompted the early directions of the research process, the engagement with a wide literature - as outlined in the Literature Review - has also been important in shaping the research design and methods. Overall, the research design is understood to be made up of a consistent methodology rooted in particular ontological and epistemological understandings of social reality. From such understandings a research strategy was designed to generate new knowledge by means of a range of methods. This chapter therefore outlines the intellectual underpinnings of the research design, as well as the methods used to answer the original research question for this thesis:

*What is the extent and what are the implications of forced migration or relocation for women fleeing domestic violence?*

This question is clearly about journeys, and a broad model chronology of journeys - leaving, travelling, waiting, and settling - has shaped the direction of the research. Whilst the research strategy engages with the overall question of the journeys, different elements of the research design employed different methods to generate data on a range of facets and aspects of the journeys. A feminist-informed commitment to researching women's experiences of the journeys grounded the research in interviews with women who had relocated due to domestic violence; and this aspect of the data generation addressed all four facets of the journeys - leaving; travelling; waiting; and settling - through the qualitative data of the interview transcripts, Significance Charts<sup>1</sup> which some women completed, and through quantitative data from women's accounts of their journeys. However, a concern to generate knowledge on the extent and spatiality of women's journeys in England as a whole, and on the implications for

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<sup>1</sup> See Section 3.5 and Table 3.1 for details of all methods. An example of a Significance Chart is at Figure 6.30



services, authorities and policy - as well as for individuals - led to a research design which involved a wider range of methods. Different methods did not generate data to address discrete questions, but the nature of the data generated by different methods contributed in different degrees to the four facets of the journeys, as well as the overall research question.

Under the overall research question there were four sub-questions which enabled an initial development of focus and methodological thinking; however they were themselves developed and modified through engagement with the literature and emergent data analysis. Initially they were:

1. *What is the geography of these journeys within England?*
2. *How do women's experiences and understandings of fleeing, returning, or settling in a new area affect their sense of home and belonging?*
3. *How can services contribute to developing and supporting positive feelings and undoing negative experiences for women and children who have relocated?*
4. *What are the policy and practice implications of the extent of forced migration or relocation?*

The first sub-question is extremely broad and was therefore developed into more specific questions of the extent of distances and distinctiveness of places, and their measurement and mapping, requiring an engagement with the significance of scale (from local to national). As the literature review identified, there has been a particular lack of knowledge on the travelling of the journeys - these distances and places - and datasets were therefore generated for statistical analysis and mapping from administrative data collected by the Government under the Supporting People Programme<sup>2</sup>. Separate datasets with individual women as the cases, and with Local Authorities as the cases, enabled analysis at

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1

individual, local and national scales; and analysis of these data provided insights particularly into the facets of leaving and travelling.

It was initially envisaged that the second sub-question would be primarily addressed via interviews with women who had relocated; and the third sub-question also via those interviews, and via interviews with workers in specialist domestic violence services. Whilst this was the case, and whilst the fourth sub-question was addressed via analysis of the range of data sources, additional methods were also developed to address specific aspects more comprehensively via surveys and groupwork.

The administrative data on the journeys that women had made did not include any indication of whether those were the places that women had wanted to travel to, or if they had had any choices. A gap was therefore identified in terms of this leaving/pre-leaving stage, and was addressed by a survey being carried out on calls to the National Domestic Violence Helpline<sup>3</sup> covering the factors women raised when they were deciding where to go, and whether they were given any choices of location<sup>4</sup>. Analysis of data from this National Helpline Survey therefore provided greater insight into the process of leaving. Further data were generated via a survey of women in some domestic violence services, concerning whether they had tried formal options before, or instead of, relocating; and whether they had relocated more than once<sup>5</sup>. Analysis from this Refuge Survey therefore particularly addressed aspects of leaving and travelling.

Aspects of the waiting within women's refuges, and processes of settling, were researched through creative groupwork in refuges<sup>6</sup>, as well as through the interviews with women and refuge workers<sup>7</sup>. The Groupwork Process generated data on women's time in a refuge, and settling in a new area, and the

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<sup>3</sup> The National Domestic Violence Helpline for England is run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge and operates 24 hours a day.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 2

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix 3

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 4

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 5

photographic images which participants provided for the research particularly addressed aspects of this waiting and settling.

A mixed methods research design was therefore developed to be able to address different facets of the research question, within the context of different facets of women's domestic violence journeys. Such a design was developed for pragmatic reasons - to attempt to answer the research question - but also out of values and beliefs about social reality and how new knowledge can be generated. This chapter therefore begins with an engagement with this process of new knowledge generation, before going on to explore the power relations and particular ethical challenges of this research project. The research strategy is then outlined, drawing on the interrelationship between the research question, the methodology of new knowledge generation, and the particular ethical issues identified. The chapter concludes with an outline of the specific research methods used to generate the twelve datasets<sup>8</sup> employed in this research, and lists the additional datasets also accessed within the research analysis.

### **3.2. Social reality and new knowledge generation**

From a realist perspective, a social reality exists and acts independently of our descriptions (May, 1997; Williams, 2003); and research is a process of generating new descriptions, analysis and therefore knowledge. The methodology of research is therefore rooted in aims of being authoritative; in engaging with theory, literature, and previous research studies; and in grounding the research empirically.

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<sup>8</sup> Dataset is used to refer to each set of data generated via either quantitative or qualitative methods - see Table 3.1. For example, the interviews with women generated transcript data which were analysed thematically - the "Interviewed Women" (a qualitative dataset) - however the women also provided details of places, tenures, dates, means of transport etc. that formed a quantitative dataset - the "Interviewed Women's Journeys" - which enabled analysis on distances and places, and the journey graphs, such as Figure 5.20.

## ***Authoritative social research***

The aim of research is new knowledge generation, and knowledge that is recognised as authoritative. As Walby (2001, p.497) argues, “Knowledge is socially created and how we assess it depends on socially agreed-upon criteria”, highlighting that for research (specifically, in her article, feminist research) to have purchase on the world, researchers need to “utilize procedures that are widely considered authoritative” (2001, p.502). She calls for feminist analysis to “be bolder about its truth claims, rather than retreating into a defensive stance about partial knowledges” (Walby, 2001, p.485). Different audiences therefore make different judgements on what counts as authoritative social research, drawing on judgements particularly of quality, validity and reliability. In the particular context of social policy research, Bryman et al (2008) investigated the quality criteria that researchers deemed appropriate to different types of research and found greater agreement around assessing quality of quantitative rather than qualitative research. Whilst validity - the concept that research is identifying aspects of reality - was seen as important across the board, it was given higher importance in quantitative research; and reliability, replicability and generalisability were seen as less relevant to qualitative research, where investigations may be focused more on the particular, situated in time and place. Bryman et al (2008) therefore highlighted how different quality criteria present particular problems for mixed methods research, and concluded by suggesting criteria which focus on a process that provides clarity of rationale and transparency of procedures so that assessment of quality can be made relevant to the research question.

Achieving the necessary thresholds of validity and reliability so that research may have the intended impact with the intended audience is therefore not a simple issue of carrying out methods to a good enough standard, and there will often be a trade-off between reliability and validity. For example, coding the complexity of human identity into questionnaire categories of sex or ethnic origin facilitates a higher degree of reliability than allowing individuals to describe themselves in their own words; and it allows aggregation and analysis

on the basis of demographic characteristics. However, it also reduces the validity of such data for exploring in detail how individuals would define themselves in relation to concepts of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender and so on. As a result, research on the meanings of race and identity in a particular context may therefore prioritise validity to participants' own constructions of their realities, and not use such standardised demographic characteristics that enable generalisations. Cho and Trent (2006) therefore explore concepts of validity in the context of the purposes of particular research, identifying a transactional approach which grounds validity in the research process, along a continuum as to whether validity is seen as something that can ultimately be achieved, or whether it needs continually to be checked. However, they also identify a transformational approach to validity which grounds validity in the outcomes of research - in the ability of research to provoke action. Particular research techniques, therefore, may only be necessary but not sufficient to ensure validity, and they argue for a more holistic view of validity which can "open up validity consideration to the consumers of the research" (Cho & Trent, 2006, p.335).

The question of audience or consumers is therefore central to an aim of producing authoritative social research, and considering how research may be influential. Oakley (2000, p.298) argues that the small-scale of much feminist research has made it more able to be sidelined in academia and politics, and charts her own movement towards larger scale research because "one of the purposes of research is to move beyond individual world-views". She calls for research to develop "the most reliable and democratic ways of knowing" and abandon a "gendering of methodology" (Oakley, 2000, p.3) that categorises large-scale and quantitative research as typically male and small-scale and qualitative research as typically female. Whilst research literature includes numerous debates about qualitative and quantitative methods, Bryman (2006, p.111) argues that such "paradigm wars" have largely subsided, and that social researchers can now more productively focus on quality criteria, and greater integration of methods appropriate to the nature of the study. It is such an

integration of quantitative and qualitative that is attempted here, as discussed later in the section “Mixed methods”.

### ***The role of theory and literature***

The review of the literature in Chapter 2 has indicated that women’s journeys in response to domestic violence are an under-researched and under-theorised social phenomenon. The absence of theory on the nature or the distances of the journeys ensures that this research is primarily inductive, working from the empirical data generated. However, the aim is not to be simply descriptive of the phenomena identified, but to develop generalisations and explanations, and potentially new conceptualisations and theory from these insights. Theories and approaches from the literature are therefore seen as contributors to an iterative process of evolving thought throughout the research process.

Whilst considering the potential to develop theory grounded in the empirical data generated by the research, a strictly Grounded Theory approach, as developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), is not adopted. Grounded Theory is an inductive approach which rejects prior theory, arguing that theories emerge out of the data by means of repeated sampling and constant comparison. Though subsequently amended somewhat, including by Strauss and Corbin (1994), to allow some introduction of prior knowledge and theory, it retains an empiricist perspective that data/texts, such as interview transcripts, are resources to access truths about the world, requiring rigorous analytic techniques to extract those truths. Charmaz (1994) therefore argues that a literature review should only be carried out after conceptual analysis of the data, requiring the researcher to engage with the data with a mind empty of theory, empty of expectations; allowing her mind to fill with what she finds in the data.

In contrast, this research project aims to approach the data with an open mind, sensitised by engagement with prior knowledge and theory from a wide range of sources and disciplines, and a commitment to cumulative knowledge production. Examples and concepts from the reviewed literature provide tools for

engagement with the empirical data, and towards the empirical and conceptual conclusions. The approach is that of Layder's Adaptive Theory (1998, p.viii) which "combines the use of prior theory to lend order and pattern to research data while simultaneously adapting to the order and pattern contained in the emerging data". In this iterative approach, a wide range of theories, concepts and segments from general theory are used as "orienting devices" (1998, p.24) and discarded if they prove inadequate; or combined with themes and theories emerging from the data to construct new knowledge and theory. The process is therefore grounded empirically, employing rigorous methods of analysis, but drawing throughout the research on prior literature and theory to enable the process.

As the literature review indicates, there are some patterns and processes identified in migration or domestic violence research which may be applicable or adaptable to women's domestic violence journeys. No traditional formal hypotheses are suggested, to be tested by a deductive approach, however the nature of the data generated in this research enables testing of elements of prior theory. For example, as identified in Chapter 2, internal migration within the UK has been modelled in terms of patterns and distances; and international migration research includes theories of displacement, waiting and gendered processes which may travel across disciplinary boundaries to generate insights for this research project.

### ***Grounding the research***

It is out of an engagement with prior knowledge that the broad chronology of journeys - leaving, travelling, waiting, and settling - was identified for this research; but it was also constructed and reconstructed from ongoing engagement with the data generation. Fyfe and McKay (2000) employ a similar notion of journey stages in their research on forced migration of protected witnesses, citing Boyle et al's (1998, pp.191-4) migration work. However, they also emphasise their particular focus on specific issues that they saw as under-identified in previous studies, or that they identified from analysing interview

transcripts. Grounding the research is therefore about a commitment to the cumulative generation of knowledge, building on earlier studies, whilst retaining an openness to unexpected outcomes in the research encounters. Empirically grounded social research is clearly about values as well as techniques; and about an engagement with social issues and concerns, in contrast to types of academic activity which Hamnett (2003, p.1) provocatively characterised as a “theoretical playground” detached from substantial social analysis and political engagement.

An engagement with social issues highlights that all views are a view from somewhere (Harding, 1987; Haraway, 1991), and Massey (2003) argues it is therefore better to acknowledge and conceptualise this point of view and negotiate our practical and philosophical engagement throughout the research. However, Rose (1997, p.314) critiques an idealisation of “transparent reflexivity” that implies comprehensive self- and situated-knowledge and calls for recognition of the “messiness” of the research process. Other feminist authors have also been prominent in highlighting the gendering and placing of knowledge claims, including engaging reflexively with the notion of ‘fieldwork’ and a conceptualisation of research as having stages when the researcher is or is not ‘in the field’. Nast (1994) introduced an issue of the journal *Professional Geographer* on Women in the Field by exploring the extent to which a researcher can be either an insider or outsider in a research context, which Katz (1994, p.67) drew upon in the same issue to argue “we are always already in the field”. Katz argues that “the field” is the “blurry space of everyday life”, and explores the extent to which political engagement and reflexivity can grapple with the issues of power differentials in research. Grounding is therefore neither straightforward, nor something that can be completed or totally achieved.

Whilst much early feminist scholarship was directly linked to activism, authors such as Maynard (1994) and Kelly et al (1994) highlighted a risk of abstraction if feminist work becomes detached from women’s lives and experiences. The debate continues, such as Wright’s (2010, p.818) more recent “emphasis on research that grounds theoretical discussion with research conducted in activist projects conducted in the name of social justice”, highlighting her own



emotional investment towards activism and progressive change. In terms of domestic violence research, Griffiths and Hanmer (2005) argue that no one method is inherently feminist, but a feminist perspective affects how research studies are conceptualised, carried out and presented. O'Connell Davidson and Layder (1994) emphasise that a feminist commitment to research as a two-way ethically-informed encounter demonstrates a concern to do no harm; as is highlighted, for example, in Coy's (2006) prioritising of women's welfare in her research with women in the sex industry. To situate research as feminist indicates both an intellectual stance and a political commitment towards gender equality and women's empowerment. For example, Dyck and McLaren (2004, p.514) characterise their research with immigrant and refugee women as "informed by feminist theoretical and methodological debate that understands accounts of 'everyday life', constructed through the methods of qualitative research, to be located within broader relations and distributions of power that play out unevenly within the particularities of time and place".

However, a feminist commitment does not necessarily require qualitative research, as emphasised in Mattingley and Falconer-Al-Hindi's (1995) history of quantitative work in feminist geography; and Dias and Blecha (2007) argue for feminist insights to inform geography as a whole, rather than to be regarded as a discrete subdiscipline. Lawson (1995) states that arguments for change - such as policy proposals - must demonstrate the pervasiveness as well as the seriousness of a problem, and therefore need both large-scale quantified data analysis on extent, as well as analysis on meaning and implication from smaller-scale data. Moss (1995, p.447) also argues that incorporating such quantification in research makes it less likely that individual women's accounts, for example of domestic violence, can be dismissed as just "one woman's account of a singular act". In fact, in an overview of research on gender violence, Skinner et al (2005) characterise feminist research as particularly favouring multiple methods to enable different ways of knowing; contextualising the links between individuals and society. Ramazanoğlu and Holland (2002) also emphasise that the power-laden nature of society ensures that knowledge has to be generated; it will not simply reveal itself via the conduit of research. They argue that experience -

such as women's experience of abuse - cannot simply speak for itself, with meaning restricted to individuals' own interpretations; but that research practice brings reflexive interpretation to be able to reveal and examine such power relations of the everyday world.

### **3.3. Power relations and ethical engagement**

Grounding research recognises that research is an intervention in the social world and therefore does not operate independently of the operation of power (Williams & May, 2000). As a result, researchers need to take ethical responsibility for the intended impact of their research, as well as trying to anticipate other potential effects and mitigate potential negative implications. The need for ethical engagement in all research relationships is also formalised via procedures and guidance in institutions, in academia (for example, British Sociological Association, 2002; ESRC, 2010); and also within research sites, particularly for research which involves participatory practice or collaboration. However, not all ethical issues can or will be anticipated, and Rose (1997, p.317) argues that "The negotiations that are part of a research process are not fully knowable; the effects of an interview, a publication, a presentation, are impossible to predict. This impossibility does not absolve researchers from the obligation to work in an ethical manner". For example, Prins' (2010) account of the use of participatory photography in research in El Salvador highlights participants' concern around surveillance and social control which she had not expected; and she therefore discusses how she responded to and reflected on these issues. Wiles et al (2008) argue that research involving visual methods may raise particular ethical concerns, and a tension between enabling visual communication and addressing issues of confidentiality and potential anonymity (Wiles, Coffey, Robison & Heath, 2010). However, Wiles et al also discuss how procedures of ethical regulation in academic research can disengage researchers from more effective consideration of genuine dilemmas, negotiations and decision-making in research (Wiles, Coffey, Robison & Prosser, 2010).

Research therefore requires ongoing ethical engagement, and five particular domains of ethical impact were identified within this research project, to be addressed within the research strategy: the revealing of patterns and practices; the ethics of interviewing and groupwork; the role of gatekeepers and ongoing contact; the nature of informed consent; and the political context of social research.

### ***The revealing of patterns and practices***

Research intends to achieve new knowledge, revealing patterns and practices that may have been hidden or under-recognised. However, patterns and practices may be hidden or unexamined for good reasons, and there are implications to revealing social, political or economic practices to wider audiences. Revealing subjects' experiences does not necessarily lead to their empowerment. As Sibley (1999) argues, it can lead to more effective social control; and Katz (1994, p.71) emphasises the danger in making "the practices of the oppressed visible to those who dominate". Rather than risk the potential harm to participants, an ethical response could be to abandon the research, as England (1994) did rather than expose the strategically hidden spaces and lives of the lesbian community in Toronto.

Social and political awareness is therefore important in understanding the potential implications for policy and practice of revealing the outcomes or extents of social processes. This research project examines individual women's journeys, but also aggregates these journeys to assess spatial flows and processes at the local authority and national level. Such processes have not been researched before, and so the patterns have not previously been visible to policy makers and practitioners. Local authority policies and practices, particularly around housing and homelessness, and the provision of women's refuges, are likely to be important factors in patterns of net inflow and outflow. However, in seeking impact for research, it is not necessarily possible to predict how local authorities would respond to the patterns revealed, and whether their responses would increase or reduce women's options to escape violence.

Therefore, awareness of this carries an ethical responsibility for research which has a political commitment towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

### ***The ethics of interviewing and groupwork***

Feminist research has often led on recognising the power relationships in interviewing, and has attempted to work with difference, empowerment, and methods of co-investigation (Ramazanoğlu & Holland, 2002). In domestic violence research, Ellsberg and Heise (2002) characterise the interview as a positive intervention that can indicate that women's experiences are important rather than shameful, and that advice, support and information can also be offered as necessary. They emphasise that women are already at risk, having experienced violence; therefore research needs to work with risk rather than assume it can be eliminated. Guidelines to this effect have also been developed by the World Health Organisation for domestic violence research with women (WHO, 2001).

Participatory groupwork research has also been developed in some contexts, particularly of community or health development, such as Wang's formalisation of participatory photography practice which she named Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang et al., 1998; Wang, 1999; Wang & Li, 2008). Its empowerment and advocacy work origins emphasise how participants may use images to campaign for change and communicate with policy makers (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001), but participatory groupwork has also been used more instrumentally by researchers. Pain (2004, p.655) argues that participatory research can be "effective at drawing in people normally excluded from research, and able to overcome some barriers to participation of culture, literacy or disability", and has reflected on different degrees of participation (Pain & Francis, 2003). Ethical issues are highlighted by this drawing in of more marginalised people, which are reflected on in accounts such as Frohmann's (2005) photography groupwork with immigrant women in the USA who had experienced domestic violence; and McIntyre's (2003) project with a group of

women in Belfast. However, the blacked-out faces in Giritli-Nygren and Schmauch's (2012) account of participatory photography with immigrant women in Sweden represent a visually-disturbing, and potentially dehumanising, way to deal with the issues of confidentiality and safety raised by such research.

Incorporating both interviews and groupwork with women who have experienced domestic violence, and who were in the process of escaping that violence, therefore raised ethical issues in this research process. However empowering in ethos and design, research is unlikely to change the conditions of individual women's lives (Kelly et al., 1994), and this was emphasised with all participants. There are also risks that the structured introspection required by an interview could raise false expectations of a therapeutic experience (Miller, 2000), and Laing (2003) highlights the potential for questions to be unintentionally re-traumatising. The availability of support and advice from a specialist domestic violence service for all participants was therefore built into the research design. In terms of recognition of women's contribution, there are ongoing debates about the ethics of payments to research participants (Coy, 2006), and it was decided that no payment would be offered to encourage women to take part. However, gifts were given (unannounced) to women at the end of the interview or groupwork processes.

### ***The role of gatekeepers and ongoing contact***

From the domestic violence literature (for example, Humphreys & Thiara, 2002; Edgar et al., 2003) it is clear that many women relocate, often multiple times, to try and escape an abusive partner who may use a wide range of techniques to follow them, contact them, or track them down. It was therefore particularly important that the research practices did not mirror this in any way. Laing (2003) has identified that tracing or following up women for longitudinal research risks replicating the stalking or harassment commonly experienced by abused women; and Burman and Chantler (2004) have drawn links between abusive surveillance and monitoring of women's behaviour and the safety rules and practices such as CCTV at women's refuges. Therefore, contrary to a

common research concern to keep contact with interviewees to facilitate further participation, this research did not retain any contact details for participants, relying on their personal agency, and their involvement with support services, to maintain contact for potential second interviews. As women were living in refuges at the start of their involvement in the research, the researcher also engaged on an ongoing basis with refuge workers as key gatekeepers. Wiles et al (2005) identify that gatekeepers can be seen as over-protective and not offering choices to potential participants, and the researcher's relationship with the gatekeepers is therefore an important part of the research process. As a result, the negotiation of a Memorandum of Understanding with the specialist domestic violence service provider that facilitated approaches to potential participants for the interviews and groupwork, was a key aspect of the early stages of the research strategy<sup>9</sup>.

### ***The nature of informed consent***

The formal processes of Ethical Approval within the university are closely aligned to medical research ethics, which Thorne (2004) has highlighted as potentially difficult to make meaningful to social research. She argues that ethical rules are an attempt to make ethical outcomes predictable, whereas social research aims to be open to unpredictable outcomes from encounters, providing ethical dilemmas that are context-specific and would have been processed out by attempting to control all encounters in advance (Wiles et al., 2005). It is therefore a judgement of how and when to provide information in what format to ensure sufficient information to participants but not to put potential participants off by over-formalising the process. Encounters that are based on trust can be affected by introducing long forms to be read and signed, and this is particularly the case if individuals are already involved in completing numerous forms for bureaucratic processes of applying for benefits, for housing, for immigration status, for new schools etc. as is likely for women who have

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<sup>9</sup> The Memorandum of Understanding between the researcher and Refuge detailed access arrangements for carrying out the research and safeguards in terms of confidentiality, ethical commitments and well-being of research participants. It also outlined arrangements for ongoing support and updates, data collection and storage, and communication of research outcomes.

relocated due to domestic violence. The Domestic Violence Research Group (2004) has also highlighted how difficult it can be for anyone to know the full consequences of participation in research, to be able to give really fully informed consent; and Whatmore (2003) highlights the importance of cultivating good judgement throughout research, over and above formal procedures.

Informed consent can be revisited through the research process, but Helgesson and Eriksson (2011) argue that it is important that this does not end up giving the impression that the researcher does not believe that the participant understood what they were consenting to, or that the research has become more risky in some unspecified way. Both the nature and the format of the information, and the process of consent, therefore need to be tailored to the research context. In this research process, the administrative data, survey data, interview data and groupwork data all incorporated consent procedures within their generation, which were specific to the ethical issues identified in each situation and process.

### ***The political context of social research***

Valentine (2003, p.376) identifies a new political-ethical ideal of “enabling geographies” which recognise the responsibility of researchers not only to identify but to act on issues of social injustice. Such an engagement with politics is a challenge ethically and practically, and within this research project raises the particular question of the timeliness of interventions. The collaboration with a specialist domestic violence service provider was at a particularly difficult time for such services, facing cuts in funding and provision and the requirement to compete for service contracts. This raised challenges in negotiating staff time and input where resources are increasingly limited; and it was therefore important to ensure ongoing communication of early findings and issues to assist in maintaining their commitment to the research project.

During the course of this research project there has been a change of national government (to the Coalition Government in May 2010), and associated political

and policy changes, some with particular relevance to this research. These include the end to the national Supporting People data collection (in March 2011), and a Localism Act (in November 2011) which, amongst other changes, significantly shifts responsibility for social housing allocation and homelessness provision (DCLG, 2011). This research project on women's domestic violence journeys has therefore developed an evidence base with conclusions and recommendations concerning the policy balance between the local and national level, at a time when this balance is already shifting and is proposed to shift further. There is consequently an acute ethical issue of timeliness in reporting the research to particular audiences; and in intending to contribute to policy and practice debates before they are concluded. In response to this issue, for example, a briefing paper on findings from this research concerning local and national policy and service provision was published before the final completion of the research (Bowstead, 2012) and received media coverage (for example, The Independent, 2012; Daily Mail, 2012).

### **3.4. Research strategy**

The research strategy was developed out of the interrelationship between the research question, the methodology of new knowledge generation, and the particular ethical issues identified above. The strategy is outlined with respect to three key aspects: the rationale of a mixed methods approach; issues of access and sampling; and the iterative process of data analysis and mapping.

#### ***Mixed methods***

In his work on family and social mobility, Thompson (2004, p.237) argues against research "using one eye rather than two", and concludes that "instead of a hard method and a soft method keeping their distance from each other except at the initial or concluding stages of research, the expectation should become a zigzag of mutual exploration: a sociology using both eyes to the full". In international migration research, Singleton (1999, p.156) argues that "Migration involves many complicated and inter-related social processes, and migratory movements are



motivated by multiple reasons, usually a combination of economic and social concerns". She therefore outlines the need for "new migrant typologies, independent of, and not bounded by the definitions used in existing data categories", arguing that qualitative research needs to be used to ask questions of the large-scale quantitative datasets. Such an engagement with the micro and macro (Layder, 1998, p.69), with questions of structure and agency, is at the heart of mixing methods in research, because "Many of the forces structuring gender relations operate at a variety of scales (e.g., the body, home, communities, nations, international political economies), even as they take on particular forms in places" (Staeheli & Lawson, 1994, p.98). It is therefore an interest in investigating the different facets - and different scales - of women's domestic violence journeys that requires a mixed methods strategy in this research project, rather than an expectation of a simple notion of triangulation (Kelle, 2001).

Debates over research methods have tended to be polarised into a dichotomy of quantitative and qualitative methods; criticising the former for being decontextualised, reductionist and failing to capture meaning for individuals, and the latter for being too context-specific and unrepresentative. The debate has been particularly acute at times amongst feminist authors, with a tendency to question the use of quantitative methods; though there have always been arguments such as McLafferty's (1995, p.438) that "Quantitative methods are well suited to describe and probe the measurable aspects of women's lives, to analyze spatial associations, and to document spatial and temporal inequalities". Even recent authors, such as Scott (2010), seem to feel the need to defend quantitative work; and Hughes and Cohen's (2010) recent review of the methodologies of gender research is titled 'Feminists really do count'. However Bryman (2006) argues that there is now a paradigm peace and a contingency approach which roots the rationale for the methods used in the nature of the study. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005, p.384) conclude that "all distinctions between quantitative and qualitative research methods lie on continua" and argue that research students should be trained to be pragmatic researchers. Numerous practical guides and overview papers now exist for

mixing methods (for example, Brannen, 2005a; 2005b; Irwin, 2006), and Mason (2006) explores six strategies for this. Her continuum ranges from a 'rhetorical logic' of using quantitative to add breadth to a primarily qualitative study or qualitative to add depth to a quantitative study; to a fully 'multi-dimensional logic' which asks distinctive intersecting questions throughout the research process. She recognises that the dialogue prompted by the evidence from different methods may conclude with creative tensions unresolved, highlighting that all knowledge is partial and that the end of a research project is likely to contain within it questions for further research.

Drawing on Mason's (2006, p.6) typology, this research project mixes methods using an "integrative logic", to address "questions about connecting parts, segments or layers of a social whole"; namely, women's domestic violence journeys. Whilst some of the methods were conceived from the start as able to address particular parts of the overall story, others were developed to address gaps identified during the course of data generation and analysis. Women's journeys were conceptualised three dimensionally over time (and stages), space (distances and places), and scale; incorporating both the individual scale and aggregation into local and national scales. As a result, a considered, but flexible, theory of integration was required rather than an assumption that data can be simply added together as corroboration or triangulation to identify and measure a single social phenomenon. Using Brannen's (2005a, p.12) discussion of ways of combining data, this included both "elaboration" where qualitative data was used to exemplify how quantitative patterns apply in particular cases; and "initiation" where analysis of data from one method prompted new questions which could be pursued by another method. Integration may indicate complementary or contradictory insights; whereby, for example, a national-scale pattern is exemplified in an individual woman's journey, or a statistical association of demographics and distances is the opposite of interviewed workers' experiences. Additionally, the complexity of the overall story may be such that different data both indicate different facets and prompt additional questions about a facet at a different scale or journey stage. Some additional questions were able to be pursued in the context of this research project, but

others remain (as discussed in the final chapter). Brannen (2005a, p.13) highlights the ongoing cumulative and provisional process of research conclusions in arguing that, at times, “the researcher may simply juxtapose the contradictions for others to explore in further research”.

### ***Access and sampling***

Research on any aspect of women’s experiences of domestic violence faces the challenge that women are at risk from violent perpetrators whether or not they are still in the relationship. Access to participants can therefore be very difficult as they may keep their experiences and location secret, and, even if they are in contact with services, the services maintain high levels of safety and confidentiality of individuals and organisations. As Wiles et al (2006) argue, research cannot provide complete confidentiality because data will be revealed in some form; and the research design therefore had to build in anonymity for both people and places, whilst retaining sufficient specificity to provide evidence for the research (Clark, 2006). Participants chose pseudonyms for themselves and judged the degrees of anonymity required in reporting the names of places on their journeys. To ensure that the research does not increase risk, the research strategy had to be flexible and reactive to opportunities, as well as grounded in the realities of women’s lives and the working practices of women’s services. In addition, Melrose (2002, p.333) highlights the “emotional costs” for researchers in “sensitive” areas of research, and Widdowfield (2000) explored her emotional engagement in research on homelessness; and the research strategy therefore also built in support and time for reflection for the researcher. These issues were made more manageable by the researcher’s background in domestic violence work, but required ongoing negotiation and safeguards at every stage.

Sampling was also a challenge as it is not possible simply to define the population of women who experience domestic violence and to sample from that population. In fact, the sampling frame of most social surveys, such as the British Crime Survey (Mirrlees-Black, 1999; Walby & Myhill, 2001), only includes

private households and thereby excludes many women experiencing domestic violence, such as all those in women's refuges or hostels. In addition, Walby (2006; 2007, p.5) has argued that "administrative data are in general unsuitable for the measurement of the scope, prevalence and incidence of violence against women because the majority of women who are victims of violence do not report this to any authority", and she cautions that "no extrapolation from administrative data will ever tell us about the extent of the hidden violence against women" (Walby, 2005, p.193). However, negotiating access to the administrative data of Supporting People (ie. housing-related support) services in England<sup>10</sup> for this research enabled analysis on a large sample of women who had experienced domestic violence (over 20,000 per year for six years) which enabled both descriptions of characteristics and trends and also inference of associations. This does, however, only reflect the women who accessed some kind of formal service and can provide no information on women who experience domestic violence but do not access services.

For the interviews and groupwork, a purposive non-probability sample of women was sought; and contact was made via domestic violence support services to ensure that women had access to advice and support at all times. A Memorandum of Understanding was negotiated with a specialist domestic violence service provider (Refuge) which ran services in various locations, and confidentiality agreements, CRB checks and meetings with managers and staff formed an ongoing collaboration throughout the research process, providing the opportunity for women in the services to participate in the research. Building on the relationship of trust that this collaboration developed, two small-scale surveys were subsequently negotiated via that service provider, involving the National Domestic Violence Helpline (which it runs in partnership with Women's Aid), and women in its services. The survey sampling was pragmatic, in terms of what could be achieved, with The National Helpline Survey sampling all the calls by women in a 24-hour period on six occasions over nine months, and participation in the Refuge Survey being offered to women in services over a year. These samples were respectively compared to demographic data for the

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix 1 for further details.

total calls to the Helpline, and for women accessing Refuge services, to enable a consideration of how representative they were (see Chapter 4).

Whilst making no claim to be statistically representative in terms of the sample size of twenty women, the aim in the interviews was for a range of women of different ages, ethnic origins, disability, with or without children, and in a few different places in England. This aimed to achieve degree of theoretical (rather than statistical) representativeness (Pavlovskaya, 2006), which can be termed “saturation” (Lummis, 1987, p.113; Baker & Edwards, 2012) in terms of the interview themes. Transcribing and preliminary analysis was carried out by the researcher alongside ongoing data collection, in an iterative process, leading to seeking more and richer data around emerging themes and questions, so that the interview guide remained flexible and adaptable (Charmaz, 1994; Plummer, 2001). The groupwork was carried out in two different locations, with nine women in total, aiming to involve both a range of women, and particularly enable the participation in the research of some women who did not speak English and were therefore less likely to be able to participate in the interviews. This draws on Pain’s (2004, p.655) argument that more participatory methods of research can draw in people normally excluded from research.

### ***The iterative process of data analysis and mapping***

Negotiating access to the Supporting People Client Records data not only provided quantitative data for statistical analysis, it also enabled the generation of further data for mapping. Mapping within the GIS (Geographical Information Systems) software also generated data on distances which enabled further statistical analysis of women’s journeys. The iterative process of ongoing data generation and analysis therefore reflected a research strategy which enabled such openness to new combinations and possibilities.

As previously discussed in the literature review, authors such as Cosgrove (1999) and Corner (1999) argue that maps construct rather than simply represent reality, and caution that maps can give the appearance of stability and the

aesthetics of closure rather than being recognised as partial and provisional. The development of GIS further enables the production of visually powerful spatial representations, but also continues this debate about cartographic literacy and what maps can 'show'. There has been much debate about the use of GIS, particularly in feminist research and research concerned with social justice (see for example, Hanson, 2002; Schuurman & Pratt, 2002; Kwan, 2002b), highlighting the social and political construction of data suitable for mapping, such as crime data, and including criticism of presentation of maps as if they speak for themselves.

Many studies engage with these concerns, such as Pain et al (2006) arguing that qualifying the outputs of GIS mapping on crime hotspots is essential to promote more inclusive knowledge and effective decision-making (on streetlighting, in this example). Dorling's (1998, p.277) call for a "human cartography" includes a notion of alternative mapping, such as the work of the Social and Spatial Inequalities Research Group on mapping social divisions in the UK (Dorling et al., 2007). O'Sullivan (2006) argues that both GIS and feminist research are concerned with the grounded contexts of everyday life and can deal, implicitly or explicitly, with concepts of power and empowerment. Therefore, employing mapping within a mixed methods research strategy follows Kwan's (Kwan, 2002a; 2002b; Kwan & Knigge, 2006) argument that GIS can be part of incorporating multiple views of the world via a range of data sources and thereby allow interpretative modes of analysis. As Pavlovskaya (2006, p.2004) argues, "GIS is not fixed and given but constantly remade through the politics of its use".

The concept of a constant remaking, echoes Plummer's (2001) characterisation of research analysis as an iterative process, with coding and analysis proceeding side by side with further data collection (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004). As a result, insights from the qualitative data prompted further questions of the quantitative data and vice versa. Smart (2010, p.7) discusses writing with data, rather than a notion of a separate "writing up" stage which follows analysis; and this informed the strategy that all data transformations (such as from interview

notes or recordings to transcripts, or recoding, selection and aggregation of quantitative data), were carried out by the researcher herself to remain as close as possible to the source of analytic ideas (Fielding & Thomas, 2001). Latour's (1999) concept of Circulating Reference, whereby the chain of transformations of data is retained to ensure that the links can be retraced, also informed the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, enabling frequent return to sources. Overall, thematic analysis (Howitt, 2010, pp.163-186) provided the consistent frame for analysis of all the data sources, whilst analysis such as statistical description or inference, for example, was appropriate for some of the research data.

This iterative process was assisted by the use of computer software as tools to assist with the tasks of analysis, following the initial conceptualisation of the research strategy. This included statistical analysis within SPSS, Excel and ArcGIS, mapping and visual analysis within ArcGIS, and content and thematic analysis of interview transcripts and notes within Nvivo. Thematic analysis of interviews, notes, and the groupwork notes and images was also carried out within Word. Software can enable analysis on a far larger scale than manual analysis, and Lewins and Silver (Lewins, 2001; Lewins & Silver, 2007) argue that this promotes rigour by the ease of revisiting, searching and interrogating cases and codes, and by making more explicit the processes followed. Transcripts from the semi-structured interviews were not treated as biographic narratives (see, for example, Wengraf, 2001; Wengraf, 2010), but were analysed for content and themes; fracturing the narrative to make connections and generate evidence about each woman's experiences and meanings. Where second interviews were carried out, these were analysed in context and relationship with the first interviews; and then all the interview data were brought together to draw out themes across the whole dataset<sup>11</sup>. Johnston (2006, p.383) highlights a potential risk of losing analytical distance by focusing on coding every part of a document within a programme such as Nvivo, leading to "an overly descriptive prosaic project", and argues that coding in itself is not analysis. The drawing out of themes across the whole range of data sources for

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<sup>11</sup> See Appendices 5 and 6.

this research helped to develop sufficient analytical distance to identify connections and contradictions, and keep Mason's (2006, p.6) "integrative logic" of mixed methods research in play.

### 3.5. Research methods

Overall, twelve datasets were generated and used in this research and these are summarised in Table 3.1 at the end of this chapter (followed by a summary of seven additional datasets accessed within the research analysis - Table 3.2). These form the basis of this original research project, however the researcher had previously designed and carried out a small scale research project on women's domestic violence journeys for an MA dissertation (Bowstead, 2008; Coy et al., 2011). That MA project particularly allowed the initial development of three aspects of the research methods: interviews with women; interviews with refuge workers; and generating flow maps of woman-journeys from the administrative dataset of one service provider. The analysis for the MA also highlighted the potential for improvements in these methods which were incorporated into this project.

#### ***Woman-journeys datasets***

Six years of woman-journeys datasets were developed from the Supporting People Client Records databases (2003-2009), with around 19,000 cases per year<sup>12</sup>. The naming as "Woman-journeys" reflects the fact that each case records a unique journey by a woman to access a service, however the anonymisation of the data means that it is not possible to identify if any woman accessed services more than once. Supporting People services provide support to a range of "Client Groups" and the Client Record therefore identifies both Primary and up to three Secondary Client Group for each case. However this research project is concerned with domestic violence as the primary purpose for accessing support and therefore only cases where the Primary Client Group code was "Women at risk of domestic violence" were selected for further analysis. In

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<sup>12</sup> See Appendix 1 for further details.



addition, this research project's focus on women's journeys meant that analysis was only carried out on cases where the woman had changed accommodation at the point of accessing the service.

The Client Records are an anonymised record of clients when they started to receive services through the Supporting People Programme in England and include socio-demographic information as well as the Local Authority location prior to receiving the service. However, the location of the service accessed is recorded at the Administrative Authority level (ie. County-level for two-tier authorities) and therefore approximately 40 percent of the cases had to be recoded for the Local Authority location of the service. This was achieved for almost all cases by using other data within the datasets (such as Management Codes or Service Name), or by additional research using directories of services and information from service providers and councils available online.

The resultant annual datasets therefore have a Local Authority location for both the Origin and Destination of each woman's journey to access a service. Flow map analysis (see below) generated distances for these journeys, and identified whether or not journeys crossed Local Authority boundaries, and the resultant datasets are the Woman-journeys datasets, of around 19,000 woman-journeys per year. Additional variables were also generated from recoding the demographic variables to create new variables for analysis, and by incorporating data on the Local Authorities of Origin or Destination for each case.

Initial descriptive analysis of the demographics of individuals was carried out for each year, to show the age, ethnic origin, disability, additional needs around drugs, alcohol or mental health, and whether or not women had dependent children with them. Age categories of women and children were also developed, and categories of previous accommodation type and current service type derived from the original Client Records variables.

Beyond descriptive statistics on individuals and journeys, inferential statistical techniques were used to explore potential associations which had been

suggested by reviewing the domestic violence or migration literature. The analysis particularly addresses the aspects of the research question concerning the extent and geography of women's journeys; including the experiences of women with different characteristics. Primarily this analysis tested any association of socio-demographic characteristics with two aspects of woman-journeys which had now been quantified: the distance travelled, and whether or not a journey crossed a Local Authority boundary (ie. was a migration rather than a residential mobility journey)<sup>13</sup>.

### ***Flow maps***

The Woman-journeys datasets for each year were imported to ArcGIS mapping software to enable mapping of women's journeys<sup>14</sup>. The software was programmed for both visualisation (drawing lines for each woman-journey between the Origin and the Destination Local Authority) and analysis (measuring the length of each line in miles).

Because the journeys of women who relocated within a single Local Authority could not therefore be mapped as lines, they were given the nominal distance of 1 mile (as this was shorter than the shortest distance between different Local Authority centroids). Around 10,000 woman-journeys per year were therefore mapped as lines between Local Authorities. In addition, as the Origin and Destination location data are only at the Local Authority level, the lines were drawn between calculated centroids of the local authority polygons, whereas a woman may have travelled from any location within a Local Authority to any location within another Local Authority. Distances were measured in straight

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<sup>13</sup> Non-parametric statistical analysis was used for both these analyses because of the nature of the data. Migration/Residential Mobility is a Nominal variable, enabling non-parametric analysis such as crosstabulation. Distance is an Interval variable, however the assumptions for parametric analysis are not met: specifically the data are not normally distributed (Kolmogorov-Smirnov  $p < 0.05$ ), and there is not homogeneity of variance (Levene Statistic  $p < 0.05$ ). Descriptive analysis confirms that the distance data are highly skewed towards shorter distances. As a result, non-parametric analysis is used, particularly Mann-Whitney Test for differences between two groups, and Kruskal Wallis Test for differences between k groups. The assumptions are also not met for analysis such as Discriminant analysis (for example, the demographic factors are not continuous variables) or Regression (for example, the residuals are not normally distributed).

<sup>14</sup> See Appendix 1 for further details.

lines and therefore likely to be an underestimate and not a representation of the actual journey a woman took. Mapping symbology was programmed to draw different thicknesses of lines for the number of women making that journey in a year.

The mapping and measuring of the woman-journeys in each year generated distance data, as well as categories of whether or not each woman-journey was across a Local Authority boundary, which was incorporated into the Woman-journeys datasets (see above). The visual data of mapping itself also enabled further analysis and presentation, on distances and directions of journeys; as well as the patterns to and from different types of Local Authority. The analysis particularly addresses the aspects of the research question concerning the extent and geography of women's journeys.

### ***Local Authorities dataset***

Origin and Destination data from the Woman-journeys datasets were used to generate annual datasets with the 354 English Local Authorities (2001 boundaries) as the individual cases, plus Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Outside the UK as additional Origins. For each year variables were generated on the frequency of Residential Mobility (ie. women relocating within that Local Authority), frequency of Origin (ie. women leaving that LA), and frequency of Destination (ie. women arriving in that LA), as well as breaking down these frequencies to enable analysis for accessing accommodation services, as well as all services. These variables formed the initial Local Authorities dataset, to which further data on Local Authorities were added.

In addition to frequency data on residential mobility, leaving and arriving for each year, rates of residential mobility, leaving and arriving were also generated by converting these frequencies to be proportional per 10,000 female population aged 15+ (Office for National Statistics, 2008, fig.9 (table)). Additional data of Local Authority characteristics were accessed and incorporated into the Local Authorities dataset to enable comparison of these characteristics with the rates

of women's journeys<sup>15</sup>. The variables chosen were suggested via the literature review; as well as the availability of relevant data or indices at the Local Authority level. ONS population change due to migration was incorporated to enable comparison with general migration flows (Office for National Statistics, 2008, fig.10 (table)); and the characteristics of local authorities in terms of a measure of deprivation (IMD 2007 Average Score, (DCLG, 2007)), a measure of availability of specialist domestic violence services (from Map of Gaps research, (Coy et al., 2009)), the Rural-Urban Classification (DEFRA, 2009), and the Area Group Classification (Office for National Statistics, 2001b) were incorporated. The area of each local authority was included to enable consideration of whether this was associated with whether or not women relocated within a Local Authority, or travelled further/shorter distances. Means and routes of transport had also been conceptualised from the literature (see Chapter 2) as potentially affecting women's journeys, but no variable at the Local Authority level was identified to be able to quantify transport links or connectivity.

Beyond descriptive statistics on Local Authority characteristics, inferential statistical techniques were used to explore potential associations of characteristics of place with the proportion of women leaving due to domestic violence, or arriving to access services; or with the proportion of women who relocated but accessed services within that same Local Authority. The analysis particularly addresses the aspects of the research question concerning the extent and geography of women's journeys, focusing on the characteristics of places; and enabling analysis of the policy implications.

### ***Local Authority maps***

The Local Authority dataset was imported to ArcGIS mapping software to enable choropleth mapping of appropriate variables. The intensity data of rates of leaving, arriving and residential mobility for each local authority allowed mapping of these patterns and identification, for example, of the Local Authorities with the highest and lowest proportional rates of arriving and

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<sup>15</sup> See Table 3.2

leaving, or residential mobility. Outlier Local Authorities were identified via statistical analysis of the Local Authority dataset as well as the mapping, and the choropleth mapping categories were chosen to enable such analysis - using the median rates and standard deviations from that median. The analysis particularly addresses the aspects of the research question concerning the extent and geography of women's journeys, and the policy implications for Local and National Government.

### ***National Helpline survey***

The Woman-journeys datasets only relate to the journeys of women who actually accessed services, and could not therefore indicate the extent to which women had any options offered at the time of considering relocation. Journey distances, or type of Destination location, might reflect a choice amongst a range of options, or the only option available; and they do not indicate whether other women were unable to find a vacancy in a service when they needed help. Therefore, to generate additional data on women's experiences, the specialist domestic violence organisation Refuge collected anonymised data via the National Domestic Violence Helpline.

A survey questionnaire was devised to enable Helpline workers to record what issues and needs women raised when they called the Helpline and were considering relocating due to domestic violence<sup>16</sup>. The survey also recorded whether or not the Helpline was able to offer options for a woman to relocate at that time. Only anonymised data were collected and provided to the researcher, and no additional questions were asked of women callers. The survey questionnaire was completed on all calls by women over a 24 hour period on six days over nine months (n=267). The days chosen included weekdays and weekend days, and a Bank Holiday; and the sample was compared in terms of demographics of callers to the total calls over the nine months. Both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis on the resultant National Helpline survey dataset enabled an exploration of the issues and options for women at the point

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<sup>16</sup> See Appendix 2 for the questionnaire.

of considering relocation. The analysis particularly addresses the aspects of the research question concerning women's experiences at the point of considering leaving, with the demographics data enabling analysis of the experiences of women with different characteristics.

### ***Refuge survey***

To generate additional data on women's experiences prior to, or instead of relocation, a survey was developed for the specialist domestic violence organisation Refuge to incorporate into its case record system for the services which it runs around the country<sup>17</sup>. The sample was therefore a convenience sample, with women being offered the opportunity to participate at the point of completing other record-keeping with their keyworker. The incorporation of the survey into the electronic record system unfortunately meant that it was affected by wider technical problems of the IT system and was therefore only offered to, and completed by, a small sample of women (n=34), despite extending the period of data collection. The questions were devised to identify if women had relocated due to domestic violence, if they tried formal methods to stay put (such as Sanctuary Scheme or civil or criminal law), and how many relocation moves they had made. Primarily descriptive statistical analysis on the resultant Refuge survey dataset enabled an exploration of women's experiences of different stages of (potential) journeys; particularly their actions to avoid relocation, and their multiple moves if they did relocate. The analysis therefore particularly addresses the aspects of the research question concerning women's experiences, and the policy and practice implications, via a slightly larger sample than the sample of Interviewed women.

### ***Interviewed women***

A semi-structured interview process was carried out with a purposive non-probability sample of 20 women from a range of backgrounds who were receiving support from local domestic violence services in a range of seven locations. A

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<sup>17</sup> See Appendix 3 for the questionnaire.

semi-structured interview technique was used to generate accounts of both external events and personal meanings (Squire, 2008). An interview guide was developed to focus on the meaning of having to move to create safety, and exploring areas such as why she left, how she felt about home, where she went and why, how she felt about arriving, and how she felt about staying<sup>18</sup>. The interview guide was specifically not about the experience of violence and abuse, but about each woman's actions and experiences afterwards. Interviewing in the context of support and advice being available ensured that women could stop the interview at any time; and that any comments or concerns after the interview could be communicated via the service provider. Ongoing liaison with the service provider would have highlighted problems and enable the interview process to be changed or ended as necessary; however, no problems were raised. The reason four women were not interviewed a second time was that they were no longer in contact with the support service, and it was central to the research design that women would only be interviewed if they were known to be in contact with a support service. One other woman declined a second interview as she was dealing with issues concerning her immigration status and did not want to take part in any other interviews; and the other woman who did not do a second interview took part in the groupwork as she felt this was more of interest to her.

Whilst being flexible to the individual nature of each interview, the interview aimed to cover seven previously conceptualised themes: women's practical and emotional experiences; women's agency and needs; concepts of the journeys; geography of the journeys; the role of services; the policy and practice implications; and concepts of home, belonging and safety. Within a primarily qualitative, semi-structured approach, some questions enabled the systematic collection of data on places, accommodation and means of transport of women's journeys which could then be analysed quantitatively (see next section). Second interviews revisited the same themes when women had moved out of the refuge, or felt that they were at a significantly different stage of their journey. These second interviews therefore identified further aspects of their journeys and also

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<sup>18</sup> See Appendix 5 for the interview guides and relationship to the themes.

gave women an opportunity to re-interpret their experiences and feelings. In total, 20 women were interviewed, with 14 being interviewed a second time; and two women were interviewed a third time following rehousing.

Drawing on feminist-informed interviewing, the aim was to “listen in stereo” (Anderson & Jack, 1991, p.130) for both the dominant aspects of women’s stories and the more muted aspects of their accounts. It was also important to ask women to clarify their meanings of particular words and descriptions to ensure that their account was understood as much as possible in their own terms (Reinharz, 1992), and to be aware of different cultural expectations within an interview encounter (Slim et al., 1993). Interviews were carried out in English, but for two interviews the women were supported by a refuge worker who also provided language interpretation. Rapport and empathy were important during the interviews (Blee, 1993), in the subsequent contact to check transcripts or notes; and in the contact up to eight months later to arrange second interviews. However, the researcher was also guided by the gatekeepers in terms of sensitivity in aspects of the contact; and it was part of the Memorandum of Understanding with the service provider that it was not appropriate to interview women at times of particular vulnerability, such as court or immigration processes.

The interviews were digitally recorded if the interviewee agreed (which they did in most cases) and transcripts produced; or detailed and partially verbatim notes were taken and typed up. These documents were then analysed with the assistance of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) using Nvivo software (Lewins, 2001). An Adaptive Theory approach was employed (Layder, 1998) initially using the same seven orienting concepts from devising the interview guide as codes for analysis<sup>19</sup>. Using Lewins and Silver’s (2007) outline of analysis, the first coding was for these ‘Descriptive Codes’, all of equal status. Examining particular themes led to the development of a more refined coding structure, including using ‘nodes’ to identify links and hierarchies. Conceptualising the connections between codes indicated associations, while not

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<sup>19</sup> See Appendix 6 for structure of coding for analysis.



necessarily implying any causal connections; and these were tested further using the search and query functions of the software. These more 'Interpretative Codes' were revisited to add a more detailed layer of meaning via recoding and connections, and the software enables such queries and searches to be saved as reports which retain evidence of the process of analysis. A third layer of 'Pattern Coding' was more inferential and explanatory, considering themes, concepts and processes across the whole dataset to identify meaningful patterns in the data. Smart (2009, p.299) has highlighted the "increased use of verbatim quotations in much published empirical work" which allows "space for multiple views and mess"; and quotations were selected from the 'Pattern Codes' to illustrate the themes within the research account.

This thematic analysis of the interview transcripts therefore particularly addresses the aspects of the research question concerning women's experiences and understandings of their journeys, and the range of implications for them, including on their senses of home, safety and belonging. Analysis of women's accounts of policy, practice and service provision also addresses the aspects of the research question concerning the policy and practice implications of women's journeys; and the role of services.

### ***Interviewed women's journeys***

During the course of the interviews with women, the practicalities and geography of their journeys were systematically noted, covering the places (at the level of Local Authority), the length of stay, the tenure of the accommodation, and the means of transport. Women were naturally wary of giving location details, because of their experience of violence and their fear that they would continue to be at risk if the abuser found out where they were. However, women recognised that the research would be strengthened by specific details of their journeys, and all provided details at the Local Authority level on the understanding that it would be used for quantitative analysis (for example for distances) but that specific locations would not be named. All women chose pseudonyms for themselves, and were offered the interview

transcripts to check for any information that had not been sufficiently anonymised or removed. The data on Interviewed women's journeys therefore provided a dataset for statistical analysis of the multiple stages of their journeys over space and time, as well as details on practicalities such as means of transport. The analysis therefore particularly addresses the aspects of the research question concerning the extent and geography of women's journeys, and detail of women's experiences.

### ***Significance charts***

Within the second interviews with women<sup>20</sup>, Significance Charts<sup>21</sup> were used to add nuance to the aspect of the interview which covered people and places that were significant to women, and how this had changed over the time since leaving the abuser. Smart (2009, p.301) describes this method as "We also asked them [participants] to fill in a circle diagram (often with concentric circles) with the names of people they felt more or less close to", and argues that "These are useful devices because they are a kind of joint activity or at least they become a joint engagement which alters the relationship between participant and interviewer". Emmel (2008, p.2) argues for participatory mapping - a more detailed but somewhat similar method - that "The act of drawing allows the participant to focus attention on a particular feature of the map. It also provides the interviewer with a record that can be interrogated as it is being drawn, during its crafting by the participant, and when it is completed".

In this research, the Significance Charts were not analysed separately as visual data (Rose, 2001), but were used as a visual method to enable a different engagement and dynamic in the course of the interviews, and to encourage reflection as the participant spoke about, drew, and contemplated the chart. It was not introduced in one of the second interviews because of what the woman had already talked about in terms of feeling let down by family and friends; and it was not used in another second interview that a woman chose to do by

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<sup>20</sup> See Appendix 5 for the interview guides.

<sup>21</sup> See Figure 6.30 for an example.

telephone because it is essentially a visual method. The method of Significance Charts therefore added depth to an aspect of the interviews, generating data for analysis within the overall thematic analysis of the interview transcripts to address the research question (see above).

### ***Interviewed workers***

A refuge worker was interviewed in each of the locations where women were approached to be interviewed, thereby providing a small sample (n=9) of expert informants on issues of women's relocation, as well as in terms of their roles as gatekeepers and support providers to the women research participants. In one location a refuge worker was interviewed but subsequently no women decided to participate, and in one location two workers were interviewed as they were based in services in different areas of the city and provided different perspectives. A semi-structured interview technique was used, with an interview guide covering the same seven aspects as the interviews with individual women<sup>22</sup>. The interviews aimed primarily to elicit workers' experiences of supporting a range of women who had relocated due to domestic violence; as well as their perspectives on the role of services, and the policy and practice context.

The interviews were carried out within the same understandings of the process and roles as with the individual women, and were digitally recorded or notes taken in the same way. These notes or transcripts were analysed according to the same coding methods, assisted by NVivo software. The analysis of the interview transcripts therefore particularly addresses the aspects of the research question concerning the role of services, and policy and practice implications of women's journeys.

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<sup>22</sup> See Appendix 5 for the interview guide.

## *Groupwork process*

To investigate women's experiences of being and settling in a new area, as well as the role of support services, a Groupwork process was carried out with small groups in two locations (4 women in one and 5 in the other) to explore the research issues creatively<sup>23</sup>. With the identification of a 'waiting' phase in many women's journeys - where they are not literally moving, but are still on their journey - groupwork within places of waiting (women's refuges) enabled exploration of this aspect of journeys. The sessions were planned by drawing on guidance on visual and participatory methods in research (for example, Prosser & Loxley, 2008; Richards, 2011; Reavey, 2011) and more community-based participatory photography, such as the work of PhotoVoice (Blackman, 2007); as well as the researcher's experience of working in women's refuges, and of participatory photography in other settings. The groupwork was intended to be enjoyable and of value to the women themselves, including that they would produce creative work for themselves; as well providing an opportunity to explore the potential of a visual methodology for use in practical support work. Using visual methods enabled participation in the research for women without them having to use so much verbal language - such as in interviews; and one of the groups was of Asian women, four out of five of whom did not speak English.

An account of the groupwork process was therefore designed as a research output in itself, and the incorporation into the research of any actual images or text produced in the groups would depend on there being no identified consequent risk to safety and security of individuals or services. As discussed earlier, Wiles et al (2010) identify that both visual data and groupwork may carry particular challenges for anonymity and safety risks, and this was addressed by there being no need for women to share information about their own journeys in the group, and the assurance that no images of identifiable people or places would be used if they could risk safety. The groupwork was carried out in two refuges, in collaboration with Refuge, who ensured that refuge workers in the services assisted in facilitating the practicalities of the

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<sup>23</sup> See Appendix 4 for an outline of the groupwork sessions.

sessions and the participation of women (for example in encouraging women to have confidence to take photographs between the sessions, and in supplying replacement batteries for the cameras). Informed consent was sought in a process of stages: for participation in the group, for individuals' images to be shared with the group, and for any images to be shared outside the group.

Notwithstanding the sessions prepared, the groupwork had to be run very flexibly because of issues such as childcare, language interpretation, and the practical considerations of working in a women's refuge. The often unpredictable length of women's stays in refuges made it difficult to arrange sessions over more than a few weeks; however all the participants emphasised that they enjoyed taking part in the activities and would have liked to have had longer. Both the women themselves and staff highlighted that such groupwork fitted well into the holistic support the refuge aimed to provide; and that the groupwork had a practical value in the focus on sharing information about the local area, and emotional value for women in expressing themselves and building self confidence. The thematic analysis of the notes taken of the groupwork particularly addresses the aspects of the research question concerning women's experiences of waiting and resettling, and of the role of support services; thereby also considering the service and practice implications of women's journeys.

### ***Groupwork images***

During the Groupwork process participants took hundreds of photographs for themselves, produced calendars and albums for themselves, and each of the two groups produced a poster for their refuge. In addition, all the nine participants intended to put photographs into the research, however one woman was ill on the final session and subsequently left the refuge, so did not provide any photos. In total 106 photographs were provided for the research (of which 90 did not include identifiable people or places that might compromise safety), and the participants gave varied degrees of consent in terms of use of the images; for example use in this thesis, in research presentations, or in publicity and

publication. Some of the images women wanted to put into the research included recognisable people (each other, children and friends), and places close to the refuge, and could therefore not be shown anywhere, but women emphasised that they still wanted the researcher to have the photographs to inform the research. Women talked about putting images into the research as a safe way of 'speaking' out - avoiding concealment and shame - whilst recognising that there was an ongoing balance to be struck between risk and recognition via the photographs. Women assigned joint copyright in their images to the researcher, to enable the uses they had agreed to.

The participants also took an active role in highlighting what they wanted to communicate by providing captions for many of the images, including short descriptions and longer explanations, and explained if they wanted the image only to be used with the caption. The Groupwork images and captions therefore provide a dataset which was analysed for themes; including aspects and places of day to day life, work and celebrations during the stages of waiting and settling. The analysis particularly addresses the aspects of the research question concerning the implications of the journeys for women, including their senses of self, place and home. The images were not used for detailed visual content analysis (Rose, 2001) but were analysed within the context of the themes highlighted by the women themselves.

### **3.6. Conclusion - research design**

Overall, the design of this research project aims for an integrative logic (Mason, 2006) of bringing together quantitative methods of spatial and statistical analysis of administrative and survey data with qualitative methods of thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews and creative groupwork. It thereby intended to identify the extent of women's relocation journeys due to domestic violence, and to explore the implications for individuals, services and authorities at a range of scales. Different elements of the research design aimed to illuminate different aspects of the research question, and different facets of women's journeys, with the analysis bringing these elements together in dialogue, or

wider conversation, to highlight both complementary and contradictory aspects of women's journeys. Elements of dissemination and research impact have already taken place in the ongoing process of engagement with participants, practitioners, academics and policy makers, within the social and political context of policy-relevant research. However, this thesis is a particular iteration of the research process.

**Table 3.1 The 12 Datasets generated for this research**

<b>Dataset Name (alphabetical order)</b>	<b>Brief description (see methodology for details of data generation)</b>	<b>If generated from an Administrative Data Source</b>	<b>Period of data collection</b>	<b>Sample size</b>
<b>Flow maps</b>	Line maps of woman-journeys to and from each English Local Authority.	SP Client Records - all services	Apr 2003 - Mar 2009	10,161 in 2008-9
<b>Groupwork images</b>	Photographs taken by the women who took part in the groupwork.		Oct 2011 - Feb 2012	106 photographs
<b>Groupwork process</b>	Evidence from the groupwork sessions with women in two refuges: Midlands City and South Coast Town.		Oct 2011 - Feb 2012	9 women in 2 locations
<b>Interviewed women</b>	Women interviewed about their experiences of leaving abuse and their relocation journeys.		Feb 2011 - May 2012	20 women in 7 locations
<b>Interviewed women's journeys</b>	Evidence on places, tenures, means of transport etc. for the journeys made by the interviewed women.		Feb 2011 - May 2012	87 journeys - 20 women
<b>Interviewed workers</b>	Workers in refuges interviewed about their experiences of providing services for women.		Feb 2011 - Mar 2012	9 workers in 8 locations
<b>Local Authorities dataset</b>	Aggregated data per English Local Authority (354) of woman-journeys to, from and within each of them.	SP Client Records - all services	Apr 2003 - Mar 2009	18,812 in 2008-9
<b>Local Authority maps</b>	Choropleth maps of aggregate data of woman-journeys to accommodation services for each English Local Authority.	SP Client Records - accommodation services	Apr 2003 - Mar 2009	13,888 in 2008-9
<b>National Helpline survey</b>	Evidence of women's calls to the National Helpline considering relocation.		6 days during Mar - Dec 2011	267 calls by women
<b>Refuge survey</b>	Evidence from women in Refuge services about their relocation journeys.		Apr 2011 - Mar 2012	34 women
<b>Significance charts</b>	Charts completed by most interviewed women in second interviews on significant people and places.		Feb 2011 - May 2012	12 charts
<b>Woman-journeys datasets</b>	Evidence of approximately 18,000 journeys per year to access support services due to domestic violence.	SP Client Records - all services	Apr 2003 - Mar 2009	18,812 in 2008-9



Table 3.2 The 7 Additional datasets accessed for this research

(alphabetical order)

<b>Area Group Classification</b>		
The Area Group Classification uses a range of demographic and socio-economic variables to group local authorities into clusters based on similar characteristics (Office for National Statistics, 2001b). A summary of the variables significantly higher or lower than the mean for each Area Group cluster in England is given in the table below, with an indication of the location of such local authorities in England. The Area Group Classification was used for all 354 English Local Authorities.		
<b>Area Group</b>	<b>Location in England</b>	<b>Variables relative to the mean</b>
Cities & Services 1.1 Regional Centres	Built-up areas throughout England and Wales	<u>High indications:</u> flats; one-person households; students  <u>Low indications:</u> household size
Cities & Services 1.2 Centres with Industry	Concentrated in and near Manchester and Birmingham	<u>High indications:</u> terraced housing; no central heating; ethnic minorities
Cities & Services 1.3 Thriving London Periphery	London periphery and Oxford and Cambridge	<u>High indications:</u> population density; one-person households; students; 25-44-year-olds; professional or managerial occupations; higher education qualification; public transport use; persons born outside UK  <u>Low indications:</u> 5-14 and 45-64-year-olds; routine occupations
2.4 London Suburbs	Outer London plus Luton and Slough	<u>High indications:</u> population density; 0-4 and 25-44 year olds; flats; persons per room; public transport use; persons born outside UK; ethnic minorities  <u>Low indications:</u> 45-64-year-olds; detached housing; women working part-time; two adult households with no children
3.5 London Centre	Inner London plus Hammersmith and Fulham	<u>High indications:</u> population density; 25-44-year-olds; unemployed; students; professional, managerial or finance industry occupations; higher education qualification; persons per room; one-person households; rentals; flats; public transport use; persons born outside UK; ethnic minorities  <u>Low indications:</u> 5-14 and 45-64-year-olds; detached housing; household size; women working part-time; wholesale, retail, manufacturing, mining, quarrying or construction occupations; two adult households with no children

4.6 London Cosmopolitan	Inner London and Brent	<p><u>High indications:</u> population density; rentals; 0-4 and 25-44-year-olds; higher education qualification; students; single parent households; unemployment; men working part-time; persons per room; one-person households; flats; public transport use; persons born outside UK; ethnic minorities</p> <p><u>Low indications:</u> women working part-time; 45-64- year-olds; two adult households with no children; detached housing; wholesale, retail, manufacturing, mining, quarrying or construction occupations; single pensioner households</p>
Prospering UK 5.7 Prospering Smaller Towns	Concentrated in the middle of England	No high or low indications
Prospering UK 5.8 New and Growing Towns	Spread through southern England	No high or low indications
Prospering UK 5.9 Prospering Southern England	Home counties and around	<p><u>High indications:</u> two or more car households; professional or managerial occupations</p> <p><u>Low indications:</u> people of working age suffering from limiting long-term illness; unemployment; routine occupations</p>
6.10 Coastal & Countryside	Along the coast and some inland areas	<p><u>High indications:</u> 45-64-year-olds; agricultural, fishing, health, social, hotel, catering, mining, quarrying or construction occupations; men working part-time; working from home; no central heating; detached housing; rentals; single pensioner households; separated, divorced or widowed</p> <p><u>Low indications:</u> population density; 0-44-year-olds; ethnic minorities; household size; persons per room; professional, managerial or finance occupations; public transport; students</p>
Mining & Manufacturing 7.11 Industrial Hinterlands	North-east England	<u>High indications:</u> people of working age suffering from limiting long-term illness
Mining & Manufacturing 7.12 Manufacturing Towns	Concentrated in southern Yorkshire	No high or low indications

<p><b>Index of Multiple Deprivation Average Score</b></p> <p>The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2007) brings together 37 indicators, covering dimensions relating to income, employment, health and disability, education, skills and training. The Local Authority Summaries of the IMD 2007 were accessed to consider the degree of deprivation in each Local Authority (DCLG, 2007). Such proxy measurement of deprivation has been questioned (Lee, 1999), but to enable some comparison between Local Authorities, the IMD Average Score was used: IMD Average Score - the population weighted average of the combined scores for the LSOAs (Lower Super Output Areas) in a local authority district ie. higher values indicate higher deprivation. The IMD 2007 Average Score was therefore accessed for all 354 English Local Authorities.</p>
<p><b>National Domestic Violence Helpline call data</b></p> <p>Basic aggregate demographic data were provided by Refuge (which runs the National Domestic Violence Helpline in partnership with Women's Aid) for calls between 02/03/2011 and 02/12/2011. A total of 53,467 calls were answered in this period, of which 19,706 calls were from women themselves. Full demographic information was available on just over half of these. The dataset was used for comparison with the sample in the National Helpline Survey in this research.</p>
<p><b>ONS Population Change</b></p> <p>ONS data on migration population change for each Local Authority were accessed from "ONS table-10-local-authority-components-of-change-2008" (Office for National Statistics, 2008). The data for actual population change due to migration were converted into a percentage change over the 12 months from the mid 2007 population for each English Local Authority.</p>
<p><b>Refuge services data</b></p> <p>Basic aggregate demographic data were provided by Refuge for women admitted to their services between 01/04/2011 and 31/03/2012. A total of 2,314 accessed Refuge services in this period and full demographic information was available on 84 per cent (1,932) of these. The dataset was used for comparison with the sample in the Refuge Survey in this research.</p>
<p><b>Rural-Urban Classification</b></p> <p>The Rural/Urban Definition is an official National Statistic introduced in 2004 and relates to small census-based geographies (DEFRA, 2009). The Government aggregates these into the Local Authority Rural/Urban Classification with six categories: Major Urban, Large Urban, Other Urban, Significantly Rural, Rural-50 (50-80% of the population in rural settlements/market towns) and Rural-80 (80%+ in such settlements). The classification is therefore very broad-brush, but this six-way classification for each English Local Authority was therefore used in the analysis.</p>

## Supporting People Client Records

The “Client Record” system was developed by Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to record standard information about clients starting to receive services through the *Supporting People* Programme in England. Data was collected by all Administrative Authorities (London Boroughs, Unitary and County Councils) from the start of the Supporting People Programme in April 2003 until its end in March 2011, and Annual Reports were produced based on these data (for example, Supporting People, 2004; Supporting People, 2009). The data are held by the Centre for Housing Research (CHR) at St Andrews University and the CHR obtained authorisation from the DCLG in 2009 to provide the data for the six years from 2003-4 to 2008-9 for this research project. A change of procedures with the change of national Government in May 2010 meant that access was not available to these data for the final two years of the Supporting People Programme.

The Client Record datasets include over 80 variables, including information on the location of the service accessed, whether or not the client has moved immediately prior to accessing the service and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) code for the Local Authority where the client’s previous accommodation was. The data therefore enabled the identification of any journeys of relocation to access accommodation or non-accommodation housing-related support. The dataset also includes socio-demographic information such as sex, age, ethnic origin, economic status, disability and dependent children.

## Chapter 4. Women's Domestic Violence Journeys: Leaving

The investigation of women's journeys starts with a consideration of the process of leaving the abuse. The process of analysis (outlined in the previous chapter) provides evidence, discussed in this chapter, on the demographic characteristics of who leaves domestic violence, the process of deciding to leave, and the extent of isolation or help in that process. Some of the practicalities of leaving are then explored, and the chapter concludes with an engagement with the evidence for both force and agency within the leaving process.

### 4.1. Who leaves

#### *The limitations of the empirical evidence*

The Woman-Journeys Datasets<sup>24</sup> show that women of all ages, from all ethnic origins, and with or without dependent children relocated to access support services due to domestic violence.

This research is specifically concerned with women's journeys due to domestic violence - about women's use of space to escape abuse - so does not include evidence on the women who access support services but have not just relocated (who totalled 5,723 in Supporting People Client Records in 2008-09), nor on men who access support services due to domestic violence (who totalled 434 in 2009-10).

It is also necessarily not a complete picture of all women who relocate due to domestic violence, since the range of datasets only includes women who have contacted formal services in the course of their journey, and only includes those who were successful in getting through on the National Domestic Violence Helpline or in accessing a place at a women's refuge or other housing-related support service (funded under the Supporting People Programme). The Interviewed Women provided accounts of their actions and journeys prior to

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<sup>24</sup> See Table 3.1 for details of each dataset used.

accessing such services, but the Woman-Journeys Datasets only provide evidence of Supporting People services; and only provide that evidence for England. That is therefore the scope of this research in drawing conclusions on who leaves domestic violence, where they go, and the extent and implications of these journeys.

### *The demographics of woman-journeys*

In the April 2008 to March 2009 Woman-Journeys Dataset<sup>25</sup>, 18,812 women relocated to access support services in England due to domestic violence (as the primary need - other women were recorded as being at risk of domestic violence as secondary needs but are not included in this research). Just over half (53.9%) of the women had children with them, with nearly a quarter having one child and nearly 12 per cent having three or more; giving a total of 18,819 children aged under 18. Though women’s ages ranged from 15 to 88, eighty per cent of women were aged under 39, and their mean age was nearly 31. The age profile (Figure 4.1) is therefore skewed towards younger age groups than the general population; and an important factor in this is likely to relate to the importance of children in women’s decision-making to seek help, such as accessing services, with younger women more likely to have children with them.

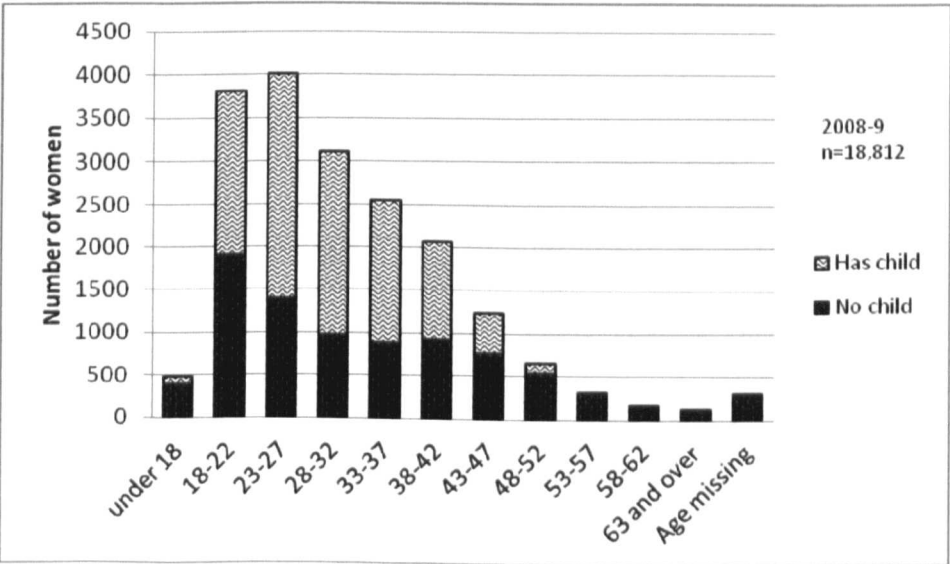


Figure 4.1: Graph of age of women with and without children who relocated 2008-9

<sup>25</sup> See Appendix 1 for further details on how the Woman-Journeys datasets were developed.

Nearly seventy per cent (67.4%) of women were of White British ethnic origin, with Asian/Asian British-Pakistani (6.6%), Black/Black British-African (3.9%), White Other (3.6%), Asian/Asian British-Indian (3.1%) and Black/Black British-Caribbean (2.6%) as the other ethnic origin census categories over 2 per cent. Using broader categories of ethnic minority (Figure 4.2), 13.1 per cent of women were of Asian origin, 7.6 per cent of Black origin, 4.0 per cent of Mixed origin, and 1.5 per cent of Chinese or other Non-White origin. Though gipsies/travellers were not recognised as an ethnic minority at the time of the data collection, 0.2 per cent of women were identified as ‘Traveller’ under ‘Secondary Client Group’. The ethnic profile therefore includes a higher proportion of ethnic minorities than the general population, despite the domestic violence literature (see Chapter 2) which highlights the additional difficulties faced by ethnic minority women in leaving abuse. An important factor in this is likely to relate to ethnic minority women having, on average, fewer personal resources (such as wealth) and therefore being more likely to access public resources, such as support services, when they do leave.

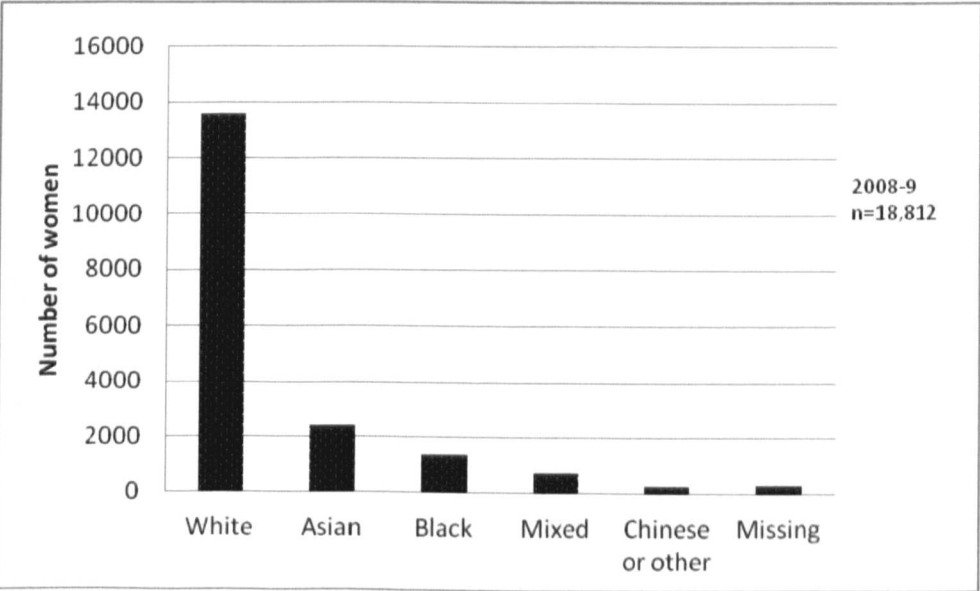


Figure 4.2: Graph of ethnic origin of women who relocated 2008-9

Under ten per cent (8.2%) of women were recorded as Disabled, with 2.1 per cent having a mobility disability, 0.3 per cent visual impairment, 0.4 per cent hearing impairment, 0.8 per cent chronic progressive illness, 3.5 per cent

mental health problems, 1.0 per cent learning disability, 1.0 per cent another disability, and 0.4 per cent did not want to disclose their disability.

Most women did not have additional support needs, but under 'Secondary Client Group' 14.7 per cent were recognised as having support needs around homelessness, 3.7 per cent around mental health problems, 1.6 per cent as 'young people at risk', 1.2 per cent around alcohol problems, 0.9 per cent around drug problems, 0.7 per cent around physical or sensory disabilities and 0.6 per cent around learning disabilities. In this research, the Additional Needs around Mental Health, Alcohol or Drug problems were used in the analysis, recorded for a total of 5.8 per cent of women who relocated.

The demographics were very similar for the six years of Woman-Journeys datasets; however statistical analysis was carried out for each year to ensure that any differences or possible trends would be tested for significance. The numbers of woman-journeys per year were: 20,988 (plus 22,600 children) in 2003-4; 18,126 (plus 18,219 children) in 2004-5; 17,402 (plus 17,185 children) in 2005-6; 18,613 (plus 18,060 children) in 2006-7; 17,253 (plus 17,269 children) in 2007-8 and 18,812 (plus 18,819 children) in 2008-9.

### ***The demographics of the National Helpline Survey dataset***

The Helpline Survey was carried out for six 24-hour days over nine months from March to December 2011 and recorded data on 267 calls by women themselves (the "Survey sample" in Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4), of which 151 were thinking about relocation due to domestic violence (the "Relocation sample"). Women callers in the Helpline Survey had a similar age and ethnic origin profile to all National Domestic Violence Helpline calls by women themselves in this period (the "Total sample"), with a quarter of women being under 25 and only 6.5 per cent over 50 (Figure 4.3); and with a wide range of ethnic origins including half the women being White British (Figure 4.4).



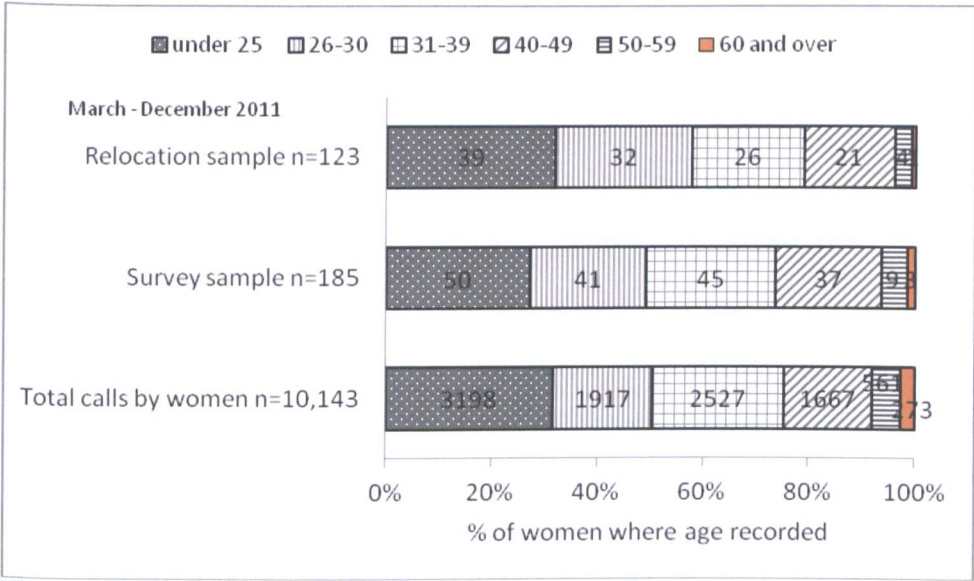


Figure 4.3: Comparison Graph of age categories of women - Helpline Survey

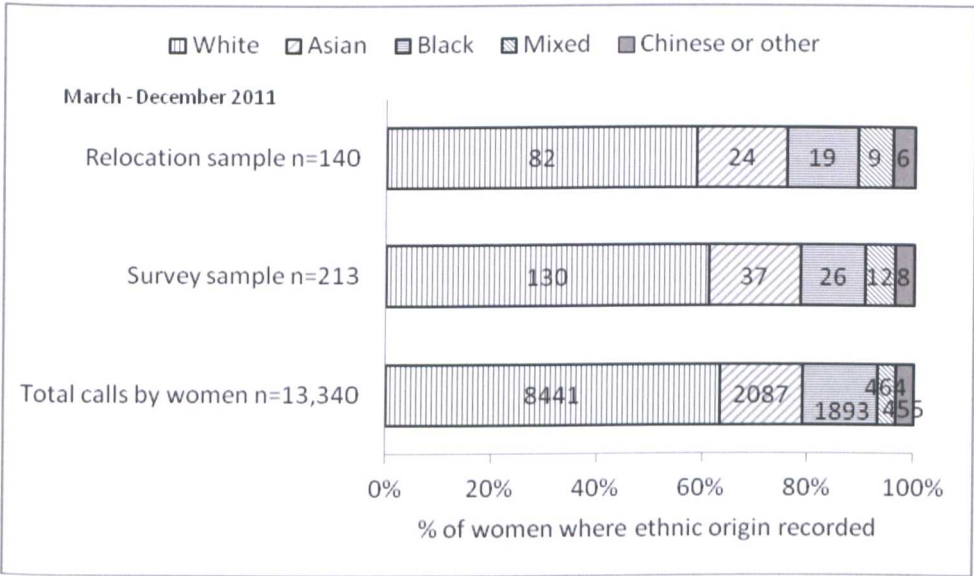


Figure 4.4: Comparison Graph of ethnic origin of women - Helpline Survey

Just under half the women were recorded as having children with them (44% of the Survey sample and 45% of the Relocation sample), with one to five children in the family. However, some women also had children in care or other children not with them who were nevertheless part of their thinking about relocation. Just under a tenth of women were recorded as Disabled (9.4% of the Survey sample and 8.6% of the Relocation sample), which is a similar proportion to that in the total calls by women to the National Helpline in this period (7.6%).

Overall, therefore, there is no reason in terms of demographics to conclude that the Helpline Survey results are unrepresentative of the experiences of the total sample of women who called the National Domestic Violence Helpline in 2011.

*The demographics of the Refuge Survey dataset*

The Refuge Survey was carried out in 2011-12 with women in a range of services provided by the specialist domestic violence service provider Refuge, and 34 women participated. The majority of women (56.0%) were aged 26-30; and therefore with a smaller proportion of older women, or women under 25, than the total figures for women accessing Refuge services in 2011-12 (Figure 4.5). There were also no women recorded as Disabled in the Refuge Survey, in comparison with 16.6 per cent of the total women in Refuge services, but demographic data were incomplete for some participants.

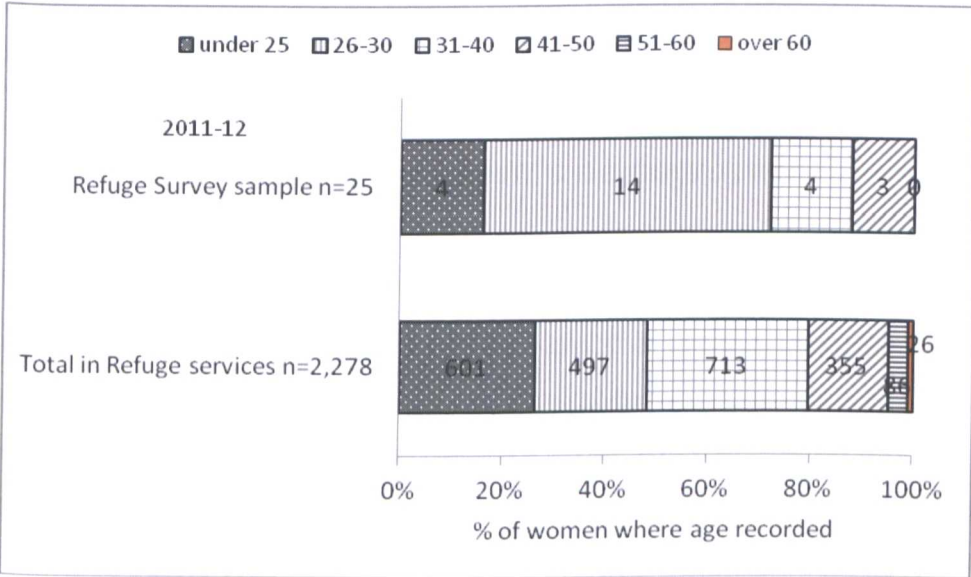


Figure 4.5: Comparison Graph of age categories of women - Refuge Survey

However, women in the Refuge Survey were from a similar range of ethnic origins as the total women in Refuge services (Figure 4.6), with half the women being White British. The majority of women in the Refuge Survey had children with them (68.0%), having one to three children in the family, and this was similar to the proportion for the total women in Refuge services (72.7%).

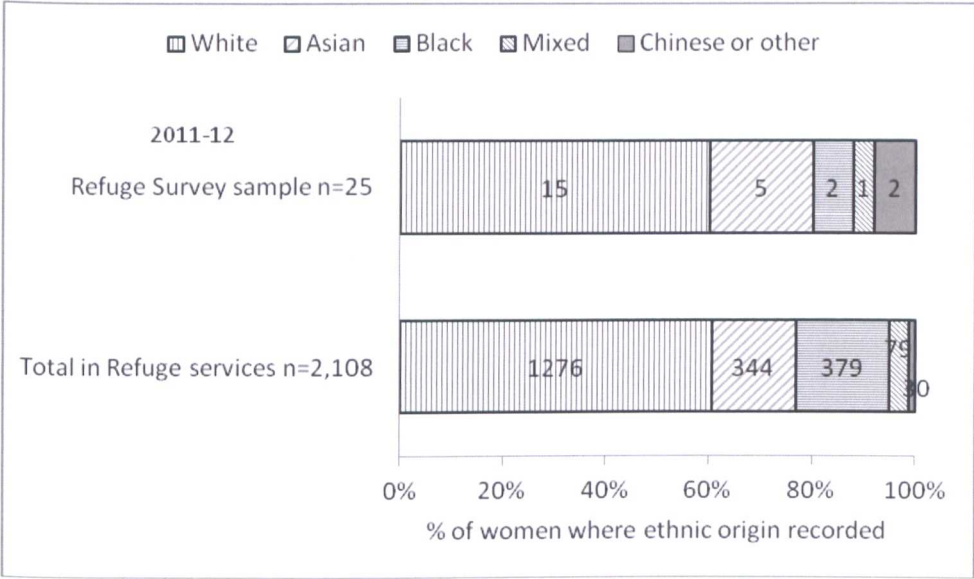


Figure 4.6: Comparison Graph of ethnic origin of women - Refuge Survey

Overall, therefore, there is no reason in terms of having children or ethnic origin to conclude that the Refuge Survey results are unrepresentative of the total sample of women who accessed Refuge services in 2011-12, but the Refuge Survey sample has an age profile concentrated between 26 and 30, and includes no Disabled women.

*The Interviewed Women’s demographics*

The Interviewed Women were selected to provide a wide range of experiences of relocation due to domestic violence, and the sample therefore took into account factors such as their current geographical location, as well as considering a range of demographic characteristics. The 20 Interviewed Women were aged 19 to 56 at the time of first interview and 60 per cent of them had children with them, which is similar to the proportion in the Woman-Journeys Datasets (54%). Though the Interviewed Women were interviewed in 2011-12, their experiences included previous years, and the Woman-Journeys Dataset 2008-9 is the most recent available for comparison. The age profiles are broadly similar (Figure 4.7), though under 18 year olds were not interviewed (due to different consent requirements), and no-one was interviewed from the oldest age categories (age 58+).

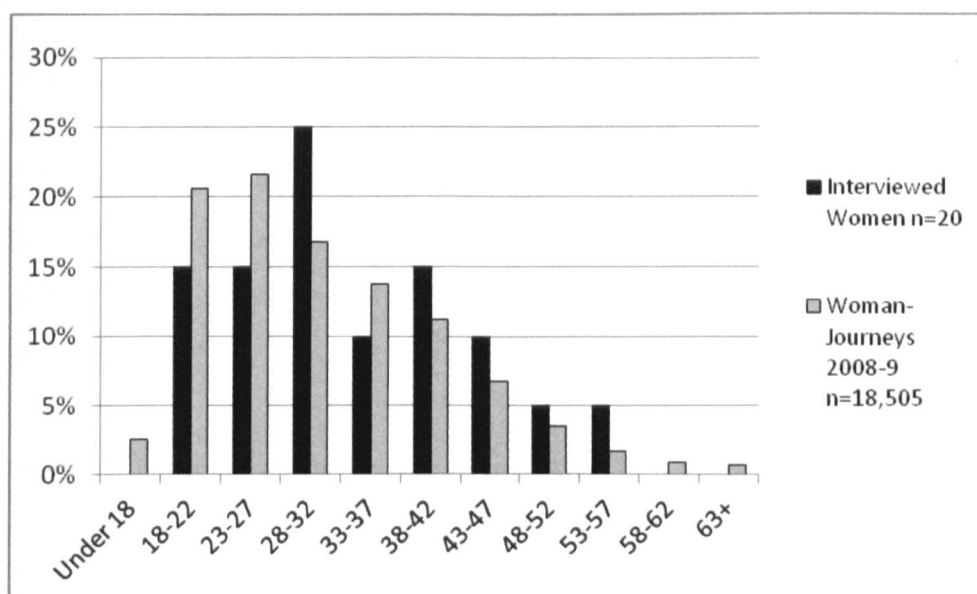


Figure 4.7: Comparison Graph of age categories of women - Interviewed Women

Interviewed Women came from a wide range of ethnic origins, including Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan within the Asian/Asian British category, and both Caribbean and African within the Black/Black British category.

Overall, ethnic minority women made up a higher proportion of the Interviewed Women, with White British consequently a lower proportion than in the Woman-Journeys Datasets (Figure 4.8); and this reflected seeking a wide range of backgrounds within a small sample size. Not all Interviewed Women participated in second interviews, but second interviews were carried out with 14 women in all five ethnic origin categories, with White British women making up 43 per cent of second interviews.

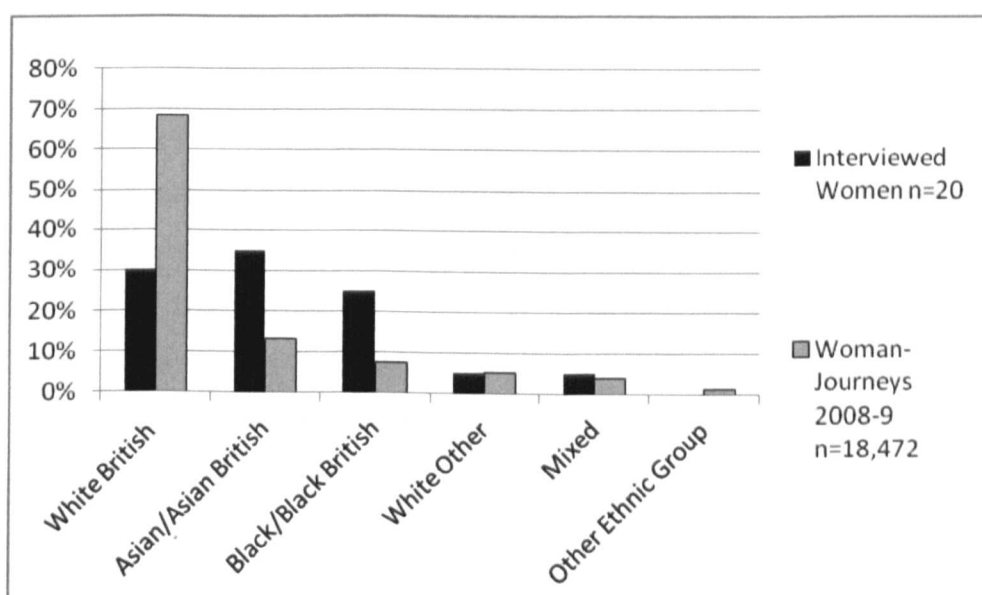


Figure 4.8: Comparison Graph of ethnic origin of women - Interviewed Women



Three of the Interviewed Women were Disabled (15%), which compares with 8.2 per cent in the Woman-Journeys Dataset; and two of the Interviewed Women (10%) did not have secure immigration status and had No Recourse to Public Funds<sup>26</sup>. This compares with 6.2 per cent of women accessing Refuge services in 2011-12 (information on No Recourse is not available in the Woman-Journeys Datasets).

Overall, therefore, the Interviewed Women can be seen as representing a range of demographic characteristics, broadly comparable with the Woman-Journeys Datasets, whilst not having been sampled to be statistically representative.

Across the range of data sources it is therefore clear that all kinds of women leave domestic violence and make journeys to access services; and that many women are accompanied by their children. Whilst the Helpline Survey, Refuge Survey and Woman-Journeys datasets provide some further evidence, presented below, on the process of leaving (beyond the descriptive demographics above), much of the rest of this chapter draws on the accounts of the Interviewed Women.

## **4.2. Deciding to leave**

### ***Gathering information and support***

All the Interviewed Women had ultimately relocated to escape domestic violence, and so had, to some extent, decided to leave. However, for most, this had not been a simple or immediate event, but had been more of a process; and for four of the women they had, for a period, returned to their partner, before leaving again. Their decisions to leave therefore included a range of actions and decisions by the women themselves - including actions in the hope that they would not have to relocate; as well as the input and influence of their children,

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<sup>26</sup> Women who are on a residence permit allowing them to live in the UK because, for example, they are married to a British Citizen, may have a condition that allows them no recourse to most benefits, tax credits or housing assistance (Home Office, 2013).

family, friends, and agencies. Interviewed Women's accounts indicate initial periods of gathering information and support, which could last for years. Many other women do not escape domestic violence at all, whilst others manage to escape the violence without having to relocate. The focus of this research is on those women who do relocate due to domestic violence, whilst recognising that this is not the only possible response.

Several Interviewed Women talked about having absolutely decided to leave the abusive partner, but not knowing about their rights or options to access any help or support; or being so frightened that their partner would have all the rights.

*I'd already made my decision years ago to go; but I always ended up going back - not because I liked him, but because I had nowhere to go.*

*I didn't know that I'd be able to be accepted into a refuge because I don't have children; so I didn't think I'd be able to find any help at all.  
[Cathy - 1:2:44/1:2:20]<sup>27</sup>*

*Every day I thought - how can I go? - how can I go? I used to look out the window and - it sounds melodramatic, but I swear to God it's the truth - and I used to think - if I could only get away... how am I going to do it? - how am I going to do it? No - there's no way round it - he's going to have my son; and I'm not going to get to see him.  
[Violet - 2:7:3]*

Other women separated from their partner and tried to use legal measures so that they did not have to relocate.

*I tried an injunction - not just on my house but on my grandma's house as well - where I'd stayed sometimes. And both of them were broken - it was like he didn't care - it didn't really change anything. But then - him as a person - those things don't bother him anyway; he's not really scared by police or anything like that. [Jenny - 1:4:29]*

Interviewed Women who were relatively new to the UK sometimes had less knowledge of their rights, or had fewer actual rights. Deborah was turned away from a local authority because of her immigration status and returned to her

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<sup>27</sup> Direct quotations are referenced by the pseudonym of the interviewee and the location of the quotation in the transcript - Number of interview with that individual : Page number : Line number of the start of the quotation.

husband for two more years until she had gained Indefinite Leave to Remain, when she left again.

*In 2006 my son was ten days old and he [husband] hit me and injured my right ear. And I phoned the police, but he scared me not to open the door. He said - you can't get help in this country. But I saw the police, and the policewoman saw that I was bleeding so asked if I needed help. So they sent him to a friend's house and they admitted me to hospital. The Social Worker asked if I wanted to go back - and I didn't know what I could do - so I came back home and he continued to abuse me.*

*In November 2009 he hit me again and I phoned the police and they arrested him. He was bailed to a different address and not to see the kids.*

*But I had No Recourse to public funds so [West London] Council said they were not allowed to help, and so the only option was to go back to Sri Lanka. But my husband is my first cousin, and both my parents had died, so I couldn't go back home. And my brother is in Australia.*

*So then he thought that he could do anything he liked.  
[Deborah - 1:1:43]*

Anna gathered together all her key papers, which her partner had tried to destroy, and planned to store them at her place of work.

*I was just thinking to get out of the home so that he couldn't see that I am taking the bag with me. And I went... but he came to the bus stop and just... I just had the time just to get into the bus and he was just knocking at it - why you have bag? Where are you going? - but I just carry on. [Anna - 1:3:25]*

Several Interviewed Women identified the strong involvement of agencies in supporting or persuading them to leave. Parveen had a lot of support from Children's Social Services, and Caroline spoke of the support of Mental Health Services; whereas Louise highlighted the intervention of Social Services in her decision to leave (after a period of returning to her partner).

*I think my wake-up call was Social Services; because my daughter didn't actually see anything, but she heard. And they said - basically - you being hit, and your child hearing you crying, is like your child is actually being hit as well - but they're being hit emotionally. And whereas like physical bruising will fade, but for a child this doesn't - it stays. So they*

*basically said to me that - if I was to stay with that person - that they would take my child from me.*

*So - she's my baby, and I'm not letting them take her just for the sake of being in that situation; you know - blood's thicker than water. She's my baby - so that was my wake-up call. [Louise - 2:6:35]*

## ***Considering the impact on children and family***

For many of the Interviewed Women with children, their decision-making was strongly about the impact on their children. This included older or adult children, as well as young children; and included both concern about how the children would react to her leaving their father, and how children were affected by the violence.

*I couldn't take it any more. It was getting to the point that there was no respect any more; and the children were getting to see and talk about things. I didn't want them to see it as normal... I just thought - I don't want them to experience this. [Faith - 1:1:37]*

Other family members were also important in Interviewed Women's deciding to leave, with women concerned that, if they left, the partner would contact, harass or threaten their family. Caroline was the primary carer for her mother who lived near her in London, and yet was advised by support agencies that she needed to leave London because of her ex-partner's harassment and threats.

*I didn't want to go at the time, because my mum was terminally ill - and I kept putting it off; because I used to look after my mum quite a bit. And then my mum said - I'd rather you be safe. [Caroline - 1:1:36]*

## ***The point of leaving***

For many of the Interviewed Women there was a long process of gathering information, finding out about different options, and trying actions to separate safely from the abuser without having to leave. Most had been settled in their



area for some time - ranging from 5 months to 32 years, and with an average of just under 5 years - and many emphasised how difficult it was to decide to leave. One of the Interviewed Workers outlined her experience of women reaching the point of leaving.

*What I would say is - especially the No Recourse women, but generally even the Recourse ones - what I would say is that - when they do leave it's probably been a long battle in their minds of whether they should leave or whether they should stay. So quite often what you'll find is that they'll have tolerated the abuse for a number of years before they've made that step to leave; because they'll have gone through all the processes of - 'I'll stay, things will get better', 'I'll be nice to him, he'll change', 'I'll accept the abuse, he'll get fed up of it eventually', 'I'll be nice to the mother-in-law and he'll think - oh yes, she's been nice to my mum', 'I'll threaten to leave but not actually leave', 'I'll try and confide in friends and family'. And what they find is that none of that's worked; so they've tried in their minds every possible thing - and then they'll leave. [Worker R - 1:5:10]*

For Louise, when she first left her partner, she did not feel that she ever actually decided to leave.

*I can't actually say that I actually thought that I was going to leave. I mean I got up, I dressed my daughter in her uniform - because it was a school day - dressed myself, got breakfast; just like an ordinary day. And I went to Tesco's to draw out money - because it was a pay day - and then I was going to take her to school. And instead of coming out of Tesco's and going straight to the school, I ended up turning about and just ending up at a bus stop; which would then take me to the coach station. Once I was in the coach station, I was already buying a ticket to come to where my dad lives; and it just kind of hit me when I was already on the coach really that - oh god - I'm going! [laughs] Once it actually sunk in it was quite a relief; because it was like freedom - you know, I could breathe. [Louise - 1:1:45]*

Whereas Elizabeth got to the point of leaving over thirty years of marriage on her birthday.

*And then over that weekend it got considerably worse; and it got to the following Wednesday/Thursday - to the day of my birthday - and I said - I can't stand it any longer. And I walked out on my birthday - leaving the cards, the lot - and I knew I would never come back.*

*It was my birthday - but it was the best birthday present I ever give myself - in all honesty! [laughs] [Elizabeth - 1:2:2/1:3:1]*

Overall, Interviewed Women could provide a date of when they left the abuser, but also detailed a complex process of their actions, decisions and considerations in getting to that point; as well as the extent to which they were on their own or received support to get there.

#### **4.3. Isolation and help**

##### ***Isolated by the abuser***

Many of the Interviewed Women talked about how they had been isolated by the abuser during the relationship, which made it more difficult for them to contact anyone for help, including help to leave. Violet's husband demanded that they actually move to an area away from her friends and family, so that her first experience of relocation due to domestic violence was within, rather than away from, the abuse.

*I was moved furthest - furthest away from my parents, my friends - so really really remote spot. If he'd take my car then there was nowhere even to go to a shop in walking distance - it was too far. So I felt really isolated. Very isolated. So I didn't even really want to move to this particular area where we was. [Violet - 1:1:24]*

Others did not literally move, but found themselves isolated within the home, rarely able to go out or contact anyone, and their every move controlled by their partner. This was the case for both women very new to the UK (as was also highlighted in the Groupwork Process with Asian women new to the UK); and those that had lived here all their lives.

*And in fact I had friends - but during the relationship they disappeared; because he didn't like that. I didn't go out - he used to go out; but I couldn't go out. He would go away for periods; but I would have to stay in the house and he would phone me every day - to make sure that I was there. [Helen - 1:1:21]*

*He never let me go out - so I couldn't speak to anyone; I couldn't go outside the house. I didn't know what was going on outside the house.*

*But I started going to college for ESOL [English for Speakers of Other Languages] and I met a girl there. I went once a week - I wasn't allowed to do anything else. My husband dropped me off and collected me - just for those two hours. [Manj - 1:1:48]*

Several of the Interviewed Women spoke about how trapped they felt, with no sense that they would ever be able to escape the abuse, or that anyone would ever help them. They emphasised how difficult it was to tell anyone.

*I'd never phoned the police up - if I'd seen them on the street and they asked if you are OK - you say yes, because you are so scared. And you just keep it to yourself. [Julien Rosa - 1:11:45]*

### ***Unaware of women's refuges***

Interviewed Women talked about being unaware of the possible role of agencies, and unaware of their rights; and particularly not knowing about women's refuges. All the Interviewed Women were first interviewed in a women's refuge, but many said they had been either completely unaware of refuges, or else very wary of what a refuge would be like.

*If I knew that this was how it [refuge] was then I would have gone a long long time ago. When I've had like Christmas Eve - been attacked - and they [Police] said - look, we're not happy leaving you here, we're going to take you to a refuge; and I said - no, I can't put my son through that. [Violet - 1:7:27]*

*I didn't want to go home; but I didn't have anywhere to go. So some of the things I did was crazy - like sleeping in parks... what the hell was I thinking? Walking on streets in the early hours of the morning - two, three o'clock. I ask myself now - what was I doing? [Cathy - 1:2:15]*

Many Interviewed Women spoke about how the women's refuge had been distinctive in its response, particularly understanding the difficulties of actually making the journey to access the service in the first place.

*They [refuge workers] phoned me all the way on the journey to [city on south coast of England] - a really big help. And they phoned me - because he [husband] was at work - and, you know, sometimes you can meet them [husband] and you don't know what to do; so they phoned me all the way. And then when I get there, someone was waiting already for me, picking me up; and the same thing here. I think all that they did - when people need it most - to help you move was really good.  
[Julien Rosa - 1:9:37]*

## ***The help of statutory agencies***

Interviewed Women had a wide range of experiences when they approached statutory agencies for help. Several women said that they feared they would not be believed about the abuse, and some found that to be the case.

*It's alright to say he's done it, but how do people... I felt nobody would ever believe me; and the police didn't.*

*I was lucky because it was identified at the hospital.  
[Elizabeth - 1:13:4]*

*The first person I talked to [at the Housing Department], he wasn't really nice - this guy - and he said "what's your partner's number because I need to call him". I said, "are you serious? You want to call somebody who has been abusing me for the last three years; and say to him - hello - did you chuck out your partner? What do you expect him to say to you? And if he says - no - are you going to say to me to go back? And then when I die you're going to say - we didn't believe her. I'm not doing that." I was so angry with that guy! That's when they say to me, "OK you need to go into a refuge - you really need to go into a refuge". I said "refuge? I have no idea what you are talking about - explain to me what a refuge is" - because I say to them - "you're sending me to prison? Did I commit something that I don't understand?" [Gloria - 1:7:43]*

Other Interviewed Women found that agencies did offer support, but not always the appropriate kind of help. Aliya was provided with counselling when she needed practical help.

*Before I came here [the refuge] I actually told my doctor; and my doctor actually put me through counselling. But when I actually spoke to my*

*counsellor she said that she can't do nothing about it - mentally - that she's going to counsel me but that I'm still going to go back to the same situation. [Aliya - 1:2:16]*

When Interviewed Women did receive practical help to leave, they often found that they could not get suitable agency support in the place, or the timeframe, that they wanted or needed; creating additional pressure. Having got the point of leaving, they found they had no choice in where they went.

*All the people I know are in [town in West Sussex]; so I knew I was moving on my own, but I would be more happy if they had put me something like more close - not in that area, but more close; so that I could get access to things. But that would depend on the vacancies - on the places that they have; and it was quick - just move wherever. [Julien Rosa - 1:2:45]*

Concern about the financial costs of the initial leaving and journey was acute for some of the Interviewed Women, and many talked about the financial implications. Some were unaware of whether they had any rights to financial help and most funded their journeys themselves.

*So I said to them [Police] - well, look I've got some money - I never had a huge amount, but I had about a hundred pound - look, can you just put me in a hotel anywhere? I've just got to go. And then the policeman was like - no, there's nowhere you can go. And then the lady officer, she got on the phone, and she said - right, just grab what you can quickly - because they arrested my partner - and they said, grab what you can and then we're going to take you to the station. So I literally had like my sort of trolley and the rucksack - just put everything that I could. I left so much behind - car, animals, etc - and got in the [police] car, went to the police station; and there they were really kind, they said where I could go. They said I could go to a refuge. [Violet - 1:2:22]*

Women with No Recourse to Public Funds were particularly reliant on help from agencies because they would have no entitlement to benefits or Housing Benefit to fund their stay and living costs at a refuge.

*What we tend to find is that the majority of the ladies [with No Recourse] come through Social Services, either because the Health Visitor's alerted Social Services that there's issues in the family, or the school's alerted them. So we tend to find that - when they're leaving -*

*there is involvement of Social Services. We've had the odd cases where we've had ex-clients who have referred friends or family members on to us. And what we often say is that - prior to the lady actually leaving the perpetrator - it's good to get police involvement and Social Services involvement; and then - with police backing and refuge backing - she's more likely to secure the funding.* [Worker R - 1:2:46]

## ***The help of family or friends***

The help of family or friends was central to many Interviewed Women's experiences of leaving the abuse. The most frequent means of transport for Interviewed Women's journeys was a family member or friend's car; and family and friends were highlighted in most Interviewed Women's Significance Charts of significant people and places<sup>28</sup>. In the Woman-Journeys Datasets, the previous place of accommodation for 20 per cent of women was with family or friends (rather than their own tenancy or ownership), which could suggest that they had left their abusive partner and stayed temporarily with family or friends. Certainly this was the case for several of the Interviewed Women who had immediately escaped to a parent's, daughter's or friend's house and subsequently moved to a refuge to be somewhere safer. In the Woman-Journeys Datasets, women accessing accommodation services from Family or Friends were statistically significantly more likely to be relocating within a Local Authority (rather than travelling to another Local Authority)<sup>29</sup>, and to be travelling shorter distances than from other tenures<sup>30</sup>; suggesting attempts to stay fairly close to family and friends.

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<sup>28</sup> For example, see Figure 6.30.

<sup>29</sup> Woman-journeys datasets. Test for differences between Previous Tenure categories and whether or not women crossed LA boundaries - Crosstabulation. For 2008-9, n=13781, Chi-Square = 199.215 (df=9) p<0.001 - The association is therefore statistically significant, but Cramer's V = 0.120 suggests that the association is very weak. The adjusted standardised residuals indicate that woman-journeys from Family and Friends were most likely (than from any other previous tenure) to be Residential Mobility (a.r. = +8.3) rather than Migration; and from Women's Refuge were most likely to be Migration (a.r. = +7.1).

<sup>30</sup> Woman-journeys datasets. Test for differences between Previous Tenure categories - Kruskal-Wallis. For 2008-9, n=9388, Chi-Square = 119.063 (df=9) p<0.001 - The association is therefore statistically significant. The mean ranks indicate that women travelled on average shortest distances from Family or Friends (mean 31.4 miles to accommodation services) than from any other previous tenure; and longest from Women's refuge (mean 47.9 miles to accommodation services).

Many Interviewed Women had experience of considerable support from family and friends, including people they had not expected. However, others had experiences of friends or family not supporting them, not believing them, or not helping them.

*When I started to talk to some close friends they were saying to me - oh, it's not true, he's such a lovely person, he's look after you; when I see you with him he's just lovely... maybe you have a stress, or there's something wrong with you. All I got was a reaction like that.  
[Anna - 1:2:16]*

### ***The help of employers or strangers***

Just as they were surprised sometimes about who did or did not help them from amongst family and friends, Interviewed Women talked of being surprised by help and understanding from their place of work - both colleagues and managers. The majority had been in work whilst they were in the relationship, but all had had to leave their jobs in the end. However, a few had remained in contact with their employers and hoped that they might be able to return to work; particularly if it was an employer that operated in a range of locations. All who did disclose the violence to colleagues or managers had been concerned about how it would be understood.

*I went to work and I said to my boss - I am having a bag and could I leave it in the office [...] But I didn't want him to think if I am a stupid person; and he knows I have the violence at home but he couldn't do nothing because I am not saying nothing... [...] [So] is he going to kick me out from the work? Is he going to think like that? [Anna - 1:3:31]*

Some Interviewed Women had also received help from strangers at the point of leaving. Cathy first heard about how to contact women's refuges from another customer in McDonald's, and Louise was helped by a neighbour when she fled her house (where her partner was threatening her) in the night.

*I ended up knocking on a few doors; and a door was opened by a little old woman. And she said to me - "it's not a joke is it?" I said - "no, no, this*

*is not a joke; I really need to use your phone". So I used her phone; and from her phone I phoned my dad, and my dad phoned the police. And the police came to the little old lady's house. And he [partner] was escorted from the property; and then I went and stayed at my dad's.*  
[Louise - 1:6:25]

Overall, Interviewed Women's accounts of leaving include both isolation and support; and include lack of help, as well as help, from agencies and individuals in the decision-making and practicalities of leaving.

#### 4.4. Practicalities of leaving

##### *When to leave*

Leaving the place of origin does not necessarily coincide with leaving the abuser, as many women try to end the relationship without having to relocate. A quarter of the women in the Refuge Survey (24.0%) were not actually living with the abuser, but then had to relocate because of ongoing harassment and threats. Several of the Interviewed Women had also already separated from their partner and were living on their own.

*I started to have to keep on getting the police to escort him off my premises - by which time they knew him by name. And then he'd sit outside my door and phone up and say - "let me in"; or start banging it. And then he'd start following me around - and fighting with people; and I just thought - enough is enough.* [Caroline - 1:4:25]

Helen's partner had initially said that he wanted the separation, and then repeatedly tracked her down and kept watch at her flat, so that she had to try and leave there without him realising what she was doing.

*I did it over a few days and cleared the flat and what have you - clear everything out and then clean it to get the deposit back. But I was making sure I would be there at like five in the morning and load the car up with stuff so that he wouldn't know that was what I was doing; so it would be like a boot load and then something in the back that I could cover over with blankets so you didn't see that there was anything in the car; and then parking the car. And then driving, and checking he wasn't following me - so it was really hard.* [Helen - 1:10:39]



Other Interviewed Women left at a point of being assaulted, including Anna who left at the point when her partner's assault led to her miscarrying twins; and Violet who left when her husband assaulted her and held their son in the house. Others tried to escape imminent assault.

*I was in my nightie - no bra, no underwear, nothing on - just a long satin nightie; running through town and he was chasing me. He got through three bouncers to get to me, and stole my phone off me; and I'd gone in the bar - because it was a busy club - two o'clock in the morning - because it was near where I was staying. And this lady got to me, and she said - love, do you know you have your nightie on? [laughs] I said - that's the least of my worries at the moment! [laughs] She must have thought I'd left the loony-bin or something! But I just felt safe in there. And then the police came, and they took me back home; and then - as I said - the next day he came as if nothing had happened - they hadn't caught him. [Maud - 1:1:45]*

*But he [partner] was like - well, I'll come back at two; and he took the keys and locked the door; and he said he's coming back at two o'clock in the morning. So I'm panicking and I phone my dad; and I said - look, he's going to come back at two o'clock in the morning; he's locked me in the house - he's taken the keys. I can't get out, so can you come and get me, because I don't want to be here. So that was about nine; and I think he got to me about half past nine. And because he's a locksmith he opened the door - it's quite handy really! [laughs] - he opened the door, changed the lock on it; took me back to his with some clothes and stuff. And that's where I stayed until I was put in another refuge in [town in East Sussex]. [Louise - 1:7:30]*

In contrast, some Interviewed Women were able to plan their leaving, sometimes over days, weeks or months; including leaving in ways that might not immediately be noticed.

*I moved - I think on the 22nd, which was a Thursday - yes; and I arrived here on the evening. And it took him till the Sunday to cotton on. And that's where my friends started panicking - where is she? He thought - oh, she's gone out on her birthday, gone to stay with friends; she's not bothered to tell me - well, he wouldn't tell me if he were going out. Friday night I think he would've been a bit concerned; Saturday he would have thought - oh, hello? - something's wrong here. Sunday - it hit him - like a brick. Went in the bedroom - of course the bedroom was in a hell of a state - I moved really quickly, so everything was all over the place; but he looked in the wardrobe, and realised the wardrobes were bare. [Elizabeth - 1:3:28]*

In the months before finally leaving, Cathy and her friend (who was also experiencing domestic violence) had carried out a long term plan so that they could both escape.

*But we [Cathy and her friend] talked in the day - when he was at work - and decided that I'd sign on; because I'm English-born - so I'd sign on. And then the money went - it was under her address; so the money went in my bank account, under her address. And at one point she turned round and she said - we need to speed up the situation; so then I went to her house and claimed Housing Benefit - so this was to get enough to get her out. And so that's what I did, and - though everything was going to her house she wasn't - she had access to my account if anything happened to me, but she never touched a penny of it. We knew it was serious.*

*So after a few months she got a plane ticket. And I left about one and a half or two weeks before she went back to Poland; because she was waiting on her ticket - and then she had to transport everything. She had to get to the airport, get the plane; but also when she got to Poland she had to have somewhere to live - she was Polish, but she had to get herself back in the system.*

*So basically that's what we did - I came to London, and she went back to Poland. And - if it wasn't for her - I'd still be there...  
[Cathy - 1:7:31]*

### ***Needing and receiving agency support to leave***

Whilst some women, like Cathy, plan to leave without any agency support, others contact support services. The Helpline Survey shows that over half of the woman callers to the National Domestic Violence Helpline were seeking to relocate, with 53.9 per cent wanting to find somewhere to go, and a further 2.6 per cent not knowing at the start of the call what they wanted to do. The women thinking about relocation were slightly more likely to be younger than the total calls to the Helpline, and slightly more likely to be from ethnic minorities; and they were statistically significantly more likely to call during the day (8am - 5.30pm) than during the evening or night<sup>31</sup>. However, Figure 4.9

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<sup>31</sup> National Helpline survey. Test for differences between time of call and whether or not women wanted to relocate - Crosstabulation. n=266, Chi-Square = 22.820 (df=3) p<0.001 - The

shows that over a quarter of women (26.2%) who, by the end of the call, wanted to relocate immediately were not able to be offered any service place to go to by the Helpline.

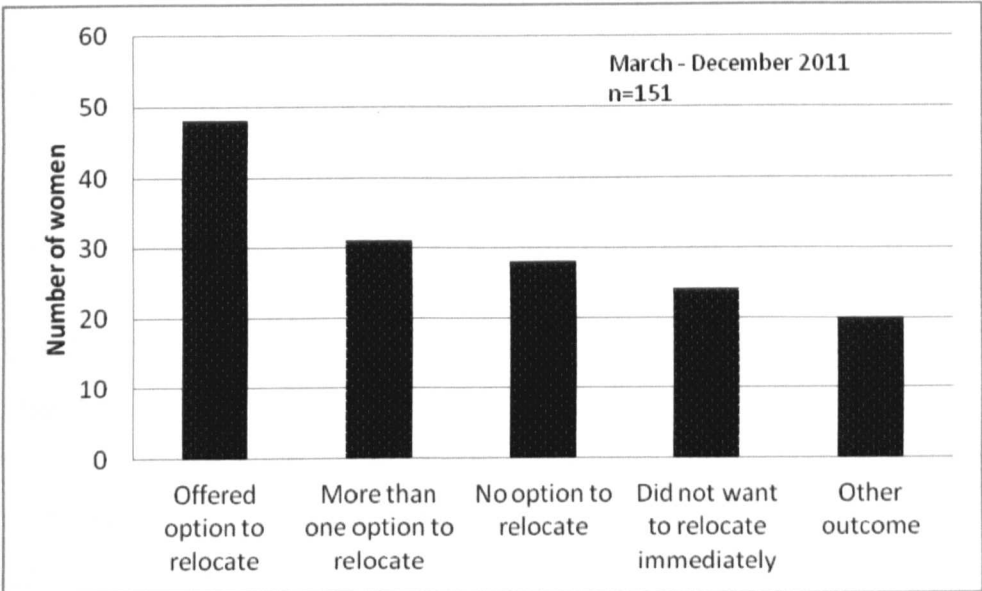


Figure 4.9: Graph of immediate call outcome - Helpline Survey

Whether or not an option to relocate could be offered was not statistically significantly associated with demographic characteristics of women’s age, whether or not they had children, were disabled, or their ethnic origin<sup>32</sup>. It is therefore significant that relocation options did not depend on demographic characteristics.

Some Interviewed Women had the same experience of not being able to find a refuge space anywhere at all.

*I had to call the police on him the day that I left; and so the police had given me numbers. I had to make so many calls - I called a lot of them [refuges] but they kept on saying there was no room, or there was room for a single woman, or a woman with a child - but no room for a women with two children... [Faith - 1:2:38]*

association is therefore statistically significant, and Cramer’s V = 0.297 suggests that the association is moderate. The adjusted standardised residuals indicate that calls about relocation were most likely to be between 8am and noon (a.r. = +2.9) or noon and 5.30pm (a.r. = +1.9).  
<sup>32</sup> National Helpline survey. Crosstabulations & Chi-Square - all four p>0.01 therefore no statistically significant associations.

A Housing Officer had finally explained to Gloria that a 'refuge' was not a prison, and then was unable to find a refuge space for her.

*And she [Housing Officer] explained to me and they tried calling places - but they couldn't get a place; so they put me in a Bed and Breakfast - that was the Thursday - which was horrible. It was a single bed - which stank of wee - I think the only bedding that was there was a single quilt, with one bed cover, which was not clean. And I just took my clothes and my baby's blanket, and made sure my son was sleeping there; and I slept in the chair all night. And I said - oh my God, did I make the right decision? Is this what it's going to be like now? [Gloria - 1:8:9]*

In addition to needing a place to stay, women may have a range of support needs at the point of leaving. Two-fifths of callers (41.7%) in the Helpline Survey raised a wide range of specific support needs they had themselves, such as around immigration or language needs (4.6%), mental health (6.0%), drug or alcohol problems (5.3%), physical disability (3.3%); and four women were pregnant (2.6%). Women also raised the impact of relocation on whether they could stay in their job, stay near family or friends, and issues of care for pets. There was, however, no statistically significant association of whether women raised their own support needs and their demographic characteristics of age, whether or not they had children, were disabled, or their ethnic origin<sup>33</sup>. In addition, nearly half of the callers in the Helpline Survey who had children (48.5%) raised specific needs of their children; however whether they did or not was not statistically significantly associated with the woman's age, disability or ethnic origin<sup>34</sup>. Again, the lack of relationship to demographic characteristics is therefore notable.

Many Interviewed Women also emphasised the range of needs that they had at the point of leaving, and that some agencies focused on a small aspect of the issues rather than recognising the wider picture.

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<sup>33</sup> National Helpline survey. Crosstabulations & Chi-Square - all four  $p > 0.01$  therefore no statistically significant associations.

<sup>34</sup> National Helpline survey. Crosstabulations & Chi-Square - all three  $p > 0.01$  therefore no statistically significant associations.

*I asked to speak to someone like in a Domestic Violence Team - like they used to have in the Housing - but apparently they're starting to like get rid of them all now. So I had to talk to like a normal Housing Officer who - I believe - didn't really understand my situation. She just saw it as like a Housing point of view - but I explained I just wanted to feel safe [...] so how she was seeing it was maybe it was like smaller than what it actually was - to her. But - to me - it was really scary. [Jenny - 1:2:39]*

Whilst many of the Interviewed Women only found out differences in policy and practice in different Local Authorities if they approached more than one authority, the Local Authority Maps indicate that there are very different services offered from place to place<sup>35</sup>. Whether women can access any support to leave therefore relates to where they live. A significant number of Local Authorities provide no specialist domestic violence services (Coy et al., 2009), and the Local Authorities Dataset shows that nearly a fifth (64 in 2008-9) of the 354 English Local Authorities have no women accessing even non-specialist support services in their area, and over a quarter (99 in 2008-9) have no women accessing accommodation services due to domestic violence. For a proportion of Local Authorities, this is clearly related to lack of provision rather than lack of demand<sup>36</sup>. Such Local Authorities are also spread around the country, often next door to authorities which do provide services and experience high rates of women arriving to access them.

There is also an indication within the Local Authority Maps of different policies in terms of whether women who approach statutory services are offered support within the Local Authority, referred outside the Local Authority, or offered both options. The rate of residential mobility within some Local Authorities varies considerably from year to year, and a sudden rise or fall in numbers could indicate a change of policy or service provision within the area, rather than a sudden change in demand. Local Authorities which are otherwise fairly similar can have vastly different rates of residential mobility; for example the similarly large Outer London Boroughs of Barnet and Redbridge have residential mobility numbers of 194 women and 0 women respectively in 2008-9. This could suggest

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<sup>35</sup> See Chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion of differences between Local Authorities and the significance of place.

<sup>36</sup> As identified in the Map of Gaps research on Violence Against Women support services (Coy et al., 2009)

different policies by the Local Authorities - offering or not offering local support - rather than such different levels and types of support need by local women in the two areas.

Some Interviewed Workers also indicated that Local Authority Housing Departments tended not to offer options to women who approached them, or explain women's rights.

*The options are not always explained. Housing often say to a woman that she just has to go to a refuge - so we have to explain the options such as rehousing in the area, injunctions, renting elsewhere.  
[Worker F - 1:2:39]*

Whether or not women receive agency support to leave the abuse can therefore vary from place to place, irrespective of a woman's needs, or her own confidence and actions in expressing those needs.

### ***Self motivation and actions***

Though many Interviewed Women did receive support from statutory agencies to be able to leave, it was generally within a wider context of the range of actions they took for themselves, or with the support of voluntary agencies. The Woman-Journeys Datasets show that a fifth (20.5% in 2008-9) of the relocation journeys to support agencies were self referrals by women themselves, and a further quarter (24.5%) were from voluntary agencies; indicating that nearly half (45.0%) did not directly involve a statutory agency.

Referrals from voluntary agencies were most likely to be across Local Authority boundaries, and average amongst the longest distances; with self referrals also likely to be longer distances than statutory referrals, such as Housing or Police<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> Woman-journeys datasets. Test for differences between Referral Source categories and whether or not women crossed LA boundaries - Crosstabulation. For 2008-9, n=13790, Chi-Square = 696.945 (df=13) p<0.001 - The association is therefore statistically significant, but Cramer's V = 0.225 suggests that the association is quite weak. The adjusted standardised residuals indicate that woman-journeys referred from a Voluntary Agency were most likely (than from any other referral source) to be Migration (a.r. = +17.7) rather than Residential Mobility; with referrals from LA Housing Department most likely to be Residential Mobility (a.r. = +11.6).

The Woman-Journeys Datasets also show that journeys both to and from a woman's refuge were most likely to be across Local Authority boundaries and longer distances<sup>38</sup>. This could partly indicate that women can end up in a women's refuge where there was a space, rather than being in a place they wanted to be; but also they can subsequently use referrals between refuges to end up nearer to where they wanted.

The Refuge Survey also indicated that in women's attempts to separate from their partner they use a range of actions to increase their safety to be able to stay put. Up to a fifth had tried the Sanctuary Scheme of enhanced security on their home and increased support (17.6%), Civil Legal Orders (14.7%), or supporting a Criminal Case against the perpetrator (20.6%). At the point of the Refuge Survey, 80 per cent of the women who had tried each of these measures had not had to relocate.

Some of the Interviewed Women had also used formal measures to try not to move, including supporting criminal cases and taking out civil injunctions. However, they had not ultimately been able to stay put safely despite these measures. Deborah's husband had been convicted of the assaults on her and had had to complete the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP) run by Probation; but she found that he still continued to threaten her. She stayed with him until she had got secure immigration status and her passport back from the Home Office.

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Test for differences between Referral Source categories and distances - Kruskal-Wallis. For 2008-9,  $n=9394$ , Chi-Square = 141.519 ( $df=13$ )  $p<0.001$  - The association is therefore statistically significant. The mean ranks indicate that women travelled on average longer distances from another RSL (mean 56.7 miles to accommodation services), when self-referral (mean 43.6 miles to accommodation services), or Voluntary Agency referral (mean 40.3 miles to accommodation services) rather than from, for example, LA Housing referral (mean 34.1 miles to accommodation services) or Police referral (mean 31.6 miles to accommodation services).

<sup>38</sup> Woman-journeys datasets. See footnote 29 and footnote 30 for journeys from women's refuges.

Test for differences between types of accommodation service accessed and whether or not women crossed LA boundaries - Crosstabulation. For 2008-9,  $n=13790$ , Chi-Square = 777.559 ( $df=3$ )  $p<0.001$  - The association is therefore statistically significant, and Cramer's  $V = 0.237$  suggests that the association is quite weak. The adjusted standardised residuals indicate that woman-journeys to Women's Refuges were most likely to be Migration rather than Residential Mobility (a.r. = +24.2) than to any other types of accommodation service.

*My husband had to go to IDAP, and after he did that he needed a statement from me about the abuse. He needed a statement for the residence - because of the criminal conviction. But once he got that he started abusing me again.*

*He started to text me fifteen times a day. I explained that I can't phone during work - I was doing lab. work so I couldn't phone. But he wouldn't listen.*

*And he said I had to dress differently - my office clothes - he said I had to wear long clothes. But I said I don't have any religious or cultural reasons - because I'm a Buddhist. I explained that I would look weird if I dressed like that at work - that I had no cultural reasons to do so.*

*He checked my phone and my handbag and he dialled the numbers. He had the phone contract under his name so he could set it up for messages to go to his e-mail. [Deborah - 1:2:16/1:1:28/1:1:37]*

Therefore, despite intensive statutory involvement in tackling Deborah's husband's violence, she and her children remained unsafe and she was forced to take her own action to leave her job and relocate out of London, to the only refuge space she could find - in the Midlands.

#### **4.5. Force and Agency**

Force and leaving is therefore being considered by analysis at a range of scales; from the individual accounts of 20 women, to over 18,000 woman-journeys a year. Defining domestic violence journeys as forced migration (which will be discussed further in Chapter 9) does not preclude the fact that Interviewed Women's accounts of the process of leaving indicate ongoing elements of both force and personal agency. And, just as in Mahler and Pessar's (2001; 2006) conceptualisation of 'gendered geographies of power' in transnationalism (discussed in Chapter 2), women's agency includes both mind work and actions; in the relationship and beyond.

#### ***Forced and controlled in the relationship***

In thinking about what they had been forced to do, many of the Interviewed Women reflected on the extent to which the abuser had forced and controlled



them within the relationship. Some had been very aware of this at the time, whilst others said that they did not realise at all.

*I didn't realise; but the abuse was ongoing, right from the word go. It's not until now you look back; and you realise it started right from the very beginning - in very very small ways. There'd be a little something - and then that would add on and add on until - and it would creep up until - you look back one day and you think - hang on a second, someone's controlling my whole life. He'd done it in such a way that I hadn't even realised that he'd done it. [Helen - 1:2:4]*

Many Interviewed Women talked about how they had lost their confidence during the relationship, so that it was not just that they stopped doing anything their partner did not want them to do, but they came to believe that they couldn't do anything without their partner; that they couldn't even express themselves.

*Because of the way they [the abuser] spoke to you, you don't think you can do it - you think you need them; but my life was under his control so much. [Julien Rosa - 2:10:28]*

*I felt forced into everything really; because it was just such a very controlled house. Everything had to be done in a certain way; and just - I don't know - the only person who seemed to be able to come and go as they pleased was him. You know, everything else had to be like the way he wanted it. [Louise - 1:2:32]*

Any action they took, therefore, was against this controlling force of the abuser.

### ***Forced to leave***

Most of the Interviewed Women were clear that they had been forced to leave by the abuser's behaviour, though not all had used the word 'force' and some did not want to see themselves as forced.

*Not forced - it's like you don't have a choice; so - in that sense - it is kind of forced. But it's the only thing that you can do. It's difficult - forced isn't a word that I would use. You know what you have to do, and therefore you do it. And a lot of the time you don't actually really want to do it - because it's more comfortable or safer - or you feel it's safer, even if it isn't - to stay. Better the devil you know - I think is the saying.*

*So I wouldn't say I was forced to do it, but I wasn't given a choice - I had to do it. [Helen - 2:16:8]*

Other Interviewed Women wanted to use the word 'forced' about their experiences, including Aliya who was leaving her abusive father who had tried to force her to marry.

*When I was eighteen my dad was forcing me to get married to someone that was in his thirties; and I kept on saying - no, I don't want to get married, I don't want to get married.*

*I think I was forced to leave home... I was forced to leave home, but - at the same time - I had a choice to go back... But I didn't take that choice - because I didn't want to. [Aliya - 2:11:4/2:15:1]*

Some Interviewed Women outlined a range of conflicting pressures on them, so that they did not feel forced directly into only one possible course of action.

*I was forced by his behaviour.*

*But I was on a spousal visa so it was very difficult to leave.  
[Parveen - 1:2:14/1:2:18]*

Caroline cared for her terminally ill mother, but this kept her close to where her ex partner lived:

*Not so much forced [to leave the area] - but - in my heart I knew it was the right thing. But it was leaving my mum really - you know - I kept going back to see her and to help. But - without my mum being really ill - I probably would have left before - because I had really supportive workers with me. [Caroline - 1:2:4]*

Some Interviewed Women felt forced, but had not used that word because it would imply that they had followed their partner's instructions to leave.

*To save my own sanity and to have a life of my own... in a way I was forced... Yes - in a way - it was forced because with that - every day - you just want to go! You just want somewhere to go! So they're not saying - I just want you out of my life, get out! But - by what they're*

*doing to you - your mind just wants... you just want to pick up and leave.*  
[Cathy - 2:22:12]

Whilst recognising the force that made them leave, and ongoing constraints after leaving, it was clearly important for women to claim what agency they could. Women engaged in “Tightrope talk” (McKenzie-Mohr & Lafrance, 2011) between force and agency, including highlighting initial force but quickly finding it to be a positive action to leave.

*I was forced - kind of. But after two days I was actually relieved.*  
[Sarah - 1:2:5]

Whilst many Interviewed Women emphasised the relief of leaving the abuse, some found that they continued to feel controlled by the abuser, either because of his direct actions, or because of the extent to which they felt they had lost their confidence and peace of mind.

*When I look back, he has ruined such a lot of my life; I know - people say - it's only eight years - but it's a long time. To have to leave your job, and everything behind - all the stuff you've worked for - furniture and stuff like that; I've got to start all over again.* [Violet - 2:10:37]

*I just feel he's still controlling me in a way. You know - and I think he will be for quite a few years. Even though he's nowhere near me and I have no contact with him... he's controlling my life, isn't he. So - he won in a way. OK - he's in there [prison], but he's caused havoc for me.*  
[Maud - 2:15:41]

The tightrope between force and agency therefore continued to thread through their ongoing journey. This exemplifies Massey's (1994, p.149) concept of power geometry (discussed in Chapter 2) highlighting the importance not just of who is moving, but who is “in charge” of the process.

### ***Personal agency***

Whilst they tried options within the relationship, many Interviewed Women found that their space for personal agency became smaller and smaller as the abuser controlled more and more aspects of their lives.

*It was just - it felt like I was running out of places to go; everything was just getting smaller and smaller and smaller. And I think something in my brain just clicked - you know - just kind of took myself away from that situation; before I even knew what was happening. [laughs]  
[Louise - 1:2:48]*

Such restricted space for action has been recognised in the domestic violence literature (for example, Coy & Kelly, 2011); however, some Interviewed Women, were able to plan how they could leave, even if they somehow felt that this was inappropriate behaviour.

*I'd also basically - it sounds bad - but I'd been starting to plan it; from Christmas - and I actually left on the 22nd of April - I'd only come back - because the hospital didn't want me to come home for Christmas. And I only came back because my [adult] son was coming at Christmas, and I thought I'd try to keep it nice - didn't want to upset anybody.  
[Elizabeth - 1:2:42]*

Many Interviewed Women emphasised the risk the abuser was to their family and friends, so that they were forced to make the move by themselves, reliant on their own resources.

*I didn't know where to go, who to turn to. I couldn't - he knew where my dad lived, he knew where my son lived; he'd found out where my daughter lived. I had nowhere I could go, because I had no money; because I'd had to leave my job because he was finding me through work - he was waiting outside work and following me home.  
[Helen - 1:3:49]*

*I just knew I had to do it on my own, because I knew - the thing that went through my head was that my parents are not going to be here forever, and I can't keep putting it on them - they're getting older, and I thought - you've got to stand on your own two feet - and you've done it. You've got to get away from this person before he kills you - he always said he would; he'd always find me - completely brainwashed me into thinking that he was something invincible probably - I don't know... Action Man - you know - that he's going to find me. I just knew I had to get away. [Violet - 1:3:17]*

For the Interviewed Women, therefore, the moves were seen as forced initially, whilst being all about exercising whatever personal agency they could in the circumstances.

*It's like - if you don't help yourself, who is going to help? You need to want, you need to understand, and you need to walk this first step inside you.*

*So - sure - in the beginning it is force on yourself; but then it is yourself...  
[Anna - 1:24:24/1:24:35]*

They were forced from where they had been living - by the abuser - and had little initial opportunity for personal agency beyond actually making that step. However, the very individual accounts of subsequent steps on the journey were shaped by particular experiences of support, or further force, from family, friends, individuals and agencies, affecting where women went and how their journeys developed (as discussed in the next chapter).

#### 4.6. Conclusions

The Woman-Journeys datasets indicate that tens of thousands of women - at least half of them with children - make domestic violence journeys in the UK; whether relatively local journeys of residential mobility, or longer migration journeys across Local Authority boundaries. Women of all ages and ethnic origins leave domestic violence and access services, though a tendency towards younger women and ethnic minority women (compared with the total population), suggests particular issues of having dependent children, and having fewer personal resources, in who accesses public services. Analysis of the surveys and interviews highlights the importance of individual circumstances and experiences in shaping leaving as a complex process, rather than an event. This process may be very isolated; or may include important roles for friends, family, statutory agencies, employers, and women's refuges. In general, the individuality of these circumstances, experiences and actions is found to be unrelated to demographic categories. Overall, the leaving - for all kinds of women - represents a forced move, within which, and/or after which, they

exercise whatever agency they can. Beyond the point of first leaving, the travelling brings further experiences of force and agency as explored in the next chapter. Following on from this chapter's focus on the women who leave, the next chapter focuses on this travelling, and the places that women leave from and arrive in.

## Chapter 5. Women's Domestic Violence Journeys: Travelling

Whilst there is a literature on women's experiences of domestic violence, and of escaping the abuse, there is a gap in consideration of how women get to services, or travel on to rehousing. Focusing on the actual travelling of the journeys leads to investigation of the places women travel to and from, including the characteristics of Local Authorities, which are discussed in this chapter. Mapping Local Authorities, as well as the journeys themselves, enables a consideration of national patterns and distances across the country, and whether these relate to characteristics of places, or of the women making the journeys. From women's own perspectives, the travelling entails a whole range of practicalities and these are also explored. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how travelling is also engaged with metaphorically, generating conceptualisations of the journeys.

### 5.1. Places

#### *Journeys to, from, and within all types of places*

Despite the very individual circumstances of abuse that women are leaving, and the extent to which the relocation is forced, it is a key focus of this research to evidence the geography of the journeys - to ground them in the characteristics of the places left, the places arrived in, and the distances travelled.

The Flow Maps<sup>39</sup> show that women travel from everywhere. Women are recorded as travelling from every English Local Authority, and from Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and abroad, to access formal support services (accommodation and non-accommodation services). In each year of the Woman-Journeys Datasets there is a Local Authority (or more than one) with no women recorded as leaving; but there is no Local Authority where no women are recorded leaving over the whole six years. In 2008-09, only the Isles of Scilly is

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<sup>39</sup> Line maps of woman-journeys to and from each English Local Authority. See chapter 3 and Table 3.1 for further details.

recorded as having no women leaving, and this is a particularly small Local Authority (in terms of population) requiring boat, plane or helicopter travel to be able to leave. Nevertheless, in another year, a woman was recorded as leaving the Isles of Scilly to access a support service in England because of the risk of domestic violence.

Women are also recorded as arriving everywhere that provided support services under the Supporting People Programme. As a result, most Local Authorities, including all types of Local Authority, experience flows of women into and out of their area due to domestic violence. In addition, three-quarters of Local Authorities have relocation journeys of residential mobility within their boundaries. The extent of residential mobility (relocation journeys due to domestic violence, but remaining within a local authority) is striking, constituting 45.6 per cent of woman-journeys to access services. However, many local authorities had only one or two women relocating within their boundaries each year, 40 per cent of local authorities had ten or fewer women per year, and only 7 per cent had over 100 women per year.

### ***Local Authorities at the extremes***

Because local authorities can have widely differing populations - from 416,000 women aged 15+ in Birmingham to 900 women aged 15+ in the Isles of Scilly - the numbers of women leaving, arriving, or relocating within each local authority were converted to rates per 10,000 female population aged 15+. This enabled the identification of local authorities with the highest rates (rather than numbers) of leaving, arriving and residential mobility.

The eight Local Authorities with the highest rates of women leaving ( $> 3$  standard deviation of median in three or more years) were neither the most urban (Major Urban) nor the most rural (Rural-80), but included Rural-50 and



Large Urban Local Authorities<sup>40</sup>. Two of the Other Urban Local Authorities with highest rates of leaving were also areas of the highest rates of arriving, whilst the other three with high rates of arriving (> 3 standard deviation of median in three or more years) were all rural authorities. These five local authorities were also areas of high Net arriving, suggesting that they provided unusually large service capacity; whereas no Local Authorities were outliers (> 3 standard deviation of median in three or more years) in terms of high Net leaving. The highest rates of leaving or arriving are not, therefore, in either extremely urban or rural authorities.

Whilst residential mobility cannot be mapped as flow maps, it constitutes over half the relocation journeys for some Local Authorities - particularly some larger urban areas. The highest rates of Residential Mobility per female population (> 3 standard deviation of median in three or more years) were generally found in Local Authorities classed as Major Urban or Large Urban, and all but one of the fourteen outliers were urban authorities. This is confirmed by residential mobility being generally most likely in Large Urban Local Authorities, whilst migration (arriving or leaving) being more likely to and from rural local authorities<sup>41</sup>.

The Local Authority Maps show that outlier authorities in terms of leaving, arriving and residential mobility (named on the maps: Figure 5.10, Figure 5.11, Figure 5.12) are distributed around the country rather than clustered, and that extreme Local Authorities are often next door to authorities with very different rates. This suggests specific characteristics rather than regional processes; and differences between Local Authorities that could even out within a County or

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<sup>40</sup> See Table 3.2 for outline of Local Authority Classifications and Indices. The Rural-Urban Classification has six categories, in order of increasing rurality: Major Urban, Large Urban, Other Urban, Significant Rural, Rural-50 and Rural-80.

<sup>41</sup> Woman-journeys datasets. Test for differences between Rural-Urban Classification of LA and whether or not women crossed LA boundaries to access accommodation services there - Crosstabulation. For 2008-9, n=13790, Chi-Square = 607.747 (df=5) p<0.001 - The association is therefore statistically significant, and Cramer's V = 0.210 suggests that the association is quite weak. The adjusted standardised residuals indicate that woman-journeys were most likely to be Migration to Significant Rural LAs (a.r. = +15.0), with Rural-50 (a.r. = +11.7) and Rural-80 (a.r. = +10.7) also more likely to be Migration; and all three Urban categories more likely to be Residential Mobility, being most likely in Large Urban LAs (a.r. = +12.1).

Region. For example, in Figure 5.10, Burnley and Blackburn with Darwen have high (outlier) rates of leaving, whilst neighbouring Ribble Valley has no women recorded as leaving to accommodation services. Similarly, North Kesteven is next to Lincoln with its high (outlier) rate of leaving.

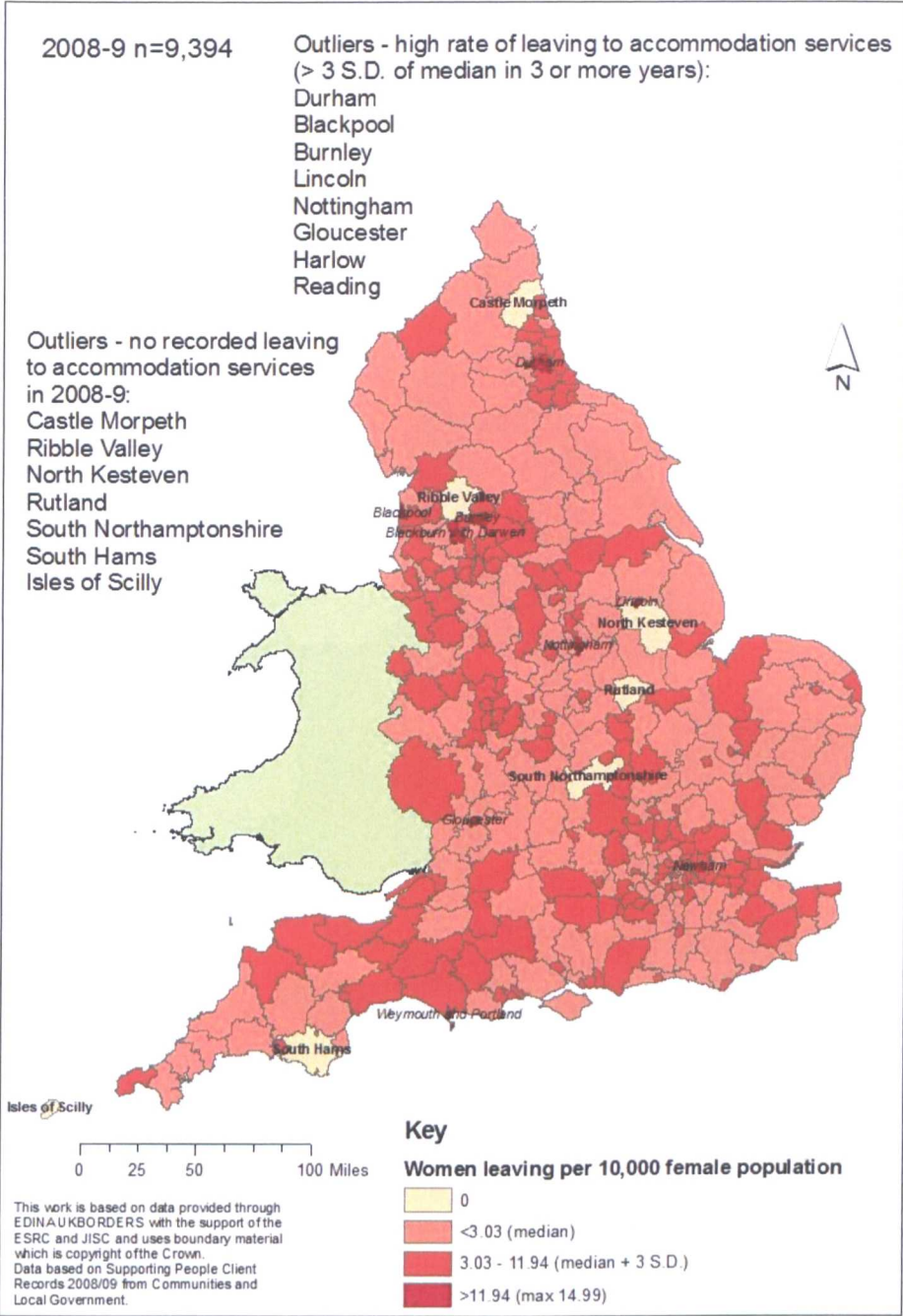


Figure 5.10: Local Authority Map of women leaving to access accommodation services

N.B. Seven Local Authorities have no women recorded as leaving to accommodation services in 2008-9, but only the Isles of Scilly have no women recorded as leaving to support services as a whole in 2008-9.

In terms of arriving to access accommodation services, Figure 5.11 shows that all the Local Authorities with the highest (outlier) rates of arriving are next to one or more Local Authorities which have no women arriving, because they do not provide domestic violence accommodation services. This suggests that the rate of arriving is about service provision rather than inherent in the place.

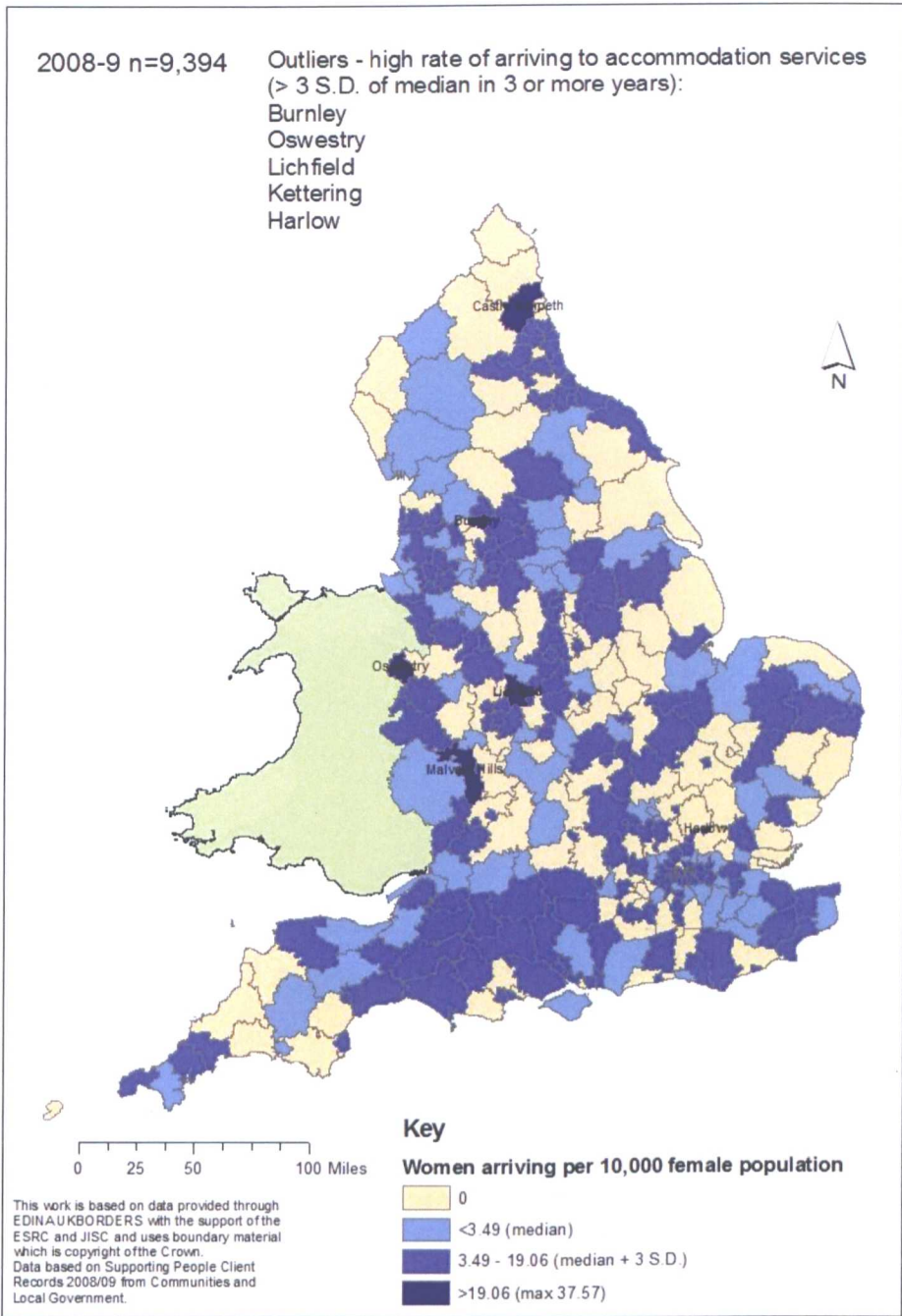


Figure 5.11: Local Authority Map of women arriving to access accommodation services

The Local Authority Map of residential mobility - Figure 5.12 - shows that the highest rates of residential mobility to accommodation services are recorded in more urban areas, particularly larger cities; with no outliers in the South West, or in most of the East from Yorkshire southwards. There are no outliers in terms of residential mobility in individual London Boroughs, though relocation within London as a whole is high (as discussed later).

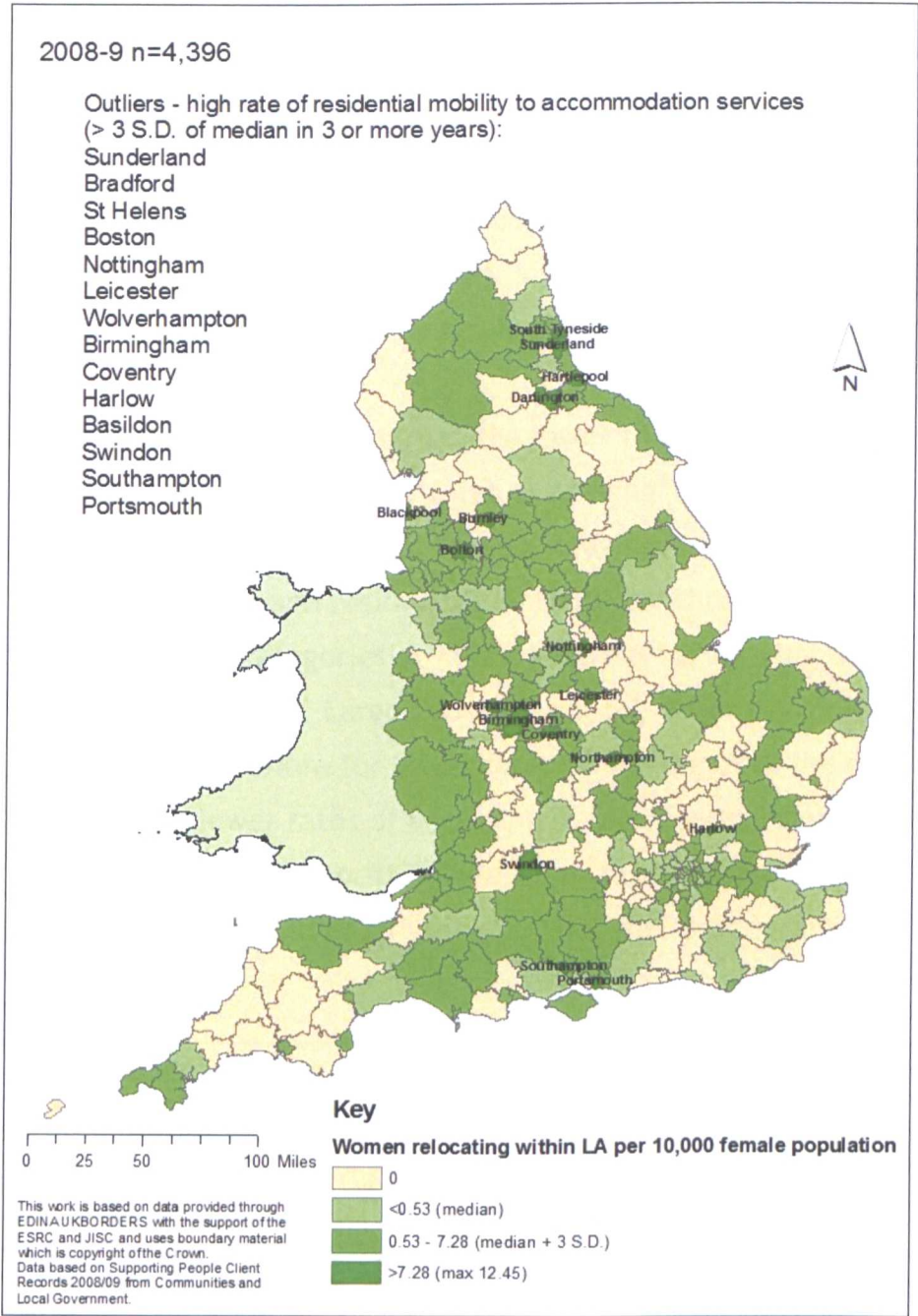


Figure 5.12: Local Authority Map of women relocating within a Local Authority to access accommodation services



## ***Local Authority characteristics and leaving, arriving and residential mobility***

The Local Authorities Dataset was used to consider how specific characteristics of local authorities might be associated with different rates of leaving, arriving and residential mobility. Two key classifications of local authorities were used - the Rural-Urban classification and the Area Group classification - which use a range of indicators to group local authorities into six and twelve classes respectively<sup>42</sup>. The Index of Multiple Deprivation Average Score was used to indicate deprivation levels in local authorities, with higher scores indicating more deprivation. In addition, data on local authorities' population size (female population), geographical size (area), and specialist service provision (number of domestic violence services) (Coy et al., 2009) were used.

The more rural the local authority, the lower the rates of leaving and residential mobility, but also the lower the rates of arriving<sup>43</sup>. Overall, Other Urban authorities averaged the highest rates of leaving, residential mobility and arriving. For leaving and residential mobility, all three categories of Urban exceeded all three categories of Rural; whereas for arriving the order was Other Urban, Significant Rural, Large Urban, Rural-50, Major Urban and Rural-80. The general trend is therefore for lower rates of leaving from the more rural authorities, and lower rates of accessing services within more rural authorities, but that Major Urban authorities have lower rates of arriving than either other urban areas (Large or Other Urban) or all but the most rural areas.

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<sup>42</sup> See Table 3.2 - at the end of Chapter 3 - for details of classifications and indices used.

<sup>43</sup> Local Authorities dataset (n=354). Test for association between Rural-Urban Classification of LA and the rate of Residential Mobility to accommodation services - Correlation. For 2008-9 Kendall's tau b correlation coefficient = -0.249 ( $p < 0.01$ ) indicating a quite weak association that the more rural the LA the lower rate of Residential Mobility within the LA.

Test for association between Rural-Urban Classification of LA and the rate of Leaving to accommodation services - Correlation. For 2008-9 Kendall's tau b correlation coefficient = -0.340 ( $p < 0.01$ ) indicating a moderate association that the more rural the LA the lower rate of Leaving.

Test for association between Rural-Urban Classification of LA and the rate of Arriving to accommodation services - Correlation. For 2008-9 Kendall's tau b correlation coefficient = -0.156 ( $p < 0.01$ ) indicating a weak association that the more rural the LA the lower rate of Arriving.

Similarly, as rural local authorities tend to be larger, the larger the geographical area of a local authority, the lower the rates of leaving, residential mobility and arriving<sup>44</sup>. Rural Local Authorities tend to have fewer services (including specialist domestic violence services), and require greater travel distances to access services (McCarry & Williamson, 2009), and this could therefore suggest that the lower rates are due to fewer options for women. Local authorities with higher populations show no difference in rates of arriving, but do show higher rates of residential mobility, and slightly higher rates of leaving, suggesting the greater contact and interaction within a larger population might enable local service options (or options to move away) to be accessed more easily<sup>45</sup>.

Local Authorities with more specialist services tend to have higher rates of residential mobility and leaving, but also somewhat higher rates of arriving. This suggests that the presence of services does not simply enable (or even encourage) women to arrive; but that services also assist women living in the area to take appropriate options - whether to relocate locally or to move elsewhere<sup>46</sup>. The role of specialist services in providing women with options,

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<sup>44</sup> Local Authorities dataset (n=354). Test for association between LA area and the rate of Residential Mobility to accommodation services - Correlation. For 2008-9 Pearson's correlation coefficient = -0.208 ( $p < 0.01$ ) indicating a quite weak association that the larger the LA the lower rate of Residential Mobility within the LA.

Test for association between LA area and the rate of Leaving to accommodation services - Correlation. For 2008-9 Pearson's correlation coefficient = -0.388 ( $p < 0.01$ ) indicating a moderate association that the larger the LA the lower rate of Leaving.

Test for association between LA area and the rate of Arriving to accommodation services - Correlation. For 2008-9 Pearson's correlation coefficient = -0.179 ( $p < 0.01$ ) indicating a weak association that the larger the LA the lower rate of Arriving.

<sup>45</sup> Local Authorities dataset (n=354). Test for association between Female Population aged 15+ and the rate of Residential Mobility to accommodation services - Correlation. For 2008-9 Pearson's correlation coefficient = 0.349 ( $p < 0.01$ ) indicating a moderate association that the larger the population the higher rate of Residential Mobility within the LA.

Test for association between Female Population aged 15+ and the rate of Leaving to accommodation services - Correlation. For 2008-9 Pearson's correlation coefficient = 0.183 ( $p < 0.01$ ) indicating a weak association that the larger the population the higher rate of Leaving.

Test for association between Female Population aged 15+ and the rate of Arriving to accommodation services - Correlation.  $p > 0.01$  therefore not statistically significant.

<sup>46</sup> Local Authorities dataset (n=354). Test for association between Number of specialist domestic violence services and the rate of Residential Mobility to accommodation services - Correlation. For 2008-9 Pearson's correlation coefficient = 0.347 ( $p < 0.01$ ) indicating a moderate association that the more domestic violence services the higher rate of Residential Mobility within the LA. Test for association between Number of specialist domestic violence services and the rate of Leaving to accommodation services - Correlation. For 2008-9 Pearson's correlation coefficient = 0.358 ( $p < 0.01$ ) indicating a moderate association that the more domestic violence services the higher rate of Leaving.

and supporting them through their journeys, will be discussed in the next chapter.

Higher rates of residential mobility and leaving, but also somewhat higher rates of arriving are similarly found in more Deprived Local Authorities; suggesting that it is not that women only leave more deprived areas. It is likely that women in these areas may have fewer private resources to relocate and are therefore more likely to access publically funded services, whether to help them arrive or to leave, or to move within the same Local Authority<sup>47</sup>.

On average, Local Authorities in the Area Group Classification 'Prospering Southern England' have the lowest rate of residential mobility, leaving and arriving; and this again may suggest different balances between using personal resources and accessing public resources. Centres with Industry average the highest rate of residential mobility (followed by Industrial Hinterlands) and also the highest rate of arriving (followed by New and Growing Towns); whereas inner London Boroughs (especially London Cosmopolitan) average the highest rate of leaving; even if only to neighbouring London Boroughs. Such differences are confirmed by women in Industrial authorities (Centres with Industry and Industrial Hinterlands) being most likely to relocate within such authorities, whilst women from London Cosmopolitan, London Suburbs, Prospering Southern England and Prospering Smaller Towns being most likely to migrate across boundaries<sup>48</sup>.

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Test for association between Number of specialist domestic violence services and the rate of Arriving to accommodation services - Correlation. For 2008-9 Pearson's correlation coefficient = 0.232 ( $p < 0.01$ ) indicating a quite weak association that the more domestic violence services the higher rate of Arriving.

<sup>47</sup> Local Authorities dataset ( $n=354$ ). Test for association between IMD Average Score and the rate of Residential Mobility to accommodation services - Correlation. For 2008-9 Pearson's correlation coefficient = 0.456 ( $p < 0.01$ ) indicating a moderate association that the more deprived the LA the higher rate of Residential Mobility within the LA.

Test for association between IMD Average Score and the rate of Leaving to accommodation services - Correlation. For 2008-9 Pearson's correlation coefficient = 0.499 ( $p < 0.01$ ) indicating a moderate association that the more deprived the LA the higher rate of Leaving.

Test for association between IMD Average Score and the rate of Arriving to accommodation services - Correlation. For 2008-9 Pearson's correlation coefficient = 0.194 ( $p < 0.01$ ) indicating a weak association that the more deprived the LA the higher rate of Arriving.

<sup>48</sup> Woman-journeys datasets. Test for association between Area Group Classification of LA and whether or not women crossed LA boundaries to access accommodation services there - Crosstabulation. For 2008-9,  $n=13601$ , Chi-Square = 941.535 ( $df=11$ )  $p < 0.001$  - The association is

In general, where different types of local authority had significantly different rates, it was the rates of all three processes (leaving, arriving and residential mobility) that were higher or lower<sup>49</sup>. However, because England-wide data are only available on women accessing publically funded services, no speculations can be made on whether rates, either of experiencing domestic violence or of relocating without any assistance from such services, vary from place to place.

The Interviewed Women had left places in all six Rural-Urban Classifications, and in ten out of the twelve Area Group Classifications, so provide evidence on a range of places of leaving. They also had travelled to places in five out of the six Rural-Urban Classifications, and six Area Group Classifications, including the two not previously travelled from. Many reflected that at the point of leaving the abuse they were not thinking about the place they were leaving, nor about where they were going; they were just thinking about being safe.

*I didn't mind wherever they put me - I just wanted somewhere I could go and sleep with my baby; and just put my head to sleep without walking on eggshells, without the door opening and you jumping - oh my God, he's here! You know all those feelings when you are afraid of somebody and scared of somebody - somebody who's so unpredictable. I just wanted to go somewhere and just sit down and rest - because I was so tired; I wasn't sleeping for days and days - I was in such a state of mind. [Gloria - 1:7:31]*

### ***London as a place to leave or arrive in***

Despite its role as a transport hub, and experiencing high levels of immigration in general, London - as a whole - experienced net leaving in terms of women accessing services due to domestic violence. No London Boroughs are outliers

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therefore statistically significant, and Cramer's  $V = 0.263$  suggests that the association is quite weak. The adjusted standardised residuals indicate that woman-journeys were most likely to be Residential Mobility within Centres with Industry (a.r. = +18.6) and Industrial Hinterlands (a.r. = +12.0), with Migration most likely from London Cosmopolitan (a.r. = +13.0), London Suburbs (a.r. = +9.4), Prospering Southern England (a.r. = +10.9) and Prospering Smaller Towns (a.r. = +8.6).

<sup>49</sup> At the County level - which has not been analysed here - Fielding (2012, p.27) identified a similar positive correlation between in- and out-migration; and noted that this contradicted standard economic theory on migration rates in Britain.



(> 3 standard deviation of median in three or more years) in terms of rate of leaving or arriving<sup>50</sup>, and London does not stand out as distinctive on the Local Authority Maps. However, boundaries between London Boroughs tend to be more administrative than obvious on the ground, and women may cross boundaries without realising it, suggesting it may be appropriate to consider London as a whole. Overall, three-quarters of journeys by London women stay within London, being either residential mobility within a Borough (32.1%) or to elsewhere in London (43.4%).

The Interviewed Women included those who had left London, arrived in London, and relocated within London. Jenny reflected how important it was for her to be able to stay in London.

*I didn't have a clue where I was going - first of all they offered me a place in Hertfordshire and it was just totally out of my comfort zone. I'm used to being in the city - I've been living in London all my life - so it was just like - Hertfordshire - wow - I'm not going down there! It was really scary!*

*I was just thinking - if I go down there, how am I going to get from A to B? They haven't really got TFL [Transport for London] down there [laughs] - like the buses come every hour or something like that! [laughs] You know - and there's no local shops or anything like that; and it's just totally out of my comfort zone. I just don't know what it's like to be in the country - I'm so used to being in the city, and having 24-hour shops and stuff like that [laughs]. And it was bad enough that I weren't near my family; but to be even further away from them and it would be really difficult - I felt that I'm going to be even more isolated down there than I am now. I had to think ahead.*

*But I think - once I knew I was in London, because obviously it's a really big place - so, because I went right to the other side of it but I was still really at home; and the place - it was safe where I was. So I felt so much better being there. [Jenny - 1:4:37/1:5:16]*

In contrast, amongst the women who had left London - despite initially not wanting to - several had come to appreciate being in a smaller, quieter place. In the Groupwork Process in a South Coast town, women reflected on getting used to somewhere very different from London.

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<sup>50</sup> Newham, marked on Figure 5.10, is only an outlier in 2008-9.

Mia: It's calm. In other places they're always rushing - you don't have all the hustle and bustle here.

Samantha: When I came here - at night - I couldn't hear a thing. I couldn't sleep! Even now I find it hard to sleep - I had to put my telly on, because I can't hear nothing. Like - at home - I'd go back and turn my telly on and there'd be [sirens] and shouting.

Mia: The other night half past twelve you said - I'll find somewhere open.

Samantha: I had to wait till six thirty and the corner shop opened.<sup>51</sup>

## **Women's agency in where they go**

Many of the Interviewed Women emphasised that they had left a place that they really liked, and would not have wanted to leave but for the abuse. However some, and particularly the Asian women who took part in the Groupwork Process (and were relatively new to the UK), highlighted that they had not got to know their original area because they had been kept isolated by the abuser. Some were therefore largely indifferent to the place that they had left, and did not know of any other places in the UK; whilst many had had no choice in the place they initially travelled to.

*I think there aren't many women's refuges in England; so the ones they called - which were nearby - they hadn't got places; so wherever they get you a place they put you there. So this was OK - it wasn't very far away. I was dreading to drive to Birmingham - because if they found a place there; and that's how it was. If they call Birmingham and there's a place, they send you there. [Gloria - 1:11:21]*

*I didn't know where I was going. All I used to do was I used to pin-point it this way - I don't want to go to Liverpool or Birmingham because it's too cold! [laughs] That's the way I thought, because I'd lived in California for so many years; so even the regular weather like this weather to me is like chilly weather! So I just knew that I didn't want to go anywhere that was cold; and I wasn't sure if I was going to have a roof over my head, so it definitely had to have a climate which is not as bad as up North! Up North - it's terrible! [laughs]*

*Because the reason why I went to Heathrow Airport was that I didn't know where in London was safe. And it was when the riots were going on in London - so I didn't know where was safe. [Cathy - 1:5:28/1:7:22]*

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<sup>51</sup> Quote from a session of the Groupwork which was recorded and transcribed.

The Helpline Survey shows that under a third (29.0%) of women callers who were trying to relocate because of domestic violence could be offered more than one choice of place to go, and that over a quarter (26.2%) could be offered no service place at that point (see Figure 4.9 in the previous chapter). However, most women callers tried to exercise some agency, with just over half wanting to go somewhere they knew (51.0%), and somewhere relatively near (53.6%), whilst others wanted to go somewhere unknown (2.6%), and far (13.2%). Drawing on Hanson and Pratt's (1995) work (discussed in Chapter 2), women can therefore be understood as trying to use space and place as a resource to achieve safety; whilst experiencing considerable constraints on their options for mobility. There was no statistically significant association of women's demographics (age, disability, ethnic origin or whether or not she had children) with whether women wanted somewhere near or far, known or unknown, suggesting that the issues were about very personal circumstances.

Many Interviewed Women, and most women within the Refuge Survey, had made more than one relocation move to escape the abuser; either because of continued threat and harassment, or following a reconciliation. Relocation was therefore most commonly forced by the abuser and there had been little opportunity to consider where to go, beyond the priority of it being a place the abuser would not think to look, and a place whereby they wouldn't put friends or family at risk.

*I just said - can I have a single ticket for myself and my daughter to Victoria coach station. That's as far as I thought. It wasn't until I was actually near the station that I thought to actually phone somebody to let them know that I'm actually here. So I ended up at my dad's. [Louise - 1:3:6]*

*I wasn't sure what was going on - I was very scared. I wasn't sure where I was going - I hadn't heard of the area before. I just had instructions - I just had to follow - I didn't know what to expect. [Faith - 1:3:17]*

*And we [Helen and her daughter] had a look on the internet when they sent - we had an idea of roughly where it was, because we had a post code for the meeting point; so we put that into the internet and we had*

*a look. And we'd never heard of it - so we thought good! [laughs]  
[Helen - 1:7:33]*

*I thought he'd always find me; and that he'd be violent towards my family if I did go - because I've tried many times before. And when the police came they said - "you can go back to your parents"; and I said to them - "no, there's no way, because he always finds me". "You should go to a friend" - but I said - "I don't want to put this on any of my friends".[Violet - 1:2:14]*

*I wanted to be near enough that my family could visit me; but not on top of them so that - in case he did find me - because one of them's got children; and I wouldn't put them through it. But - lucky enough - he hasn't. [Caroline - 1:2:40]*

Unlike other internal migration in the UK, therefore, women's agency was more about leaving the situation than aiming for any specific place where they wanted to go. Their journeys were not about wanting to change the type of place where they lived at all.

### ***Similar and different types of places***

Most Interviewed Women ended up in different types of places from where they left the abuser, however, their accounts did not indicate that they had planned this. In terms of Area Group Classification, their journeys included Cathy's from 'New and Growing Towns' to 'London Centre', Anna's from 'London Cosmopolitan' to 'Prospering Smaller Towns', and Koli's from 'Prospering Southern England' to 'Centres with Industry'. Tracy travelled from 'Coastal and Countryside' to 'Prospering Smaller Towns', whereas Louise travelled from 'Regional Centres' to 'Coastal and Countryside'. There was also a slight tendency to travel to more rural Local Authorities than the one they left, however the pattern was mixed, and, for example, Sarah travelled from a Significant Rural authority to a Large Urban one, and Manj travelled from a Large Urban authority to another Large Urban authority.

In contrast, the Woman-Journeys datasets indicate that women were more likely to travel to the same type of local authority when they accessed accommodation services. In terms of Rural and Urban Local Authorities, women were

statistically significantly more likely to go to a similarly Rural or Urban Local Authority to the one that they left (Table 5.3). Women from Major Urban authorities were most likely to go to other Major Urban authorities, women from Large Urban to go to another Large Urban; and women from the most rural (Rural-80) authorities were most likely to go to another Rural-80 authority. In terms of the more intermediate classifications of Local Authority, women were most likely to go to slightly more rural authorities, but also more likely to go to the same classification, except for Significant Rural who were more likely to go to slightly more urban authorities. The strongest association was that of women from Major Urban areas going to other Major Urban areas, and unlikely to go to any other Rural-Urban Classification of Local Authority.

Table 5.3: Cross-tabulation for migration journeys - Rural-Urban Classification of Local Authority

Migration journeys to accommodation services						
2008-9	Origin LA type					
Destination LA type	Major Urban	Large Urban	Other Urban	Significant Rural	Rural - 50	Rural - 80
Major Urban	42.1	-16.4	-15.8	-9.6	-9.2	-12.7
Large Urban	-13.2	16.8	*	2.5	*	*
Other Urban	-9.3	*	5.2	3.2	*	5.9
Significant Rural	-11.7	5.1	4.8	*	4.7	2.4
Rural - 50	-14.6	2.4	6.7	6.4	*	5.5
Rural - 80	-11.9	*	6.3	*	8.7	6.2

n=9,205	Chi-Square = 2132.920 (df=25) p<0.001 Kendall's tau b = 0.310
	Strongest positive association for each Origin type
	Other positive association > +2 adjusted standardised residuals
	Strongest negative association for each Origin type
	Other negative association > -2 adjusted standardised residuals
*	Association < ±2 adjusted standardised residuals

There is a similar, if more complex, pattern of statistically significant association between the Area Group Classification of the Local Authority women travelled from and to (Table 5.4).

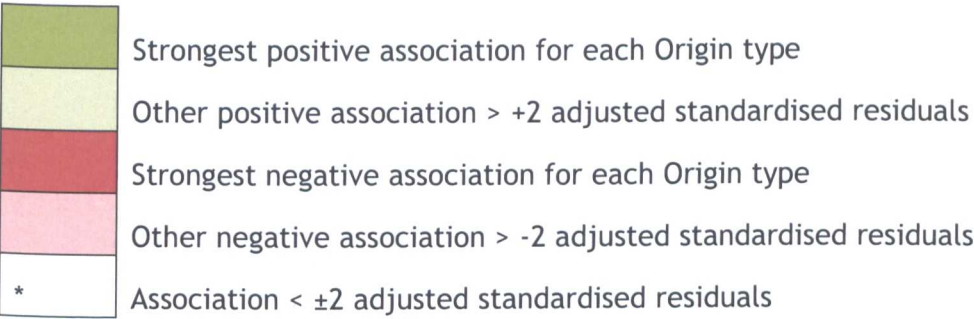


Table 5.4: Cross-tabulation for migration journeys - Area Group Classification of Local Authority

2008-9	Origin LA type											
Destin-ation LA type	Regional Centres	Centres with Industry	Thriving London Periphery	London Suburbs	London Centre	London Cosmopolitan	Prospering Smaller Towns	New and Growing Towns	Prospering Southern England	Coastal & Countryside	Industrial Hinterlands	Manufacturing Towns
Regional Centres	2.7	-4.9	*	-5.1	*	-3.9	*	*	*	9.8	3.5	*
Centres with Ind.	-3.2	33.2	-5.4	-7.5	-5.3	-9.3	*	-7.4	-9.4	-6.0	-2.6	3.5
Thriving London Periph.	-4.7	-7.0	*	11.7	8.2	7.4	-3.9	*	6.4	*	-4.6	-4.5
London Suburbs	-4.5	-5.8	2.4	13.4	13.8	20.8	-7.6	-2.3	*	-5.1	-5.7	-5.8
London Centre	-4.2	-5.0	*	10.1	7.0	24.8	-6.2	-2.1	-2.5	-3.6	-4.4	-4.7
London Cosmopo litan	-5.6	-6.4	2.4	17.9	13.8	19.2	-5.9	-3.5	-3.2	-4.8	-5.1	-5.3
Prosperi ng Smaller Towns	8.4	-2.6	-2.4	-10.9	-6.7	-11.0	13.1	2.3	-4.4	3.9	-2.6	2.7
New & Growing Towns	-3.4	-9.9	*	4.5	*	*	2.2	19.2	5.8	-2.1	-7.5	-4.8
Prosp. Southern England	-2.5	-10.6	15.1	5.9	*	*	-5.4	5.6	24.6	-2.9	-6.3	-7.0
Coastal & Countrys ide	2.8	-5.5	*	-4.3	-2.5	-4.2	*	*	*	20.5	-2.0	*
Industria l Hinterla nds	5.8	-3.3	-4.2	-7.3	-4.5	-6.7	2.3	-8.0	-6.6	-4.3	30.1	4.2
Manufac turing Towns	*	9.1	-3.9	-6.4	-4.5	-6.6	*	-4.6	-5.4	-3.6	4.1	14.4

n=9,205

Chi-Square = 8128.630 (df=121) p<0.01 Cramer's V = 0.283



Women were most likely to go to the same type of Local Authority as the one they left for seven out of the 12 categories, and more likely to do so for all but ‘Thriving London Periphery’, where they were most likely to go elsewhere in ‘Prospering Southern England’. The strongest associations were for women to go to the same type of Industrial area (Centres with Industry or Industrial Hinterlands), between authorities in ‘Prospering Southern England’ or between ‘Coastal and Countryside’ authorities.

Within the three London categories, women were most likely to go to another London category and least likely to go to ‘Prospering Smaller Towns’. In contrast, women from Regional Centres were most likely to go to ‘Prospering Smaller Towns’. In general, women were least likely to go to the most dissimilar types of Local Authority, such as from London to small towns, and from ‘Prospering Southern England’ to ‘Centres with Industry’, or ‘Centres with Industry’ or ‘Manufacturing Towns’ to ‘Prospering Southern England’. Overall, therefore, it is clear that women’s journeys to access services do not tend to be about changing the type of place where they live.

Whilst there is no evidence in the Woman-Journeys Datasets about whether women are choosing where they go, in the Refuge Survey only one move was recorded as being a positive choice of place - all other moves were to escape the abuser, or to move away from other local connections, and there had often been no choice of location. However, after the initial move to a refuge, some Interviewed Women highlighted that they were trying to exercise agency in choosing the type of place they wanted to be longer term; whilst each wanting very different things.

*So I've thought the suburbs - somewhere like this; one - he's not going to be looking for me in this area, because it's far from where he'd think I'd be; another one - I have support - because [my daughter] has [friend] and I have [friend]; and I've other friends I've met through her.*

*And obviously he'd be looking for me in [city in Wales]. And I couldn't be in [city on coast] because I think I'd be seen. So - this is still busy, but it's a villagey-feel as well - if that makes any sense. I don't think I'd like to be stuck in the middle of the countryside somewhere; and I like being by the coast - and it's better for [daughter] being by the coast, because she suffers with really bad hayfever in the summer. So when she has that her eyes swell up and everything - so that's another reason I try to live by the coast. [Maud - 1:11:44/2:8:13]*

*I'd prefer to stay in London - I have friends there. My manager said he could discuss with HR to hold the job open for me. So I wanted to be somewhere with easy access to London - I want to go back to work. I want to be busy - I don't like to stay at home. [Deborah - 1:4:18]*

*I wouldn't find it bearable to live in Wood Green or Finsbury Park, because I'm not used to that kind of place... I come from a small town - [East Anglian town] - and Wood Green is crushed with people. [Cathy - 2:1:40]*

Other Interviewed Women wanted to stay in the place where they had gone to a refuge, even though they had not initially known or chosen that area; and it was a different type of place to what they had known before. However, the Interviewed Workers also emphasised the difficulty when women have had no choice of place to go, and end up in a type of place where they do not want to stay. Interviewed Workers talked of the importance of explaining to women the reality that they might initially have to go to the only available refuge place, but that subsequent moves would be possible. Just as the Interviewed Women came from a wide range of types of places, they were seeking different types of places where they wanted to stay: from Aliya in East London to Elizabeth in rural Sussex.

*I don't want to move into any other area. Because - even though it's very crowded - I enjoy it; it's like Green Street [well-known street of Asian shops and restaurants in Newham] to me! [laughs] [Aliya - 1:7:37]*

*I'm surrounded by fields and farms. The town centre is quite nice, but it's comparatively small - but it's got most of the shops that you would*



*need. I'm near a big Tesco's - I'm half a mile from town - but it's nice; I like it.*  
[Elizabeth - 2:4:11]

Overall, therefore, there is a complex picture of the significance of place in women's domestic violence journeys, with individual women having little opportunity to think about places at the point of leaving, and limited options even at later stages of their journeys. However, even unchosen journeys from place to place can be mapped and measured, to enable a consideration of the patterns and distances involved.

## **5.2. Patterns**

In addition to the patterns mapped by Local Authority above (Figure 5.10, Figure 5.11, Figure 5.12), the data enable an exploration of the patterns of women's journeys to services in terms of flows. These flows are considered at a range of scales: related to characteristics of local authorities, to demographic characteristics of women, and to their overall net effect nationally. Lines on a map can imply smooth, straightforward journeys; but the accounts of the Interviewed Women enable a consideration of the patterns and practicalities of their individual journeys over time and distance.

### ***Flows to and from different types of places***

Though differing in the number of women travelling per year, the Flow Maps show that flows to and from each local authority are very similar in terms of patterns, directions, strengths and lengths of flows. This is the case across more rural and urban local authorities, even if the absolute numbers of woman-journeys differ. The longest journeys are generally travelled by only one or two women, with denser flows being to and from shorter distances. For two-tier authorities, the majority of journeys may be from within the same County; whereas the shortest journeys are more likely to and from Major Urban Unitary Councils, because journeys of a length that would be residential mobility within a more rural local authority cross the boundaries of the smaller area of urban councils. As well as the similarity of patterns of flows to and from differently

rural or urban local authorities, the patterns are also not strikingly different for different regions within England. To illustrate the similar flow patterns to access services in very different types of local authorities, the following flow maps show the journeys to a Major Urban Local Authority (Figure 5.13) and the journeys to a Rural-80 Local Authority (Figure 5.14).

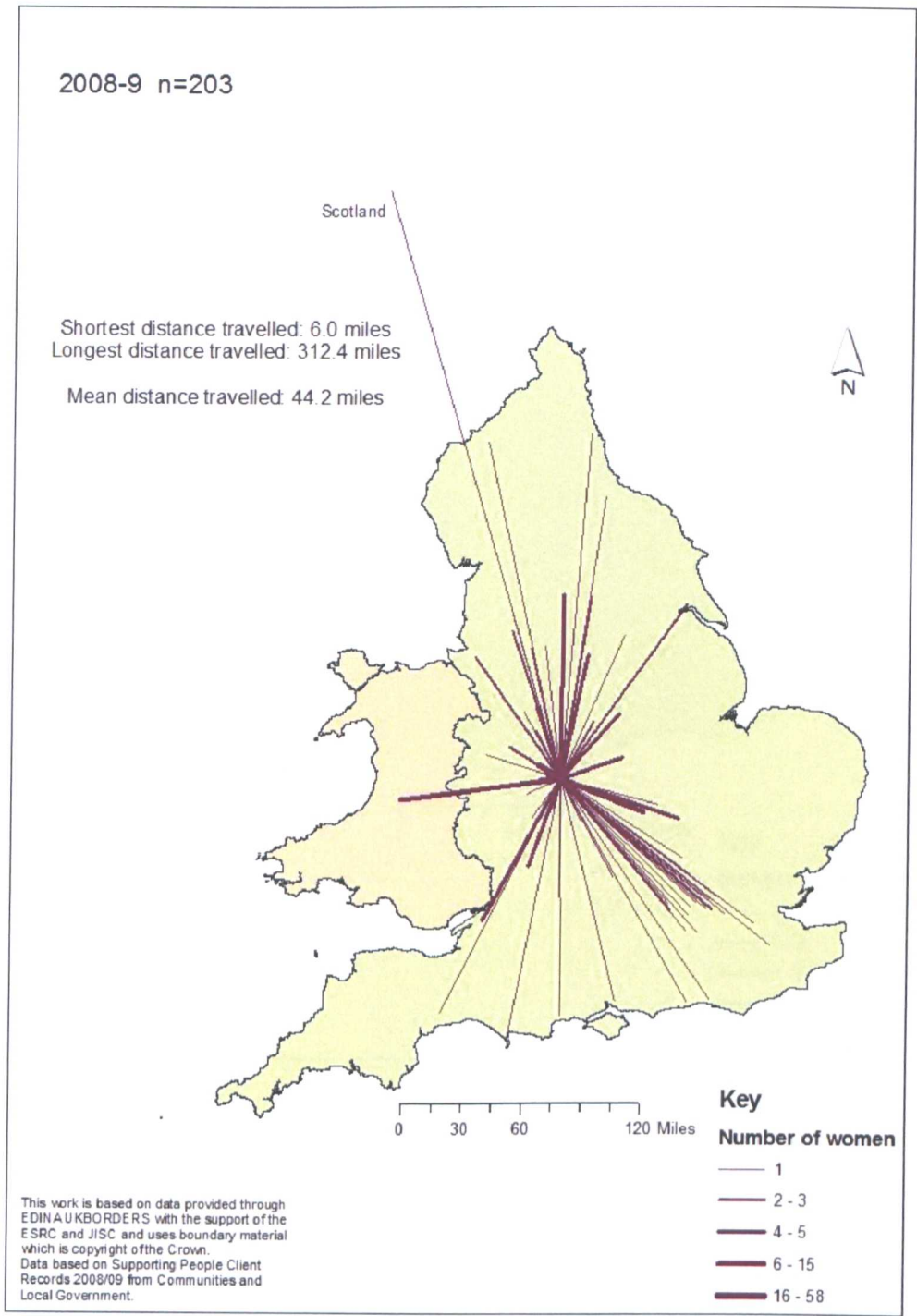


Figure 5.13: Flow Map to a Major Urban Local Authority

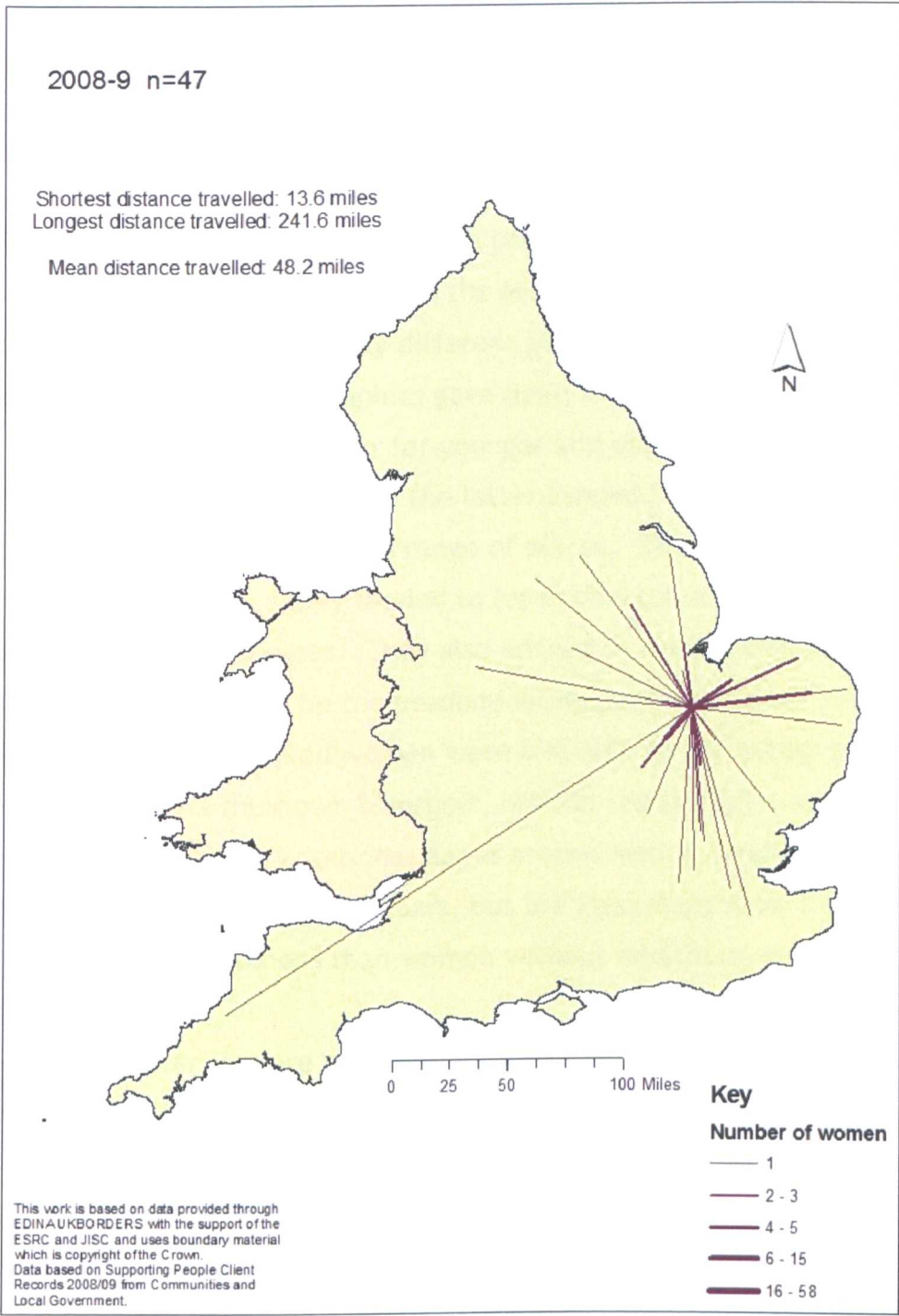


Figure 5.14: Flow Map to a Rural-80 Local Authority

The longest journey to the Rural-80 authority was 242 miles, and this compared to 312 miles (or 176 miles within England) to the Major Urban authority. The shortest journey to the Rural-80 authority was 14 miles, and this compared to 6 miles to the Major Urban authority. Overall, despite being very different types

of local authority, the mean journey lengths were similar: 48 miles to the Rural-80 authority and 44 miles to the Major Urban authority.

### ***Journeys by demographically different women***

Flow Maps for the Local Authority with the largest number of women leaving and arriving (a Major Urban authority in the Midlands) could be broken down demographically to identify any different patterns for different groups of women. In general, demographics gave little indication of flow patterns. The flow patterns were very similar for younger and older women, and for women with or without children, though the latter tended to travel slightly shorter distances from a slightly smaller range of places. The numbers of Disabled women were small, but they tended to leave only towards the North and West, and travel shorter distances. They also arrived in smaller proportion from the South-East, which would be the predominating public transport route, which might suggest that Disabled women were less able to use public transport and were travelling via their own transport, or with the transport assistance of agencies. Women with additional needs around Mental Health, Alcohol or other Drugs were also very low in numbers, but the Flow Maps show them travelling generally shorter distances than women without additional needs.

There is, however, a more distinctly different pattern of woman-journeys on comparing the Flow Maps of different ethnic groups - Figure 5.15 and Figure 5.16. Ethnic minority women showed a stronger flow from North West and South East, whilst White British women travelled more strongly to and from the North East and South West. Within broad ethnic categories, Black women travelled more strongly to the South East, and from the North East and South East; whilst Asian women travelled more to the closer Midlands and North East, and travelled from Wales and Scotland, as well as the South East.

2008-9 n=280

Key:

Ethnic Minority woman-journeys: RED  
White British woman-journeys: OLIVE

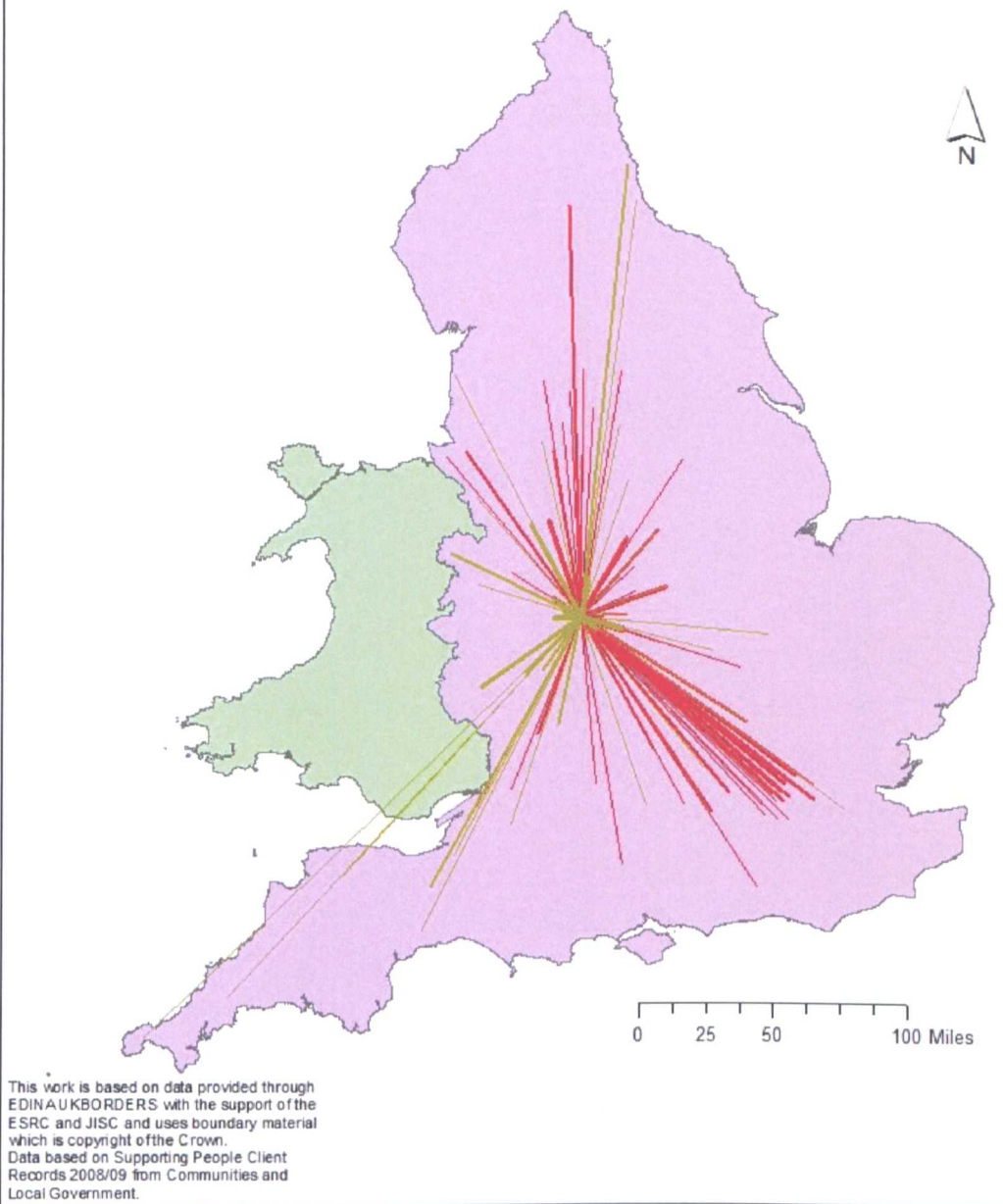
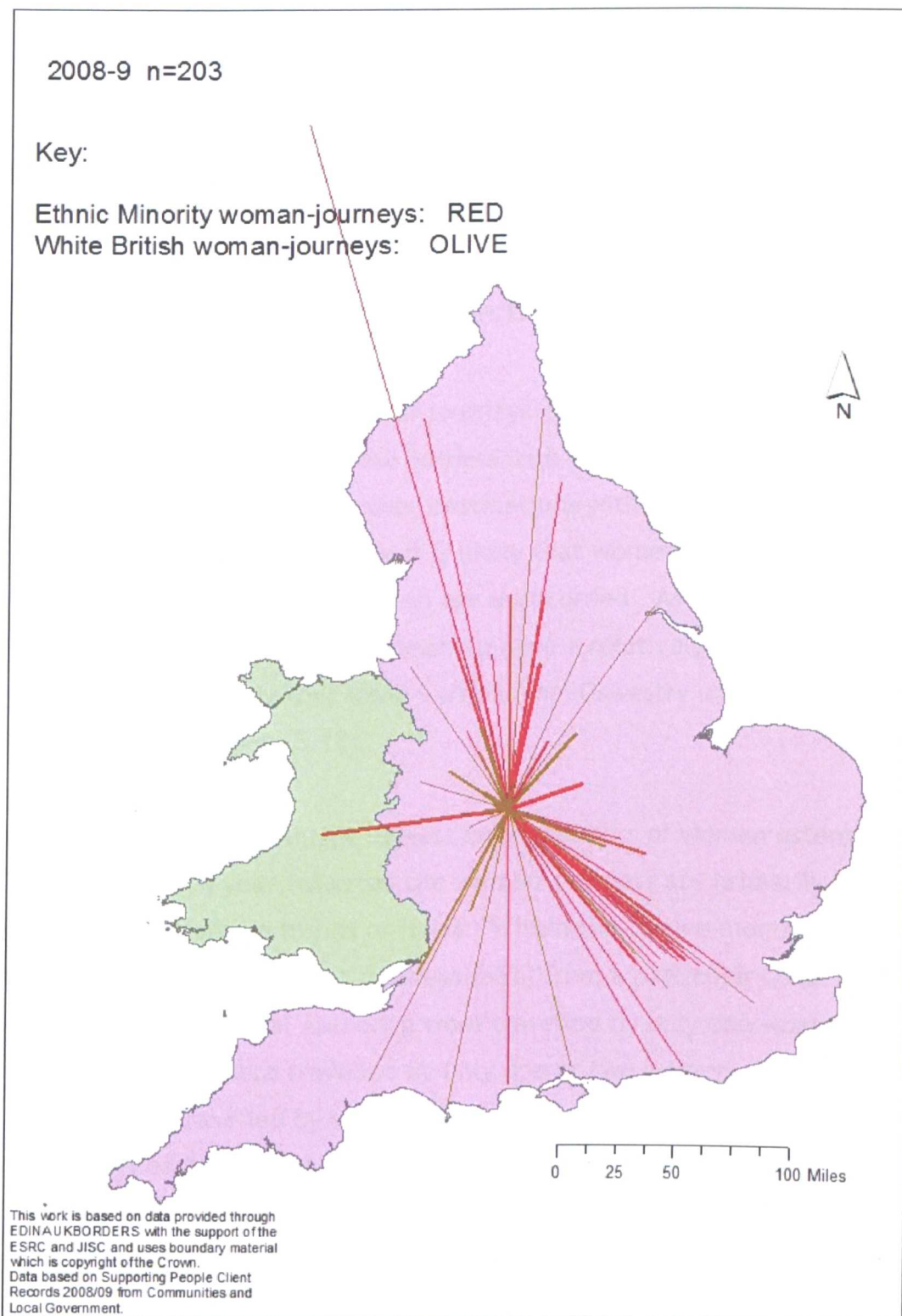


Figure 5.15: Flow Map of White British and Ethnic Minority women from a Major Urban Local Authority





**Figure 5.16: Flow Map of White British and Ethnic Minority women to a Major Urban Local Authority**

Such an X pattern of NE-SW and NW-SE corridors somewhat reflects the population distributions of ethnic minorities and White British, as well as

women's and agencies' perception of this in deciding or advising where to go. Given that the flow pattern is similar for both women leaving and women arriving, it is likely to relate to where women of different ethnic origins live, and a continuation of that distribution in leaving domestic violence. The pattern suggests women relocating to places of similar ethnic mix to those that they left.

### ***Individual journeys and collective flows***

The Flow Maps show a dense mass of journeys in every direction, only constrained by the coastline or the borders with Wales and Scotland. The Woman-Journeys datasets only cover destinations within England, and there are consequently border effects where it is likely that women travel to services in Wales and Scotland but their journeys are unrecorded. As a result, for example, Oswestry (on the Welsh Border) appears to have a relatively high rate of net arriving, whilst it is likely that some women from Oswestry actually travel to Welsh services (see Figure 5.18).

However, the term 'flow' might suggest large numbers of women ostensibly on the same route each year, whereas the woman-journeys are primarily individual routes rather than strong trends or flows. Within the twelve months of each Woman-Journeys Dataset, most journeys (65%) from a particular Local Authority to another particular Local Authority were travelled by only one woman. Eighty per cent of journeys were travelled by only one or two women, and 98 per cent of journeys were travelled by ten or fewer women. Only three journeys in 2008-09 were travelled by more than thirty women, and this includes journeys to and from all locations within the Local Authorities concerned, so may have been very different routes in reality. Therefore, despite a concentration of journeys that might be expected between transport hubs or highly populated Local Authorities in close proximity to each other, women's individual journeys do not aggregate into large collective flows. This remains the case even within the population concentration of London where the maximum number of women making

ostensibly the same journey was 22 within London, and only 5 into and 6 out of London.

The Flow Maps show the mass of individual journeys, for example from, to and through Oxfordshire in central Southern England in 2008-09 (Figure 5.17). The vast majority of journeys (the thin black lines) were made by only one woman in the twelve month period. This indicates a lack of collective migration - a lack of women travelling from and to the same places.

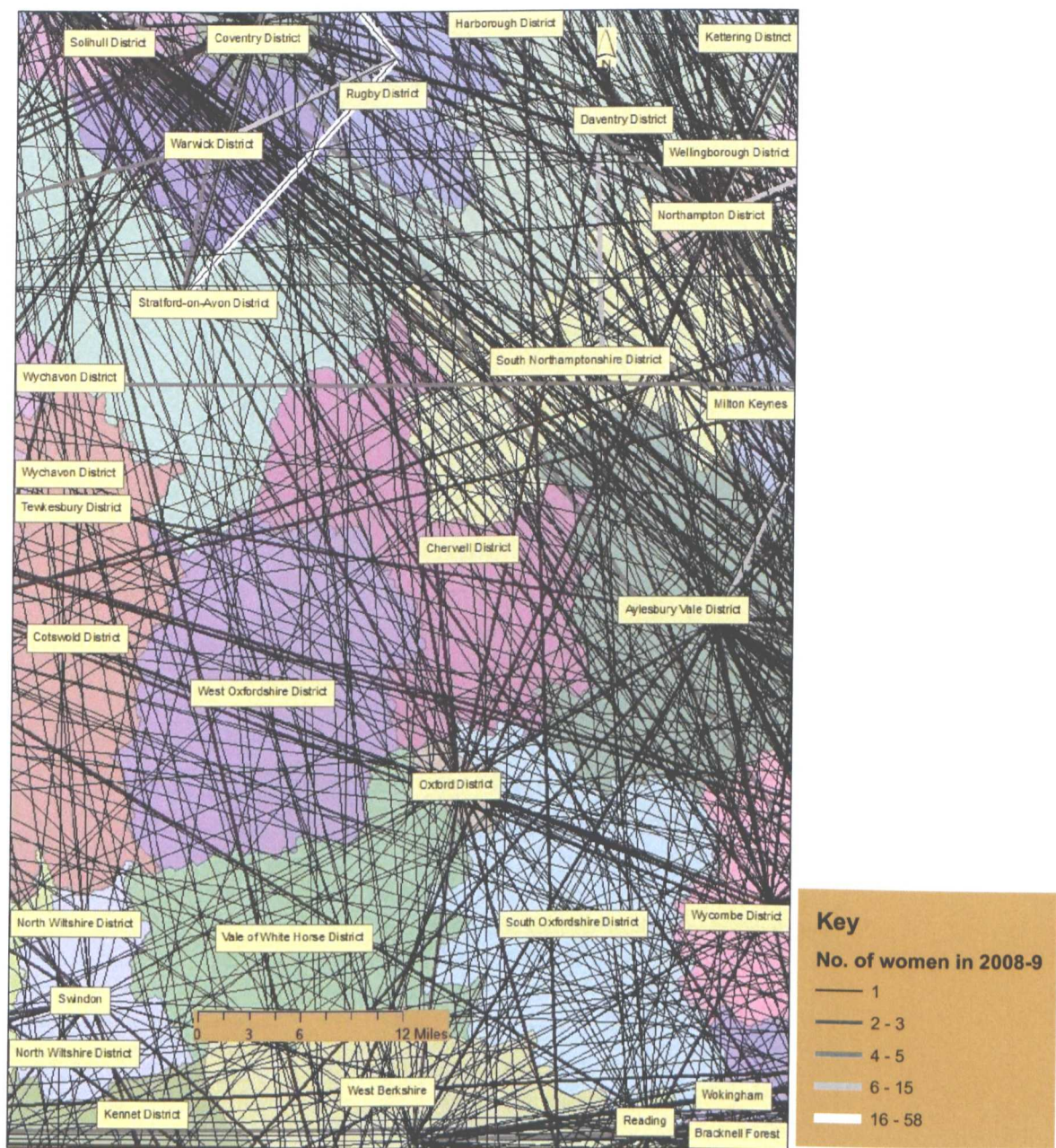


Figure 5.17: Flow Map of the Oxfordshire area



# Net flows and spatial churn

Whilst the individual woman-journeys do not aggregate into collective flows to or from particular Local Authorities, the numbers of women leaving and arriving in each Local Authority can be used to generate a net number arriving/leaving per year, and this can be mapped as a net rate per population (Figure 5.18).

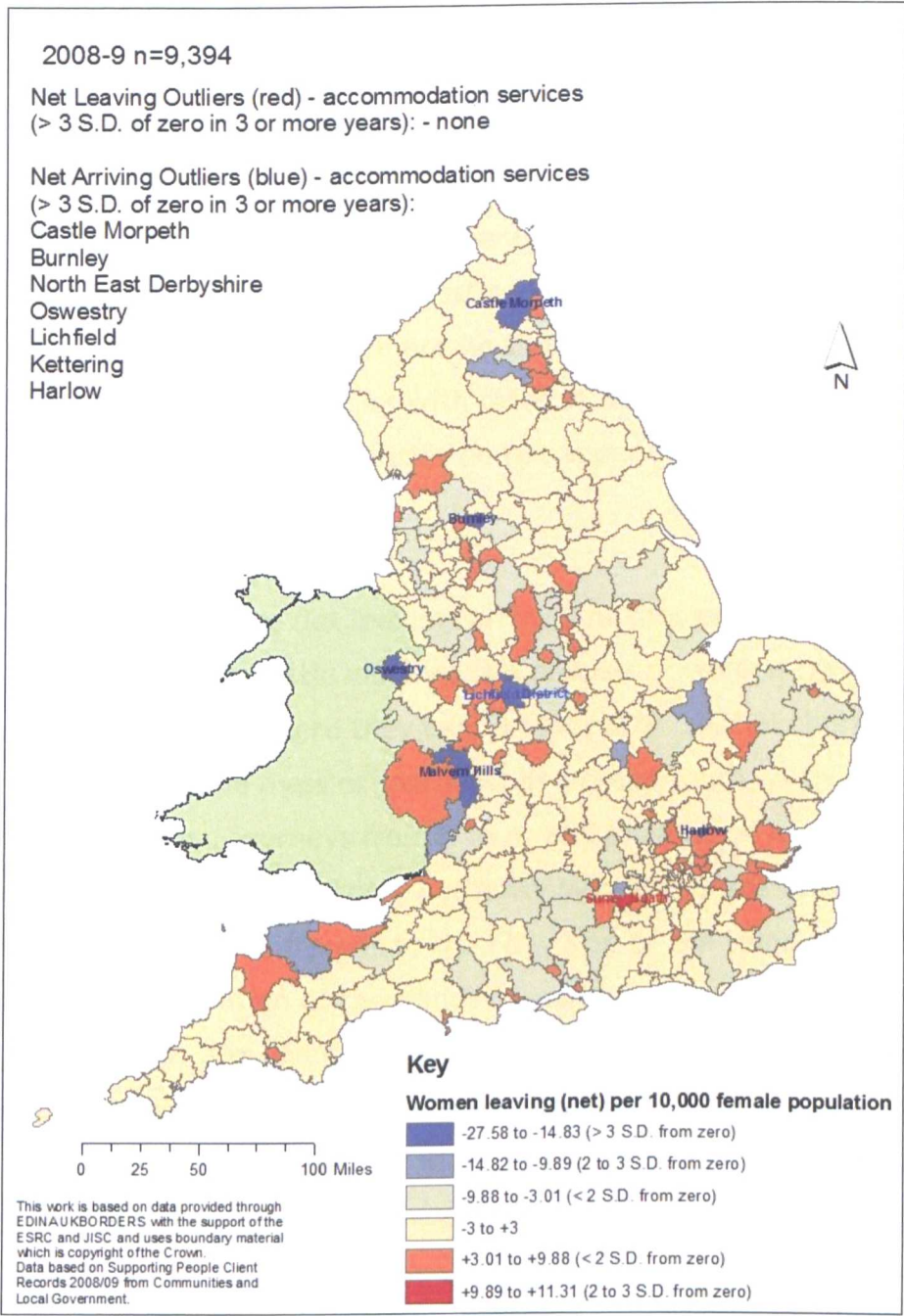


Figure 5.18: Local Authority Map of net leaving/arriving to access accommodation services

For most Local Authorities, the rate of women arriving to access services is very similar to the rate of women leaving to access services elsewhere, giving a net effect of around zero. The outlier authorities (named in Figure 5.18) are distributed around the country, and the pattern is different from the overall pattern of population change due to migration within the UK, suggesting these are different processes from other internal migration (Fotheringham et al., 2004; Fielding, 2012). Local Authorities with higher rates of net leaving are not concentrated, for example, in the North; nor are Local Authorities of net arriving concentrated in the South East. The patterns also do not match those of Rural-Urban Local Authorities, indicating that there is not a rural to urban or urban to rural trend. The pattern of net leaving/arriving also does not relate to the Index of Multiple Deprivation Average Score; or even Local Authorities with higher numbers of specialist domestic violence services. Statistical tests of association confirm that there are no statistically significant associations of Local Authority characteristics with rates of Net Leaving/Arriving<sup>52</sup>. These characteristics of local authorities do not appear to be driving these net migration processes.

However, mapping the net leaving/arriving further emphasises that this migration due to domestic violence is a process of women travelling from everywhere to everywhere they can: a process of 'spatial churn'. Net mapping renders invisible the mass of journeys; as woman-journeys from A to B tend to cancel out woman-journeys from B to A, and most Local Authorities record a net flow of around zero. The Local Authority Map of Oxfordshire (Figure 5.19) therefore looks very different to the Flow Map of the same area (Figure 5.17), and the mass migration of thousands of women a year no longer looks like a migration at all. However, it is important to remember that the limited net effect at the scale of Local Authorities, does not cancel out the actual effect for women and children at the individual scale; nor can the complexity of these individual journeys be fully represented by straight lines on a flow map.

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<sup>52</sup> Local Authorities dataset (n=354). Test for association between Net rate of arriving or leaving to a LA and Rural-Urban Classification, IMD Average Score, LA Area, Female Population aged 15+, Number of specialist domestic violence services, and Net rate of population change due to migration - Correlation. For all  $p > 0.01$  therefore no statistically significant associations.



Figure 5.19: Local Authority Map of net leaving/arriving in the Oxfordshire area

## ***Multiple stages on a journey***

The Woman-Journeys Datasets only cover women's journeys to access support services, whereas the Refuge Survey and Interviewed Women indicate that such travelling is often just one stage of the total journey from the abuser to a place to settle. In the Refuge Survey, a quarter (24.0%) of women who relocated made three or more moves before accessing the service, with up to seven moves being made. The Interviewed Women had made up to ten moves, giving a total of over eighty moves by the twenty women so far. Their journeys included considerable stays in interim places - from months to over a year - as well as considerable travelling; and the total time from first leaving the abuser to relatively settled rehousing ranged from seven months to five years, with an average of two years and two months. For some women, multiple moves were caused by the abuser continuing to track them down, such as for Helen whose ex-partner harassed her after they had separated, and despite her reporting him to the police.

*So I thought - the police - this is all a waste of time; so I decided to move. So I moved - I moved to a different town; but in easy reach of my work still. And I thought that will do it. But he found me there; and it all started again.*

*So I then moved again; and I moved counties this time; and I went and stayed with my daughter. He didn't know where she lived, so I figured that was safe - she'd moved after we'd parted - but he had contact with my younger son by e-mail; and my younger son has special needs, and he told him where I was. So he then found me again; which was when I came here, because I knew that there was no way I was ever going to get away from him unless I could find some way of literally disappearing.*

*I shouldn't have messed about trying to get away from him; going from one place to the other, keeping moving - trying to keep one step ahead of him all the time. I should have gone straight to a refuge - I shouldn't have messed about. I should have left him sooner and I should have gone straight to a refuge; and - do you know what - I would be two/three years down the line now. [Helen - 1:3:15/2:10:8]*

The graph of Helen’s journey over time and distance (Figure 5.20) shows over a year and a half of staying very local, before moving to her daughter’s and then to a women’s refuge; making a journey time of over three years in total.

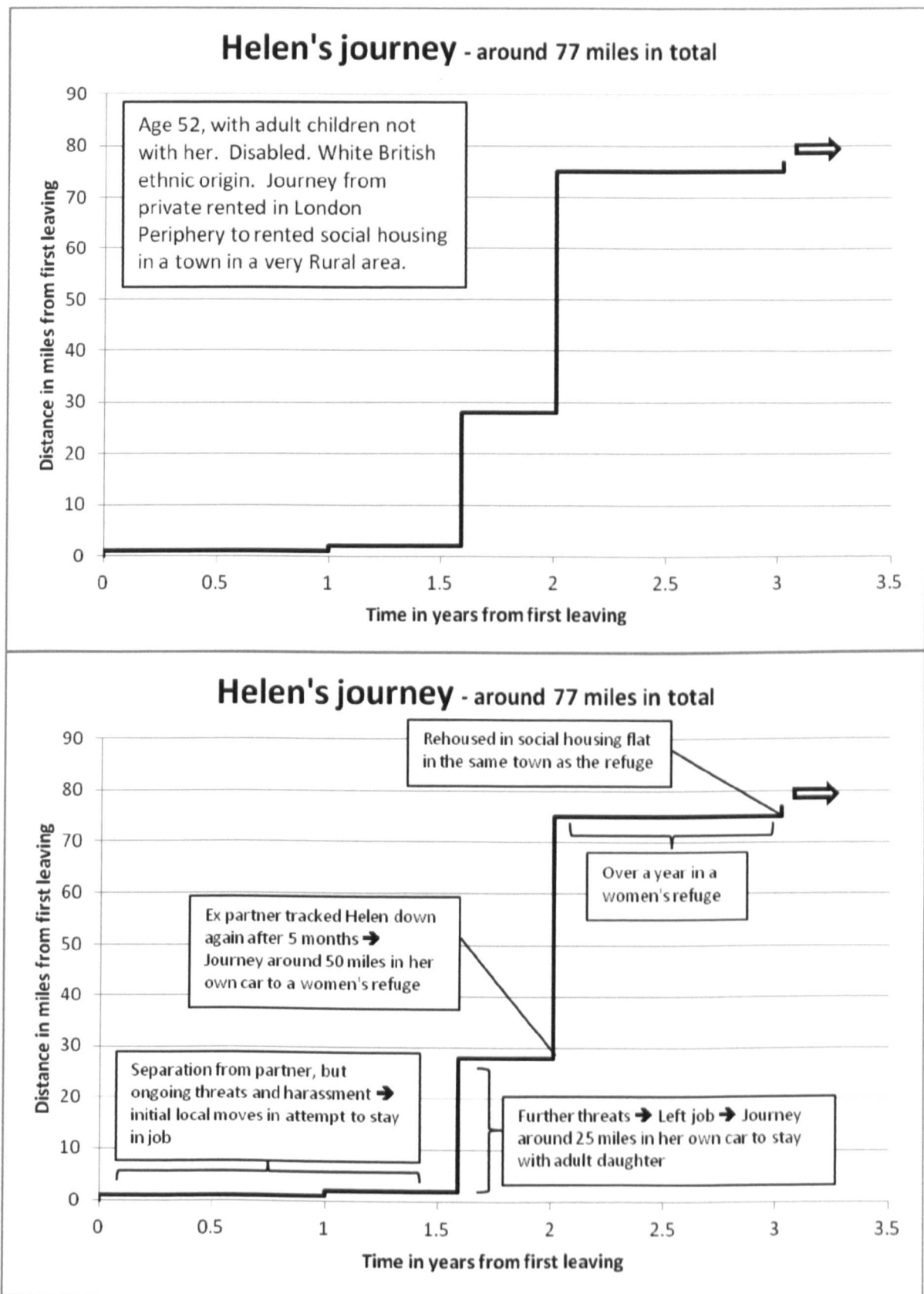


Figure 5.20: Graph of Helen’s journey over time and distance



Other Interviewed Women chose to return to the abuser, but all had subsequently left again; whilst Deborah returned to the area she had left in order to return to work, and Manj returned close to where she had left because of the ongoing court case concerning where her children would live. Most Interviewed Women highlighted how frustrating and unsettling such many-staged journeys were.

*And in the last year I've just been running between France, Spain and Britain. So he didn't know where I was; and I was lying to my family, my friends - because I didn't want anybody else to be in trouble because of me. [Maud - 1:1:17]*

*So that's the effect it's had on me - it's left me unsettled; and I feel, when I move now, it's going to be harder for me to settle down - because I've gone round and round. So just to get my mind in one place and think - yes: if I know I'm going to be in one place for more than a year then I'll be happy! Because it's just been eight months here, eight months there, and I'm thinking - I might as well get a caravan and just ride around in it! [laughs] At least it's on wheels and I can move - and I'm in one house! So it's just - and for my daughter as well - different areas, different nurseries and stuff like that - I just want her to be in one place with me. [Jenny - 1:8:28]*

Jenny's journey included several stages because of housing policies requiring her to move to different types of accommodation; and then she had been tracked down by her ex-partner requiring her to move again, and experience a further stay in a women's refuge of over a year (Figure 5.21). She clearly found her journey extremely disruptive, despite the fact that her whole journey remained within London, and so was not an enormous distance in terms of miles.

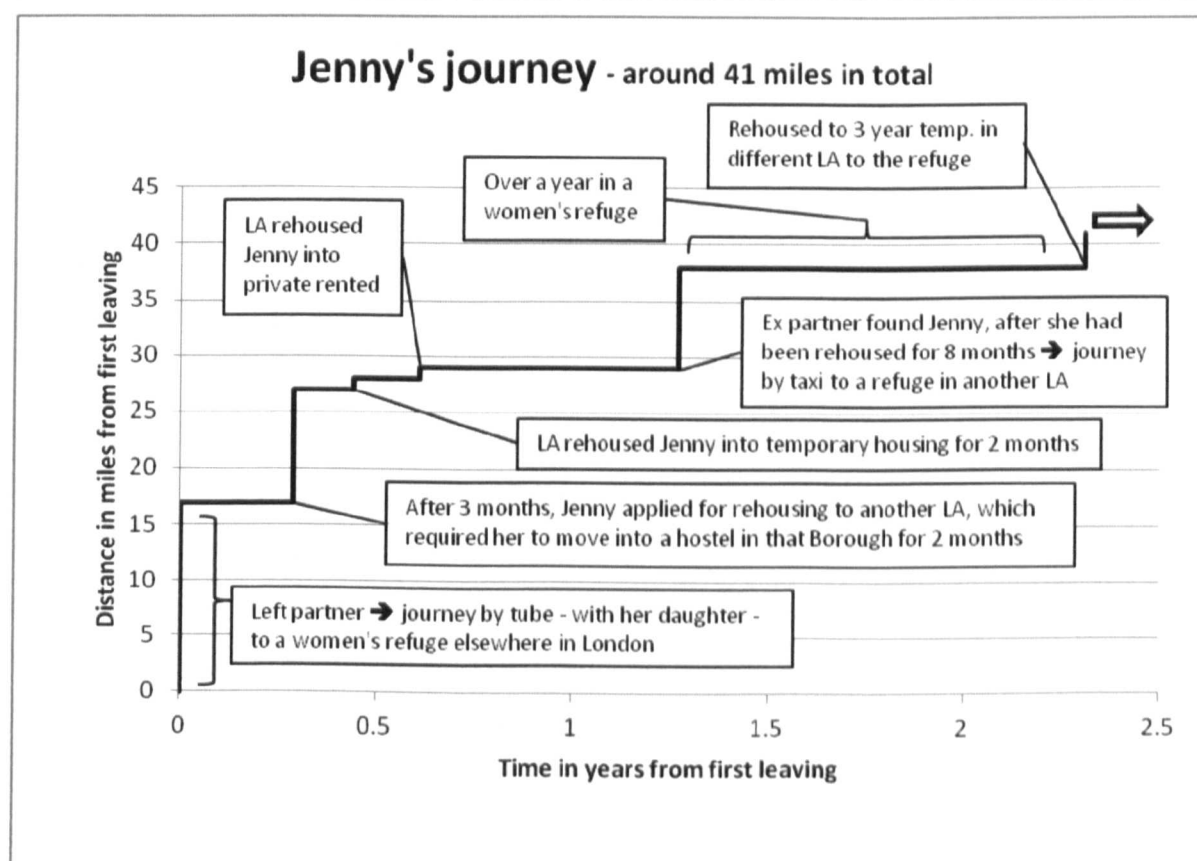
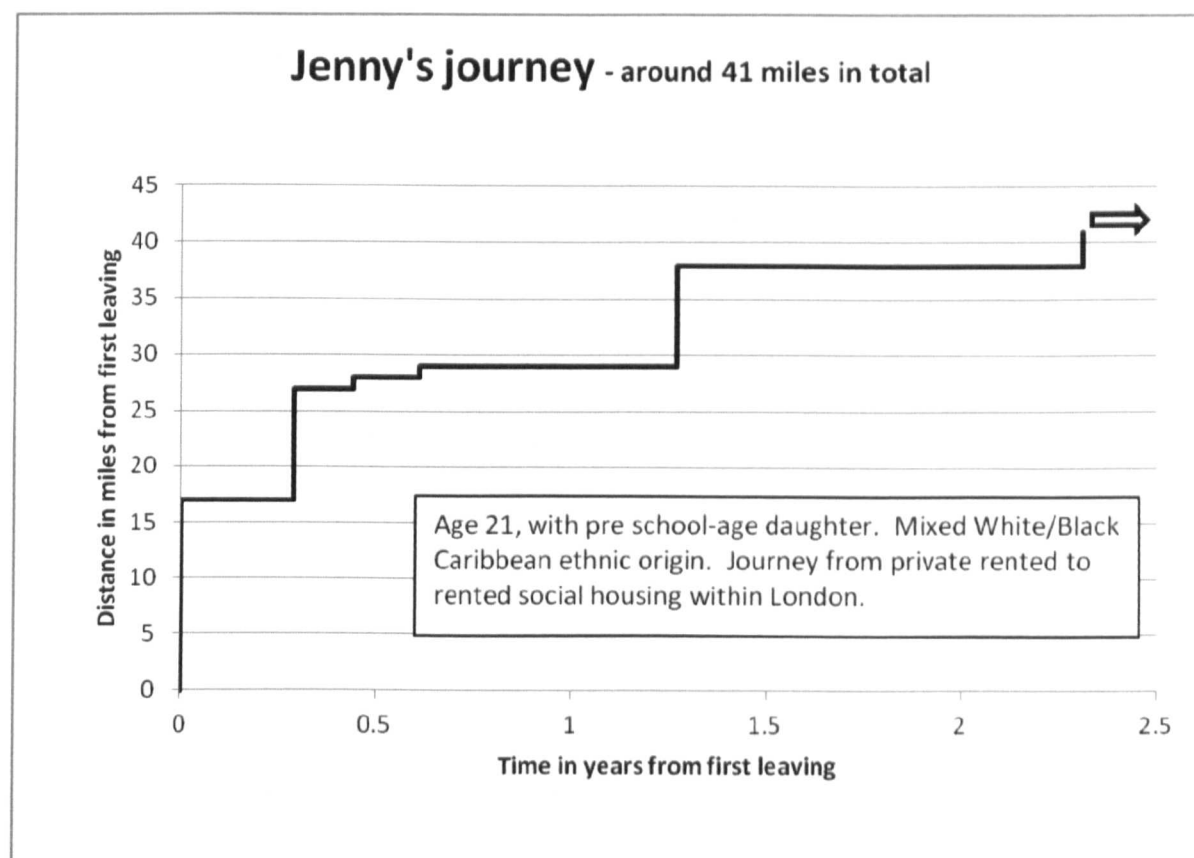


Figure 5.21: Graph of Jenny's journey over time and distance

### 5.3. Distances

In analysing the distances of women's domestic violence journeys it is important, as discussed above, to remember that distance is not a sufficient measure of dislocation or implications for individuals. Women's literal journeys over space are therefore discussed initially in this section; before going on to consider how women experience and imagine such distances, and the extent to which they are in charge of the process (Massey, 1994, p.149).

#### *Short journeys within Local Authorities*

Three-quarters of Local Authorities recorded women making relocation journeys within their area, and 45.6 per cent of woman-journeys to access services were journeys of residential mobility. In the few studies that reported distances of domestic violence journeys (discussed in Chapter 2), residential mobility was less-recognised - for example involving only five of Warrington's 27 women (2001, p.375) - because of the focus on interviewing women in refuges (rather than a wider range of support services)<sup>53</sup>. In general, residential mobility would be relatively short distances, but the nature of the Woman-Journeys Datasets means that no distances can be estimated and only a nominal distance (1 mile) can be used in analysis.

Over half (56.0%) of the women in the Refuge Survey had relocated within their Local Authority, including some who made two moves; however in the end over 80 per cent had moved out of their original local authority. Similarly, four of the Interviewed Women had initially relocated within their original Local Authority, including Helen, who had done so twice, and Cathy, who had done so four times; but all had ended up making longer migration journeys across administrative boundaries. Short journeys of residential mobility are therefore an important element of the journeys women make due to domestic violence; however, they may be only the initial stages of longer migration journeys.

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<sup>53</sup> The role of refuges in enabling migration to a greater extent than residential mobility is discussed in Chapter 8.



## *The distances travelled from place to place*

Overall, the Woman-Journeys Datasets show the straight-line distances of journeys as ranging from just over a mile (between two London Boroughs) to over 400 miles from Scotland to services in the South of England. The total woman-journeys travelled in 2008-09 was over 350,000 miles, with a mean distance of 20.4 miles<sup>54</sup>, and 75 per cent of journeys under that mean. Considering only the migration journeys between Local Authorities, distances were still skewed towards shorter distances (Figure 5.22) with 75 per cent of journeys under 42 miles, and a mean of 36.7 miles; bearing in mind that these journeys are likely to be stages in longer overall journeys away from the abuse.

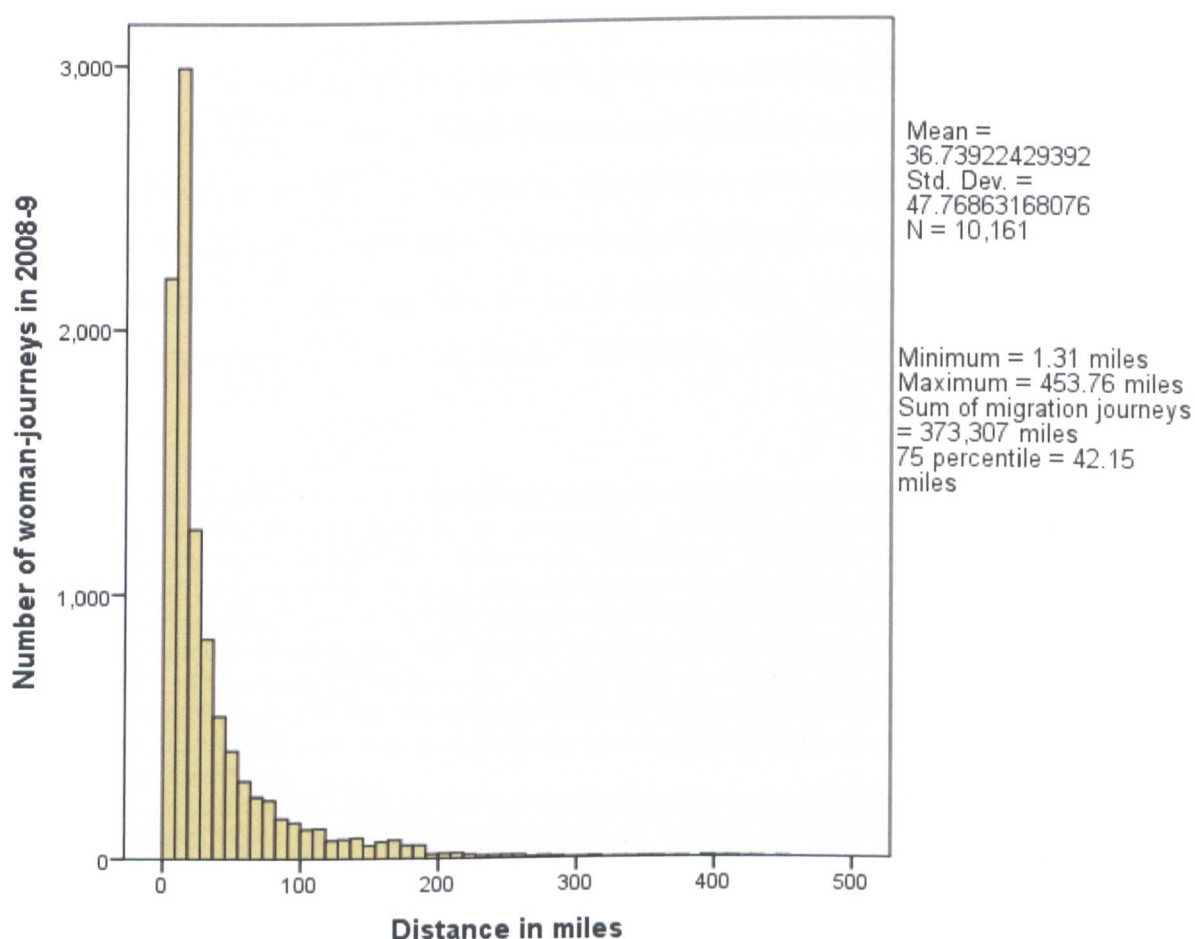


Figure 5.22: Graph of migration distances travelled to services - Woman-Journeys Dataset 2008-9

<sup>54</sup> Including the 8,533 residential mobility journeys as a nominal distance of 1 mile each.

Such distances do not match the general pattern of internal migration within the UK (Champion, 2002), with a smaller proportion of both the shortest and the longest journeys. Only 51 per cent of journeys were under 6.25 miles (compared with Champion's 60%), and only 3 per cent were over 125 miles (compared with Champion's 12%). Again, this tends to suggest that women's journeys to escape domestic violence reflect a different process from other internal migration within the UK.

In terms of types of place, the Woman-Journeys Datasets show that, on average, women travelled furthest from rural areas, particularly from Rural-80 Local Authorities to access accommodation services; and furthest to services in Rural-80 authorities<sup>55</sup>. On average, they travelled the shortest distances from Major Urban Local Authorities, and to Major Urban authorities. Travelling shorter distances in more urban, built-up areas is also indicated by the shortest distances being to and from London Centre and London Cosmopolitan for accommodation services<sup>56</sup>. Conversely, the longest distances on average were to and from Coastal and Countryside, where longer distances would tend to be necessary to reach even neighbouring Local Authorities. Longer distances, on average, were also from Thriving London Periphery, where car ownership is

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<sup>55</sup> Woman-journeys datasets. Test for differences between Rural-Urban Classification of LA and distances - Kruskal-Wallis. For 2008-9, for leaving LAs,  $n=9205$ , Chi-Square = 814.008 (df=5)  $p<0.001$  - The association is therefore statistically significant. The mean ranks indicate that women travelled on average the longest distances from Rural-80 (mean 44.3 miles to accommodation services) and on average the shortest distances from Major Urban (mean 27.8 miles to accommodation services). For 2008-9, for arriving LAs,  $n=9394$ , Chi-Square = 964.993 (df=5)  $p<0.001$  - The association is therefore statistically significant. The mean ranks indicate that women travelled on average the longest distances to Rural-80 (mean 55.4 miles to accommodation services) and on average the shortest to Major Urban (mean 29.7 miles to accommodation services).

<sup>56</sup> Woman-journeys datasets. Test for differences between Area Group Classification of LA and distances - Kruskal-Wallis. For 2008-9, for leaving LAs,  $n=9205$ , Chi-Square = 740.536 (df=11)  $p<0.001$  - The association is therefore statistically significant. The mean ranks indicate that women travelled on average the longest distances from Coastal and Countryside (mean 53.5 miles to accommodation services) and Thriving London Periphery (mean 44.7 miles to accommodation services); and on average the shortest distances from London Cosmopolitan (mean 19.3 miles to accommodation services) and London Centre (mean 27.7 miles to accommodation services). For 2008-9, for arriving LAs,  $n=9394$ , Chi-Square = 942.997 (df=11)  $p<0.001$  - The association is therefore statistically significant. The mean ranks indicate that women travelled on average the longest distances to Coastal and Countryside (mean 69.4 miles to accommodation services) and Regional Centres (mean 52.8 miles to accommodation services); and on average the shortest distances to London Centre (mean 23.2 miles to accommodation services) and London Cosmopolitan (mean 27.9 miles to accommodation services).

generally higher, and to Regional Centres, where direct train services may be more of a factor.

However, such associations and differences are not very strong, with women travelling short and long distances to and from all types of Local Authorities. This is also indicated by the Flow Maps of woman-journeys from Local Authorities in all six Rural-Urban Classifications not showing consistently different patterns of distances - Figure 5.23 and Figure 5.24. Whilst the more rural Local Authorities show longer minimum distances, this reflects the fact that shorter journeys would tend to be within the Local Authority and therefore unable to be measured by these methods. In general, these examples show long journeys of over 150 miles from all types of authorities, similar mean distances from all but the most rural authorities, and similar flow patterns of women leaving to a wide range of places.

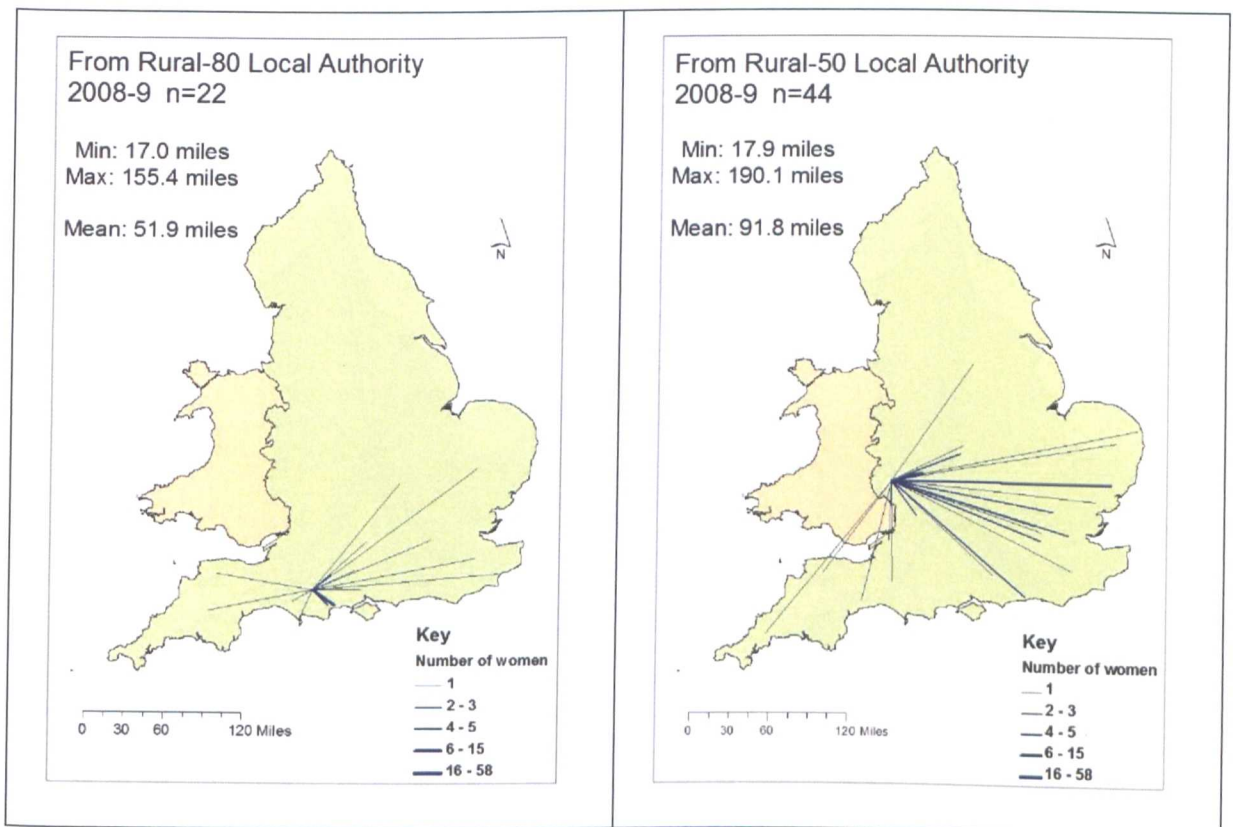
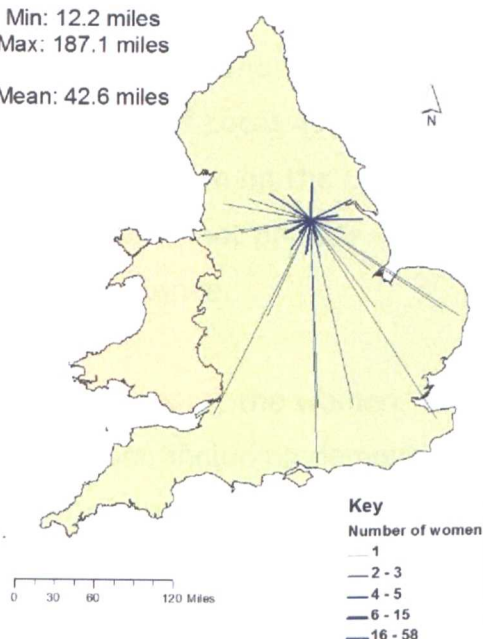


Figure 5.23: Flow Maps from the most rural Local Authorities - examples from a Rural-80 and a Rural-50 authority.

**From Significant Rural Local Authority  
2008-9 n=64**

Min: 12.2 miles  
Max: 187.1 miles

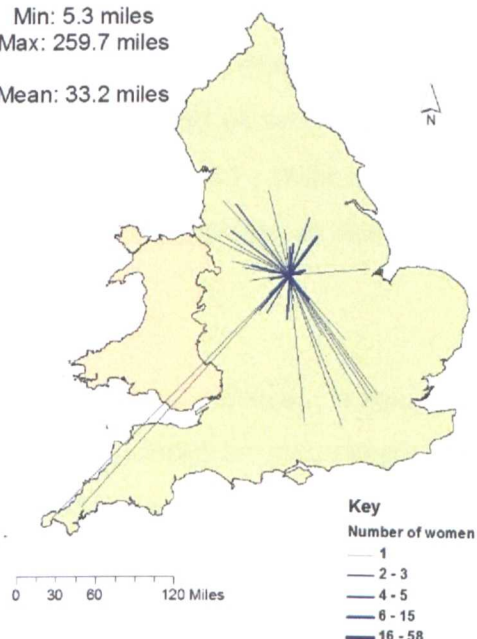
Mean: 42.6 miles



**From Other Urban Local Authority  
2008-9 n=115**

Min: 5.3 miles  
Max: 259.7 miles

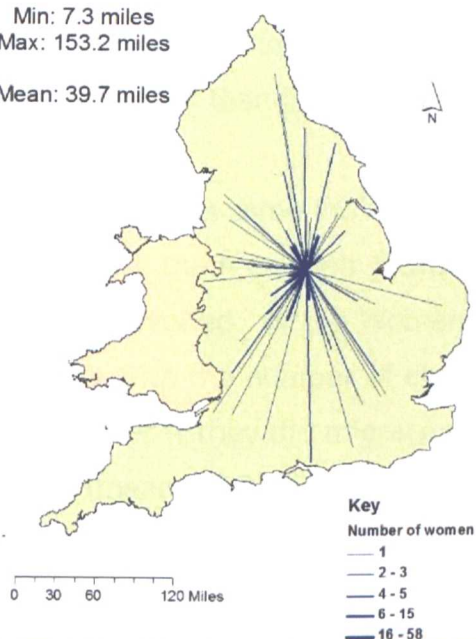
Mean: 33.2 miles



**From Large Urban Local Authority  
2008-9 n=178**

Min: 7.3 miles  
Max: 153.2 miles

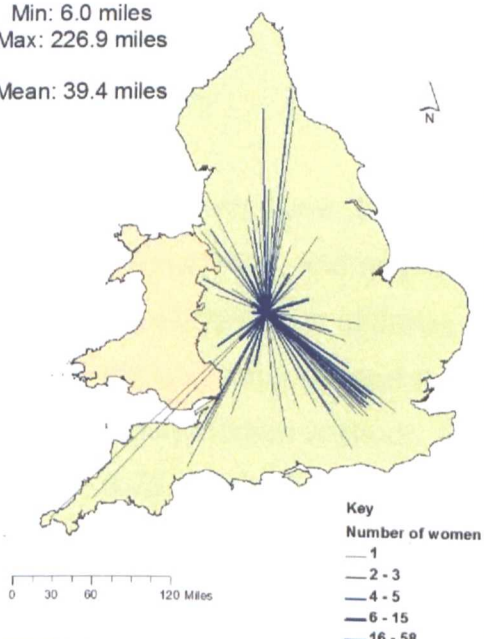
Mean: 39.7 miles



**From Major Urban Local Authority  
2008-9 n=280**

Min: 6.0 miles  
Max: 226.9 miles

Mean: 39.4 miles



**Figure 5.24: Flow Maps from the less rural Local Authorities - examples from a Significant Rural authority, an Other Urban authority, a Large Urban and a Major Urban authority.**

## ***Demographics and women's journey distances***

Availability of services is likely to be an important factor in where women go, and therefore the distances they travel, and the Woman-Journeys Datasets only relate to women who were successful in finding a formal service to access. The large number of Local Authorities with no women recorded as arriving (99 in 2008-9) - as shown on the Local Authorities Map - Figure 5.11 - indicates the high number that do not provide accommodation services for women at risk of domestic violence.

However, amongst the women who did relocate to access services, a range of other factors, including demographic characteristics, could be also related to whether or not they crossed Local Authority boundaries, and how far they travelled if they did.

Overall, statistical analysis of the Woman-Journeys Datasets indicate only very weak associations of any demographics with either the distances travelled or whether or not women crossed Local Authority boundaries. This suggests that factors such as individual circumstances are more important in determining such journeys, rather than broader demographic characteristics.

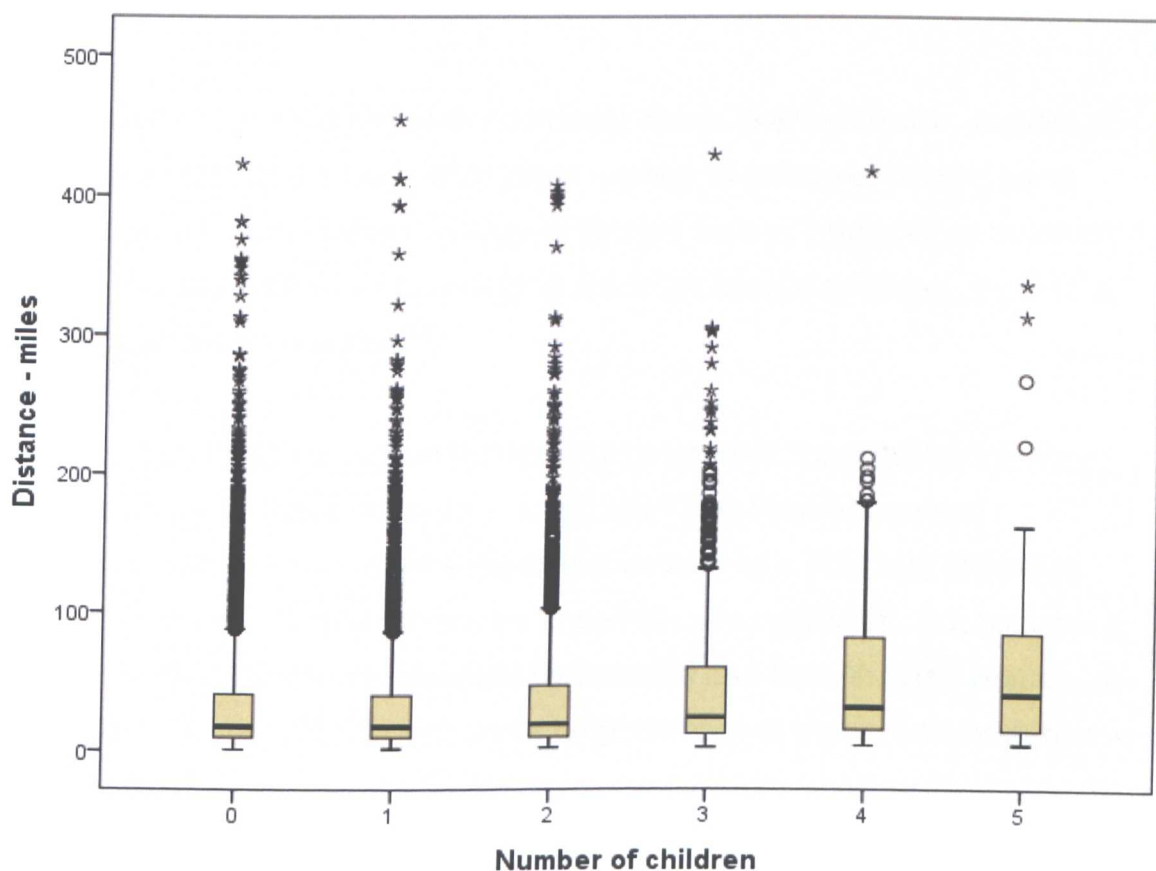
However, there is some indication that whether or not women have dependent children with them on their journey affects residential mobility, and migration distances travelled. In the Woman-Journeys Datasets, women with children (and increasing with the number of children) were more likely to migrate and to travel further if they did migrate (mean=40.2 miles) than women without children (mean=35.6 miles)<sup>57</sup>. The Boxplot - Figure 5.25 - shows that distance travelled tends to increase with the number of children a woman has travelling

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<sup>57</sup> Woman-journeys datasets. Test for differences between Women with and without children and whether or not they crossed LA boundaries to access accommodation services - Crosstabulation. For 2008-9, n=13790, Chi-Square = 83.901 (df=1)  $p < 0.001$  - The association is therefore statistically significant, but Phi = -0.078 suggesting that the association is very weak. Test for differences between Women with and without children and distances - Mann-Whitney U Test. For 2008-9, n=9394, test statistic = 10166106.500  $p < 0.001$  - The difference is therefore statistically significant.



with her; however, it is also striking how wide the range of distances is and the large number of outliers and extreme outliers.



Migration journeys to accommodation services - Woman-Journeys Dataset 2008-9 n= 9,394  
 Dark line in the box is the median distance and the box covers the 25th to 75th percentile. The T-bars would cover 95% of the data IF they were normally distributed. Points outside the box are outliers, and stars are extreme outliers

**Figure 5.25: Boxplot of Migration Distances travelled by women with and without children**

The association is further indicated in the Refugee Survey, where women without children were statistically significantly more likely to relocate initially within the Local Authority, most commonly making one such move, whereas women with children most commonly made no residential mobility moves<sup>58</sup>. The Interviewed Women - Helen and Cathy - who made more than one residential mobility move were also women without dependent children with them. The association could relate to a range of factors, including both the risk and the likelihood of being

<sup>58</sup> Refugee survey. Test for differences between Women with and without children and number of moves within origin LA - Mann-Whitney U Test. n=25, Test statistic = 35.000 p<0.05 - The difference is therefore statistically significant.

traced or followed by the father of the child/ren; and the difficulties of availability of refuge spaces for women with children, especially larger numbers of children.

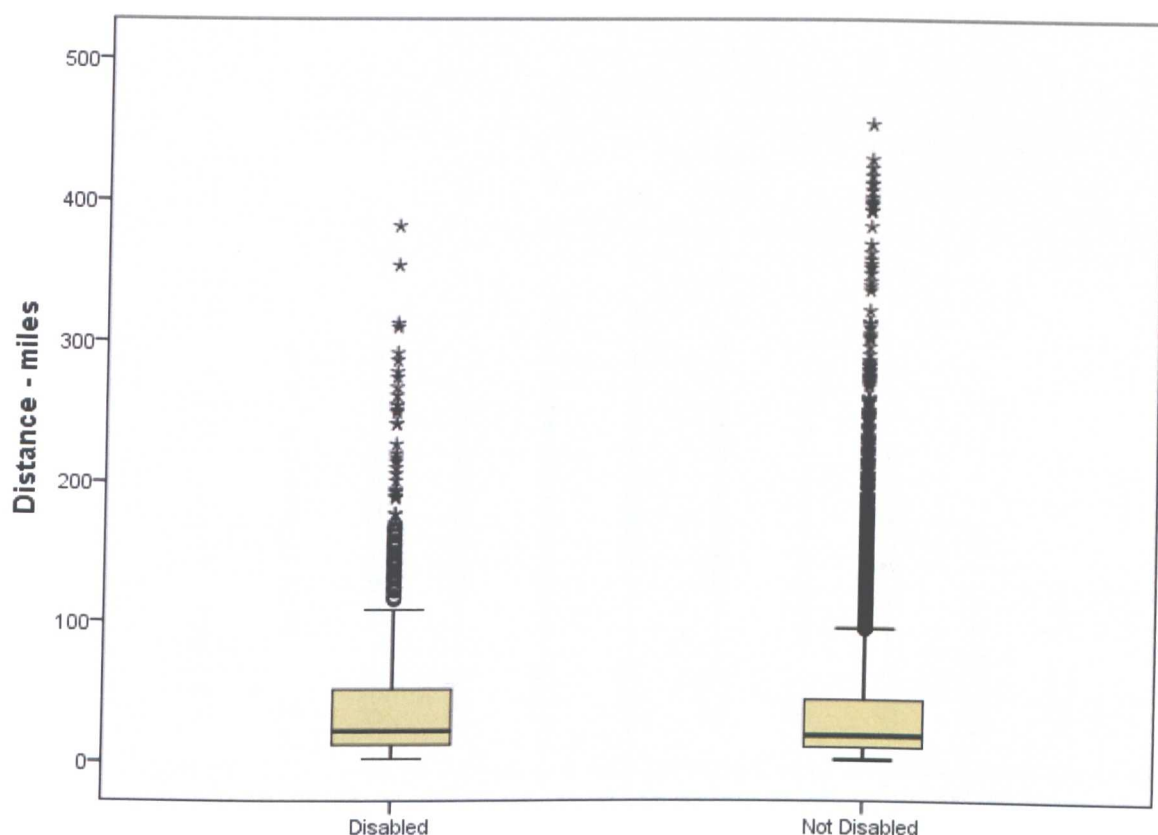
Disabled women, and women with Additional Needs (Mental Health, Alcohol or other Drugs), were more likely than other women to relocate within a Local Authority, which might reflect a range of factors such as connections to other support services, difficulties in arranging transfers in care packages, as well as the practicalities of travelling<sup>59</sup>.

However, when Disabled women did migrate to another Local Authority, they tended to travel further (mean=45.1 miles) than Non-Disabled women (mean=37.8 miles), which might reflect factors such as a difficulty in finding appropriate services<sup>60</sup>. The difference is statistically significant, but includes a very wide range of distances travelled by Disabled and Non-Disabled women, as the Boxplot - Figure 5.26 - shows; and a large number of outliers and extreme outliers.

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<sup>59</sup> Woman-journeys datasets. Test for differences between Disabled or Non-disabled women and whether or not they crossed LA boundaries to access accommodation services - Crosstabulation. For 2008-9, n=13368, Chi-Square = 18.672 (df=1) p<0.001 - The association is therefore statistically significant, but Phi = -0.037 suggesting that the association is very weak. Test for differences between women with or without additional needs and whether or not they crossed LA boundaries - Crosstabulation. For 2008-9, n=13790, Chi-Square = 55.883 (df=3) p<0.001 - The association is therefore statistically significant, but Cramer's V = 0.064 suggesting that the association is very weak.

<sup>60</sup> Woman-journeys datasets. Test for differences between Disabled and Non-disabled women and distances - Mann-Whitney U Test. For 2008-9, n=9169, test statistic = 2603756.500 p<0.001 - The difference is therefore statistically significant.



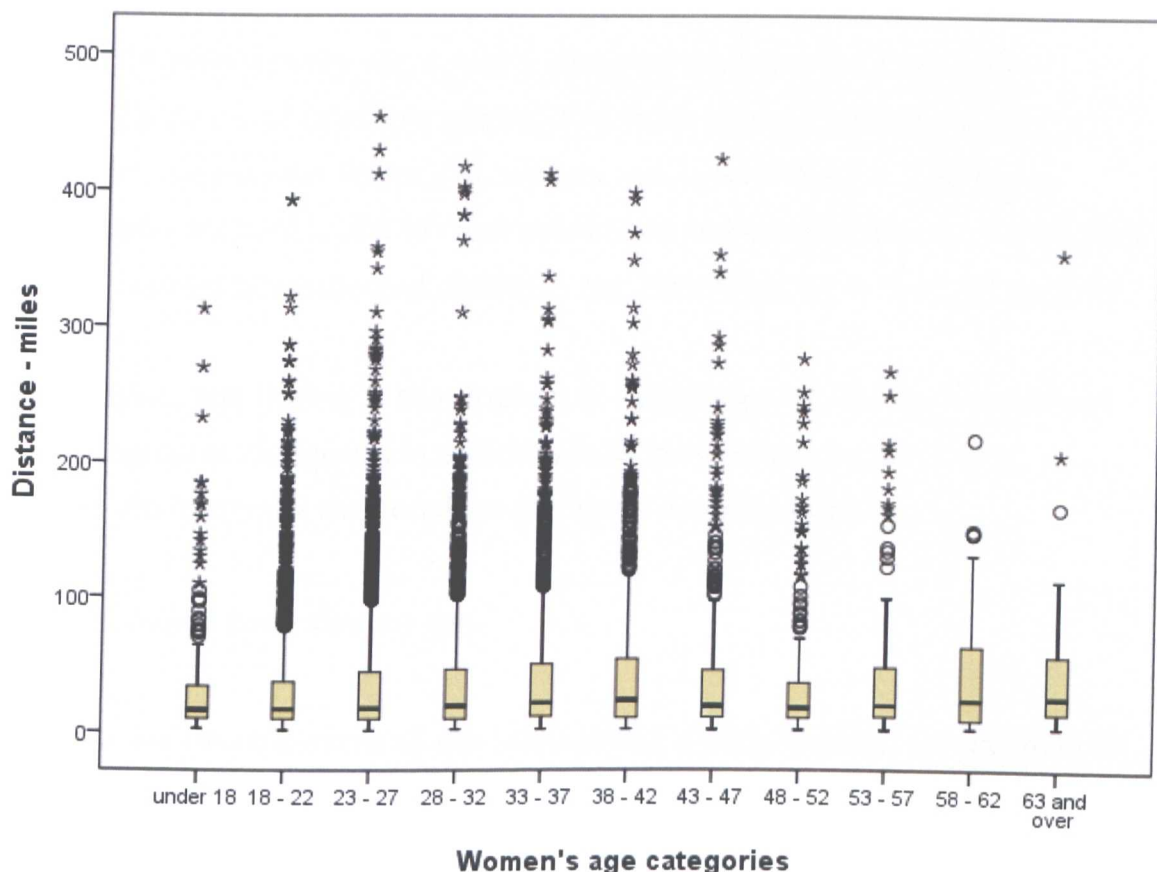
Migration journeys to accommodation services - Woman-Journeys Dataset 2008-9 n= 9,169  
 Dark line in the box is the median distance and the box covers the 25th to 75th percentile. The T-bars would cover 95% of the data IF they were normally distributed. Points outside the box are outliers, and stars are extreme outliers

**Figure 5.26: Boxplot of Migration Distances travelled by Disabled and Not Disabled women**

Women's age was not clearly associated with residential mobility or distances travelled, beyond a very weak tendency for 23 to 42 year olds to travel further and for 23 to 27 year olds to migrate across Local Authority boundaries<sup>61</sup>. The Boxplot - Figure 5.27 - also shows that women in the middle of the age range, and older women, tended to travel a wider range of distances; though all age categories included a large number of outliers and extreme outliers.

<sup>61</sup> Woman-journeys datasets. Test for differences between Age categories of women and whether or not they crossed LA boundaries to access accommodation services - Crosstabulation. For 2008-9, n=13575, Chi-Square = 67.082 (df=10)  $p < 0.001$  - The association is therefore statistically significant, but Cramer's V = 0.070 suggesting that the association is very weak.





Migration journeys to accommodation services - Woman-Journeys Dataset 2008-9 n= 9,258  
 Dark line in the box is the median distance and the box covers the 25th to 75th percentile. The T-bars would cover 95% of the data IF they were normally distributed. Points outside the box are outliers, and stars are extreme outliers

**Figure 5.27: Boxplot of Migration Distances travelled by women in different age categories**

Under 18 year olds accessing accommodation services were more likely to be staying within their Local Authority, however this is likely to relate to statutory referral arrangements because of their age, rather than necessarily young women's choices.

The weakest associations, and unclear conclusions, relate to ethnic origin, with a tendency towards different associations in the six years of Woman-Journeys Datasets.

Consistently, White British women were more likely to relocate within Local Authorities than Ethnic Minority women; but they were also likely to travel

slightly further when they did migrate to another Local Authority<sup>62</sup>. Not only were the differences very slight, but a category such as 'Ethnic Minority' includes a wide range of ethnic origins, and these showed few consistent associations except that White Irish women were more likely to migrate to another Local Authority, and in most years Asian Indian women were more likely to make journeys of residential mobility, and travel less far if they did migrate.

Overall, again, the finding is that individual circumstances are more important than demographic categories in affecting how far women travelled; and analysing the interview data enables this to be examined further.

### *Deciding how far to go*

The individual circumstances of the Interviewed Women had led one (Gloria) to have travelled under ten miles in total, whilst two had travelled from abroad, including Julien Rosa travelling over 6,000 miles in total. Five had travelled under 40 miles, but five had travelled over 200 miles so far, including women expecting to make further moves from temporary accommodation. Many talked about the complex decision of how far to go, whilst not wanting to go further than they had to from places and people they knew; and the range of issues they were considering as they tried to get somewhere safe.

*[town in East Sussex refuge] would have been fine if it hadn't have been for him knowing that area; and been drinking in that area. But they moved me out of there - and my dad said - not [town in Kent] or wherever it was they said; that's too far; so somewhere closer. I did try for the [town on Sussex coast] one again, but there was no room there; and so there was space here - and they put me here. So it's not too far away - but far enough from [town in East Sussex] that it's OK.  
[Louise - 1:10:18]*

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<sup>62</sup> Woman-journeys datasets. Test for differences between White British and Ethnic Minority women and whether or not they crossed LA boundaries to access accommodation services - Crosstabulation. For 2008-9, n=13571, Chi-Square = 41.809 (df=1) p<0.001 - The association is therefore statistically significant, but Phi = -0.056 suggesting that the association is very weak. Test for differences between White British and Ethnic Minority women and distances - Mann-Whitney U Test. For 2008-9, n=9264, test statistic = 8823955.000 p<0.001 - The difference is therefore statistically significant. The mean distance for White British women to accommodation services was 38.5 miles, compared with a mean of 37.9 miles for Ethnic Minority women.

*There was nothing coming on in my mind - every place I was saying - far, just put me far; because he drives, so he could find me. But any place was just like getting on the train and just travelling really - you don't know where to go; because I have been to a few places in England, but not much.*

*So first I went to [city on south coast of England] - really really far away; but I did not know - I did not have a clue where to go.  
[Julien Rosa - 1:2:23]*

For some of the Interviewed Women they felt they could never get far enough away from the abuser to feel completely safe. Anna left her partner after his assault had caused her to miscarry twins, and felt that there was always a risk that her ex-partner would find her, however far she travelled.

*Because these people who are violent, they will say sorry... but they will follow you - even to kill you... I'm sorry but this is true. They will find you everywhere - especially if you will put them in the court. If he will be arrested - and in the prison - Category A - for six weeks as well... but they will wait for one day and they will get advantage. [Anna - 1:6:43]*

## ***Real and imagined distances***

Whilst some of the Interviewed Women had made long journeys with many stages, others had not travelled far in miles, but felt that they had; telling their experiences via metaphors of journeys and distances. In the Significance Charts (where Interviewed Women marked how close they felt to significant people and places), several also reflected on family and friends who they had had to move away from, but who felt closer because they could now contact them without worrying about the abuser's reactions.

Violet had travelled around 30 miles, but reflected in each interview that it felt much further.

*Round here it's lovely - starting afresh! It's not a million miles away, but it does feel like it! [laughs] [Violet - 3:8:1]*

In contrast, Julien Rosa had travelled thousands of miles over a period of five years, including a time of returning to her husband; however, she saw her journey more in terms of the steps of decisions rather than the distances of miles.

*That first step to leave was a really big step - really enormous step; then - coming here, going through all this - and now - on my own... They're all steps - there's no going back. It's just big big steps. [Julien Rosa - 2:9:1]*

Others also highlighted the distance they felt they had travelled in themselves, regardless of the actual distance. Gloria had travelled under ten miles in three moves, whilst Helen had travelled under 80 miles in five moves; however, both felt they had travelled far.

*I have travelled far - far in the way that I'm not there any more, I'm not in that situation any more. Not far enough in that I'm still trying to heal myself - to accept that it's OK - I'm out now. [Gloria - 2:10:8]*

*I've just come so far - I'm a different person - a completely different person; I've started to be outgoing again, smiling at people in the street - and not thinking - oh my god - do they know him? Not looking at cars - not jumping at my own shadow - having my own opinion; and being able to voice my own opinion. Little things like that. I've come miles - absolutely miles. [Helen - 2:14:37]*

Louise had travelled over 600 miles in total within the UK, via ten moves; and she imagined measuring her journey in the paperwork of all those changes.

*[I've travelled] Miles and miles and miles and miles and miles - I don't feel like I've stopped!*

*I've not really thought about it; I've just done it. But if I were to think about it it feels like I've come a very long way. I think if all the paperwork was to be put in front of me - like from people like yourself, or the refuges - like all the forms I've had to fill in... I think I'd have like a three-storey house! [laughs] So it would be a good story I think! [laughs] [Louise - 2:7:17/3:4:26]*

The graph of her journey (Figure 5.28) shows an initial long journey from where she lived with her partner to go to the support of family, but also further long distances travelled to the support of other family. She also reunited with her

partner, but had to leave again when he became abusive; and she stayed in four different refuges during a total journey time of over three years.

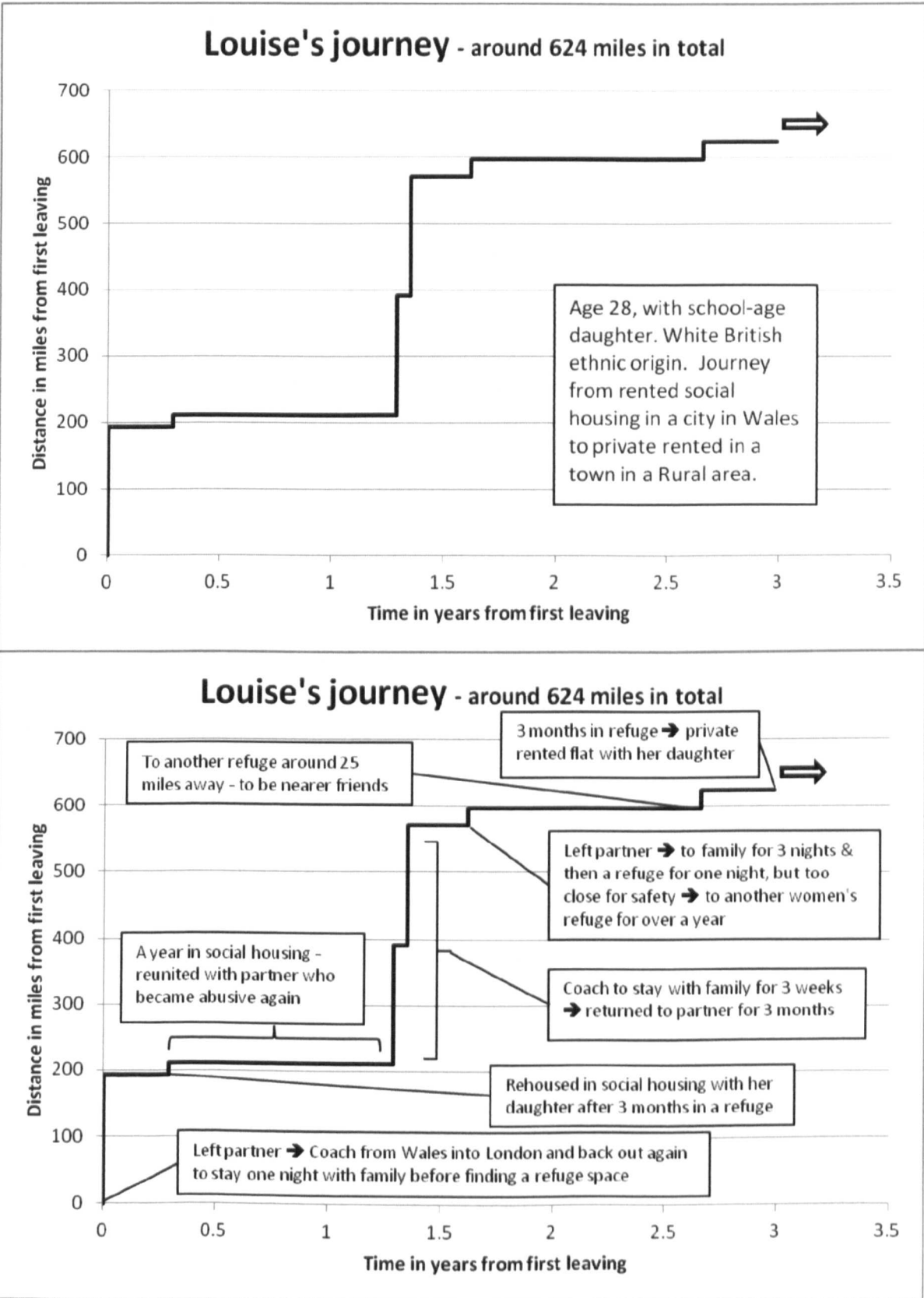


Figure 5.28: Graph of Louise’s journey over time and distance

#### **5.4. Practicalities**

Beyond the quantification of women's journeys over time, distance and space, the accounts of the Interviewed Women indicate the practicalities behind such numbers.

##### ***Familiar and unfamiliar means of transport***

Several of the Interviewed Women highlighted that their journeys had been made more complicated by public transport routes and changes, and detailed a complex range of means of transport for different stages of their journeys. Overall, however, their journeys were most commonly made by car - primarily the cars of friends or family members, but also women's own cars and some journeys by Police or other workers' cars. Two women travelled by aeroplane from abroad, and journeys included a wide range of public transport; whilst, at the other extreme, Cathy walked long distances within her home town. At the later stages of journeys, particularly when women had gathered more possessions and were moving to self-contained accommodation, several journeys were made by taxi or hire car or van. Interviewed Women detailed using both familiar and unfamiliar means of transport, and difficulties on the journeys.

*I have done every mode of transport. And you can imagine when that ash thing was up [volcanic ash grounding planes], and that was a mess - horrendous - it's like I'm really stuck. [Maud - 1:15:36]*

Despite having always lived in London, Aliya had little experience of public transport until she left the abuse from her father, and the threat of forced marriage.

*I would never have gone on a bus - if I didn't have my car! But as soon as I left home my dad was going to sell the car. I wasn't really bothered about it - but it was the first time that I'd actually been on the bus. With my suitcases and everything.*

*But I suppose it was interesting [laughs] - I enjoyed it! I realised that I don't have to rely on someone else, or the car; I've got legs, and I can take the train or the bus! [Aliya - 1:5:42]*

Within the Groupwork Process, several of the Asian women had not made journeys before within the UK, until leaving the abuse; including Nurgis who used the photography to document her second ever train journey - Figure 5.29.

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**Figure 5.29: Images of Nurgis's train journey**

## ***Managing the transport arrangements***

Once they had been able to arrange a place to go to - usually a women's refuge - the Interviewed Women had a wide range of experiences of arranging transport to that place. Several found that the arrangements worked out well, including commenting that they took this as a sign that they were meant to escape the abuse.

*I didn't actually think about it. It just seemed like my body just took itself - there was no planning or anything; I just got - an ordinary day, and ended up in Victoria coach station! [laughs] It was quite strange; and by the time - like the whole coach journey it was like - just looking at the road and just not really thinking of anything; just where I was going.*

*I think it was all dealt with quite smoothly. There was no - this way, that way, this way, that way - it was all just pretty much - straight, straight. You know, I didn't have to go and see this person, to go there - there was no goose chase around; it was just straight. [Louise - 1:2:9/1:12:2]*

*It was just like - I don't know - weird. I made sure I had the baby and it just - it almost went quick really - I was like anxious - where are we going? And it was very easy - like the trains - what they said, like - you've got to make that train, to connect that one, der, der, der... Everything went like clockwork really - it felt like it were meant to be. It weren't stressful at all, you know - and it was nice. [Violet - 1:5:25]*

Some of the Interviewed Women talked of the support and reassurance of talking to the refuge workers before or during the journey to the refuge, including Anna who had transport arranged for her by the refuge.

*I have some belongings; and it was [refuge worker] she phone me and I say - to be honest it was a few hours after my miscarriage and I don't want contact with anybody... but I couldn't manage on my own. I don't have anywhere to leave my stuff. With these friends where I was living I couldn't, because they worried of my ex-partner. So the refuge - I say - if you have any idea if you can help me please; and she contact social service and they take me with car to the refuge. So they help me. [Anna - 1:10:23]*

However, Louise talked about how it was her ex partner who was contacting her by phone during the journey.



*He was following me with my phone - leaving messages, texting - just saying - you're going to make it worse on yourself, you better come back, blah, blah, blah. And I just ignored the messages - and some of the messages that he was sending that was horrible, I'm sending to his mum - to show her what he was sending me. And she just basically said - you're doing the right thing, just - you know - just ignore it. [Louise - 1:3:14]*

Gloria highlighted how her journey had been much easier than for other women.

*It wasn't difficult because I had a car; so I could just use my car. But I suppose it would be difficult for somebody without a car - and a baby; and it's raining - it's really difficult. I don't know what they'd do - whether they'd offer them a taxi or something; but if they were going to use the public transport in such distress - I think it would be a nightmare. It would be. But for me it was easy, because I was just using my car. [Gloria - 1:11:4]*

Other Interviewed Women did detail the difficulties they had faced on public transport.

*The time I moved from [city on south coast of England] to here it was about four or five I think. And it was when people come from work and the train is packed and everything; and when I got to [town in East Sussex] here I don't know which way. It's not been easy - but we make it to come. And it's really like - I found it difficult because all your things, and all your bags; not like travelling just with one bag when you're going for a holiday or something; but carrying all your stuff. And one baby buggy and all this - it's really difficult to travel, yes. [Julien Rosa - 1:6:7]*

*On the train I'd fed my son but he kept on asking for food - and the food was in the luggage and I couldn't get it, so he was crying and crying. People helped me - but it was difficult - people helped me push the pram and took the luggage for me. [Deborah - 1:4:33]*

### ***Difficulties in the journey arrangements***

In the Helpline Survey, nearly a fifth (17.9%) of women callers raised concerns over transport issues in considering relocation; however, there was no statistically significant association of age, disability, ethnic origin or whether or

not they had children with raising transport issues<sup>63</sup>. Many Interviewed Women particularly raised the issue of the costs of the journeys.

*I had a car - my daughter gave me ten pound to put petrol in; and we're going - is ten pound going to get me there? She said - well I hope it is as it's all I've got! Bless her. But it was enough to get me here.  
[Helen - 1:7:30]*

*I didn't know how I was going to get there; I had to borrow some money from a friend. She lent me the money - and they said to me from here - we'll hold the room until Friday. This was the Thursday. I had no money at all - I had no access to any money - so I asked her; and she said - here's the fare, what are you waiting for! [Elizabeth - 1:5:28]*

Because many of the initial journeys had been done at the point of crisis, and because of the security arrangements of refuges, several of the Interviewed Women did not know where they would be going, whether the refuge space would be available, or how to get there.

*I was scared, because I don't know [town in the Midlands] - I only had the address of the [pick up point] - but the taxi driver said he could help me.*

*I didn't know even where [town in the Midlands] was - I asked the Police officer about where it was when he gave me a lift to the station in London.*

*At the station I asked for a single ticket, but the kids were struggling and it was difficult and I couldn't hear - and they ended up giving me a return. I didn't realise until they gave me the tickets, and I just had to pay and take it. [Deborah - 1:4:41]*

*When I came to London I didn't have anywhere to live; so I was trying to get a room, and I couldn't get a room. I was in McDonald's in Marble Arch, and I was just talking to a person in there - just a regular customer - and she said - why don't you call the Domestic Violence shelter? So I called the Domestic Violence shelter, and they told me to put myself up for the night because the refuge wasn't open. And then on Monday I was travelling the bus; because when I called the Domestic Violence shelter they said they wasn't sure if they were going to take me in there or not.*

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<sup>63</sup> National Helpline survey. Crosstabulations & Chi-Square - all four  $p > 0.01$  therefore no statistically significant associations.

*So I travelled the bus [all night and day], and later on in that evening I got a phone call and they said - you can come to this shelter. So that's how I ended up at this shelter. [Cathy - 1:8:2]*

*I went to three different Bed and Breakfasts - I don't know why. The Social Worker arranged everything and helped me move by taxi - I was five days in one Bed and Breakfast, and then one night, and then four nights, and then back to the second one for one night. At one of them I got stuck in the bathroom with my daughter and I had to jump out of a window - and I broke my leg. [Parveen - 1:2:31]*

Even at the point of arrival in the refuge area, Interviewed Women highlighted the difficulties if they were not met by a refuge worker; or even if they were.

*I was told to get a train - which I did - and I didn't know the address. I think the worker was worried; she said - don't leave any telephone numbers behind, which I didn't. And I think she texted me while I was on the train. When I got off at [here] - she's told me the directions to go; but basically it was pitch black, and I didn't know where I was. So I just got in a taxi - she'd told me the address, but she'd told me where the drop-off point was - which was the [nursing home]. And I just got out the taxi and paid him - then I was on my own; I had to find the address. Literally it was only down the road, but I couldn't ask anybody. [Elizabeth - 1:6:41]*

*They said if I was in the area I would be placed quicker - so I went down there; but I ended up in the wrong place. I was supposed to meet the refuge worker, but I got lost - my brain not working properly, and I'd left my directions behind - so I'd gone the wrong way. So I was two hours late and I'd missed the lady I was supposed to meet - it wasn't her fault - but they'd said - you go to the place and present yourself as Homeless. [Maud - 1:6:9]*

*I think the most scariest part was that she [refuge worker] told me to stay outside [local market]; and she went past me a couple of times but I was really really scared! I just thought - maybe it's just a stranger who's going to lure me into something! [laughs] So I held back a bit - I just wanted to see what the refuge was all about. [Aliya - 2:8:14]*

The initial journeys to women's refuges therefore often included practical and emotional pressures, some of which related to the threat of abuse; but others of which were pressures that could have been reduced by greater practical or agency support, which will be discussed in Chapter 8.

## ***Further journeys to collect possessions***

Most of the Interviewed Women had travelled with only minimal possessions, and often therefore lost furniture, clothes as well as personal items. Several had tried to return to their home area to collect things; or they tried to arrange for their possessions to be brought to them. However, these journeys and arrangements tended to be fraught with costs and other problems.

*It's the money - I've got stuff coming back to Britain from Spain; it's all been in storage, but it's actually on a van now; and that's over six hundred pounds. And I need to pick up stuff from Wales - because I've stuff in storage in Wales as well - and that's three hundred and eighty; so it's like - a thousand pounds! [Maud - 1:18:39]*

*I tried to get some stuff from my daughter's - because she had a lot of my stuff - and we were meeting at a sort of half way point. And he must have followed her - neither of us saw him - and we sort of transferred the stuff from her car to mine and I drove back here and he followed me. And I saw him in the rear-view mirror; and I slowed the car right down because I thought - oh, you're imagining it, you're imagining it - so I slowed the car right down until I must have been going about 40 miles an hour on the motorway, which is really really slow. And he's in the middle lane - and he kept his speed; so I knew it was him.*

*And I got - I'm not going to say where I got to - I got somewhere - to a town; and it was far enough away from here. And I drove round and round and round the town trying to lose him. I didn't even know my way around the town, so I got the satnav going - 'please turn around when possible' and all this! I'm going round and round and round the town trying to lose him at traffic lights; and dart down another side road, and what have you. And eventually lost him - and knew for sure that I had lost him - and then finished the journey and came here. But now I won't go there because I'm frightened that he's followed me there - followed me that far - and I won't meet up with my daughter again now because I'm frightened that he'll do the same thing. The chance that he's going to be there on that day is quite slim; but I'm just not prepared to take that chance. [Helen - 1:5:47]*

The pressured nature of the initial journeys therefore ensured that further stressful journeys were required as women tried to minimise their loss of possessions that they had had to leave behind.

## ***Rehousing journeys***

Whether or not they had been able to retrieve any of their possessions, most of the Interviewed Women who were rehoused from the refuge had more things to transport when they moved out of the refuge than when they had moved in. As discussed in the next chapter, many spent a year or more in a refuge; however they generally only had a few days to arrange the move. This raised issues of costs, as well as the practicalities of removals if the women were not allowed to ask male friends, family or taxi drivers to help, yet could not afford professional removal companies with female staff.

*Now this was the problem - because the refuge where I was will not allow taxi drivers to help you; if they do it's got to be a female - which is stupid because you can't. There's no such thing as getting a man with a van - it's got to be a woman with a van. [...] But there is no arrangement for people to get women to help them; so you've got to get out and you've got very little time to get out - so what do you do?  
[Elizabeth - 2:2:16]*

However, most Interviewed Women said how the rehousing journey had gone well; and often with the help of friends.

*It wasn't too hard because my friend - they've got a seven-seater; so - luckily - it was a really tight squeeze but we just squeezed it all in. And it just saved me so much money on getting a delivery van.*

*But I never actually realised that I could have got a lot of help with the Community Care Grant for the delivery. But I think - if I'd have known - because of the state around the time I was going, there wouldn't have been time to write it out - the form - and get a decision. So - where it was five days - I just thought to myself I'd never get it in time. But luckily - I was lucky enough to have someone to help me; because I don't know what people would do if they didn't, you know.  
[Jenny - 2:2:26]*

In general, the practicalities of travelling seemed more manageable when the destination was the positive one of rehousing, rather than the uncertain and temporary destinations of other stages of their journeys.

## 5.5. Concepts

### *Journey as metaphor*

Time and again in the qualitative aspects of the research, the notion of a journey was used metaphorically as well as literally (as was also discussed in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2). Interviewed Women and Workers spoke of emotional journeys and psychological journeys, as well as the geographical journeys to escape the domestic violence.

*It was a journey that I had to make - I wish to God that I did it when he [son] was small, but I didn't. But I did do it - so that's the main thing; I did do it - and it's definitely made me stronger and it's made me tough. I think - cor! - I never thought in a million years - me! - little old Vi! [laughs] - could go and live in a refuge. I thought that was for really tough women and I didn't think that I'd be able to cope; but I have! And it's made me look - I've never been narrow-minded - but it's made me more open to all different kinds of people and never judge anyone; because it's just - we're all in the same boat really. [Violet - 2:4:40]*

Within the Groupwork Process women used the metaphors of the steps of a journey, the struggles, and of looking forward, both in the captions they gave to their photographs and in the title of the poster made for one of the refuges<sup>64</sup>. For the Interviewed Women, as well, their experiences of the journeys combined the physical, the mental and the emotional.

*It was easy - but mentally it wasn't. [...] I think I was in some sort of daze - something took me over; I think it's survival instinct - something must have taken me over. [Elizabeth - 1:7:32]*

*But the most scary thing is - I lost my home - everything - my job; I don't have money, I don't have anything under my feet - let's say I am on the street. So they will send me somewhere and I didn't know anybody; I couldn't contact with my friends... You have to trust someone who you've never seen in your life; and you just feel like - where am I? It is the most scary thing - you don't have nothing - completely naked. [Anna - 1:5:30]*

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<sup>64</sup> See Chapter 7 for further details - Figure 7.45, Figure 7.46 and Figure 7.47.

There was an awareness also by the Interviewed Workers of their use of the concepts of a journey in understanding women's experiences when they first went to a refuge, during their stay, and after leaving the refuge.

*I don't think refuge is an easy ride for anybody - and I think that's often underestimated by professionals; for example - they just think that once a woman's here - that's it - they're safe and their life should go on then. But it's only really the start of the whole journey - the psychological journey of coming to refuge, and the practical journey; and I think the women are incredibly brave for managing to get through that.*  
[Worker A - 1:7:9]

*I had one particular service user and she went on this incredible journey - she enrolled in ESOL [English for Speakers of Other Languages] classes, she now speaks English when you see her - she's radiant! She's cut her hair - dyed it - she wears jeans; her kids are at school now - and it's just amazing the journey. It really is - you know the cliché - it really is a journey! [laughs] Not wanting to sound like something out of The X Factor - but it's a journey that they go on.* [Worker S - 1:11:27]

The widespread use of 'journey' as a metaphor can, however, obscure the detail of the practicalities and pressures of women's literal journeys, and the extent to which some of these could be alleviated. These practice and policy implications of a greater understanding of women's domestic violence journeys will be discussed in Chapter 8.

### ***Stopping moving and moving on***

Many of the Interviewed Women experienced their journeys as unsettling and disorientating, and some used the metaphor of 'moving on' with their lives as related to becoming more settled. They felt that they needed to stop moving, to be able to move on; that they would not really know where they were going with their lives until they could stop literally going places.

*I was just feeling like - you still don't know where you are going, what you are doing, you know. I was just - until before I was like - I don't know what I'm doing; you know you feel embarrassed sometimes - moving all your stuff, you know; and with children and all that. It was like - oh, what am I doing, what am I doing? Where am I going? It's not easy. You*

*don't know really - it's only like that I left but I don't know where I'm going. [Julien Rosa - 1:6:23]*

*In a way I feel quite drained and really tired; I can't wait to just get in to a new place and just sit - not physically, but mentally. To be able to just -[sigh]- it's done; and just wake up and be all like - this is it - I'm going, I'm moving - not just plodding, plodding, plodding. [Louise - 2:7:19]*

As with 'journey', the metaphor of 'moving on' is more often used in policy and practice responses to domestic violence than an engagement with the literal movement of women all around the country. Women themselves use the concept of moving on, but this research also aims to conceptualise women's geographical movement.

### ***Being a migrant***

Most of the Interviewed Woman related to concepts within the research that their journeys were examples of internal migration. Some used the language of being a migrant, and some emphasised that this could have been an acceptable, or even pleasurable, experience if it had not been forced on them.

*I'm used to moving around every two or three years or so; so - actually - moving around the country to get away from him wasn't - that side of it wasn't - it was a pain in the arse that I had to do it; but the actual moving wasn't the issue. I've always been a bit of a migrant anyway. [Helen - 2:16:27]*

*I feel like a gypsy - really! I feel like I should have just had a caravan and drove from one stop to another. I really really do. It is nice in a way - if I didn't have the little one I would happily enjoy travelling around; I don't mind - I'd love it. But - because of the little one - it makes me feel really guilty; because she's only little and she's been in one place and she's been in another - and it must be doing something. [Jenny - 2:15:32]*

Some of the Interviewed Women, and some women in the Groupwork Process, also had experience of migration to the UK; including those whose immigration status was a major concern for them as they currently had No Recourse to Public Funds. Being a migrant was therefore a legal issue for these women, as well as having a sense of being unsettled within the UK. Overall, the main issue that



Interviewed Women raised about being a migrant was that it had been forced upon them.

*You feel like you're shifted from pillar to post. [Caroline - 2:9:36]*

Internal migration within the UK tends to be conceptualised as voluntary, rather than forced, and for reasons of education, housing, employment and lifestyle (Fielding, 2012). This research, however, enables a conceptualisation of a particular process of forced migration within the UK: the migration of tens of thousands of women and children due to domestic violence.

### *Journey's end*

Despite all the pressures and difficulties at earlier stages, the Interviewed Women often highlighted the positive outcomes of the journeys, whether or not they had literally settled.

*I can't say a bad thing about my journeys - apart from that they've been cold, hard and sometimes I've been hungry; and during those journeys I've sometimes been miserable - but it had a good outcome!*  
*[Cathy - 1:14:22]*

Many of these Interviewed Women celebrated a sense of achievement at all they had been through, as well as a determination that their journey was finished.

*I think I've finished my journey now [laughs] - I'm there now - I'm at the end of the road now [laughs]. I'm quite happy, and I've got my children settled - and they can achieve again. So there's the happiness again - and I'm myself again. [Tracy - 2:8:31]*

*So the journey that I've taken - at first it was forced, but then I could see where I was going. But now, knowing what I've actually achieved by myself, I'm happy - I'm really really happy! [Aliya - 2:15:5]*

They did not conceptualise their domestic violence journey as a permanent state of travelling, but as a literal and emotional journey that they could see the end of. This was irrespective of the fact that some were still in temporary accommodation, awaiting rehousing, or in short-term private tenancies, and so

would be literally travelling again. The relationship of women's journeys to such periods of waiting and notions of settling are explored in the next two chapters.

## 5.6. Conclusions

Women travel from everywhere due to domestic violence. Many journeys to access services are relatively short distances, either residential mobility within a Local Authority, or migration of under 40 miles; but the overall journeys from abuse to resettlement include multiple stages. Residential mobility is more likely in urban Local Authorities, but the associations of rates of leaving, arriving and residential mobility with different types of Local Authority in terms of rurality, size, service provision, or deprivation are generally only weak to moderate. The strongest associations are between rates of leaving and arriving, meaning that the net rate of leaving/arriving for most Local Authorities is around zero. At the national scale, therefore, the very individualised journeys of women leaving domestic violence represent a process of spatial churn.

There is also only weak association between any demographic characteristics of women and the distances travelled, and whether or not they migrated across Local Authority boundaries. Interviewed Women's accounts indicate that where and how far they went were determined by a range of factors including their judgement of where they could be safe, the availability (or not) of refuge spaces, and the practicalities of travel. They also indicated that the disruption of their journeys did not simply relate to distance, but also to practical and emotional pressure points regardless of mileage.

All the Interviewed Women ended up in a somewhat different type of Local Authority to the one they left, however, the larger picture from analysis of the Woman-Journeys datasets is that women were significantly more likely to go to the same type of Local Authority as the one they left in terms of Rural-Urban Classification and Area Group Classification. More generally, it can be concluded that women are not relocating distinctively from or to a particular type of place,

but from their individual circumstances of abuse, and to a place over which they have very little option. They are focused on leaving, rather than arriving.

These domestic violence journeys are therefore distinctive from other internal migration within the UK, because they are forced. Women are not seeking a different type of place from where they left; they have generally not chosen their destination at all; and the journeys do not aggregate into net flows of North to South, or urban to rural. A reconceptualisation of this travelling is therefore required. However, the evidence of multiple stages within the overall journeys means that a consideration of the further stages of waiting and settling is first necessary.

## Chapter 6. Women's Domestic Violence Journeys: Waiting

The initial research questions included an intention to explore the role of support services, specifically in the context of women's journeys (as there is already an extensive literature on the role of women's refuges and other specialist support services more generally - as discussed in Chapter 2). Many women who escape domestic violence experience periods in temporary accommodation; and for all the Interviewed Women this included time living in a women's refuge. Time in a refuge involved accessing a range of support, as well as dealing with many practical and emotional issues; as women began to make sense of the abuse, make decisions, and take actions about their future. Whilst often being in an unchosen location, and in temporary accommodation, women also began processes of settling, both within the refuge as a home, and in the local area. The period in a refuge was therefore a stage of women's journeys, despite being a stage when they were not actually moving. However, this chapter includes evidence that women are staying longer than they would want to in this stage, and that this can have a negative impact on their further progress towards settling. International migration literature (such as Hyndman & Giles, 2011; Mountz, 2011) includes discussion of periods of waiting in liminal spaces, such as refugee camps; and there are parallels in women's domestic violence journeys of dynamics of both action and waiting which are explored in this chapter. The chapter concludes with conceptualising the refuge as a distinctive stage, enabling both increased autonomy and increased collectivity in women's domestic violence journeys.

### 6.1. Being in the refuge

#### *Only the start of the journey*

Both Interviewed Women and Interviewed Workers emphasised that arriving at a women's refuge was often only the very start of the journey away from the abuse, psychologically, emotionally and practically. On a practical level, many Interviewed Women had multiple stages on their journeys, with stays in various

types of accommodation of 1 or 2 days, up to a year or more, before they had to leave again. Stays tended to be for months, however, whether they were the second or the tenth stage of the journeys. Of those who had completed their stays in the women's refuge, they had been in the refuge from a minimum of two months to a maximum of 1 year and two months, with a mean length of stay of ten months.

Regardless of the length of stay in a refuge, all Interviewed Women talked of the significance of the refuge, though sometimes with mixed feelings. The Interviewed Women who completed Significance Charts generally included the refuge as significant and close, or highlighted specific named refuge workers (see Figure 6.30).

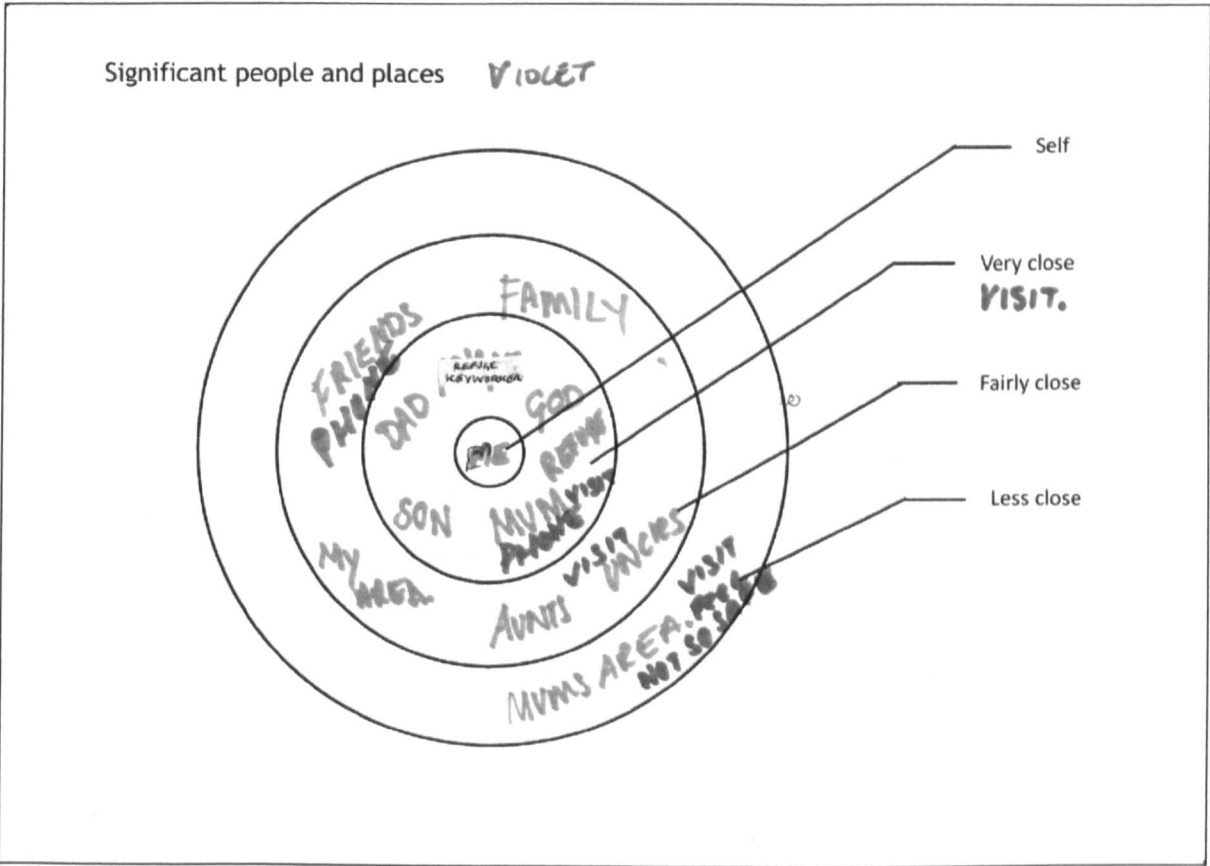


Figure 6.30: Example of a Significance Chart - Violet

*I think the most important person who did everything for me - you know - who I can say I owe to - is [keyworker] - she helped me a lot. To me she's like my mum - she advised me, she helped me with everything; if she wasn't here I don't know where I would be right now. From counselling me, when I was here and my children were not even settling - and she*

*was always there for me; giving me advice - comforting me as well - helping me with the Housing. Even when I was moving she even helped - when I was out of this place she even came and had tea with me! [laughs] So she is really important in my life. And it's so difficult for me to just disengage from her - I don't think it's fair - I really want to keep a relationship with her; that's what I wish. [Tracy - 2:7:47]*

Many Interviewed Women emphasised the specialist nature of the support offered by the refuge workers; that addressed their needs in a very broad and holistic way (as discussed by Abrahams, 2007). And this included some Interviewed Women who initially had not recognised such needs, and wanted to leave the refuge as soon as possible.

*So yes counselling was very good - it worked; and the keywork sessions here [the refuge] were fantastic. I didn't understand in the beginning because I'm like - oh my God, I just want to get out of here and get my own place - find me somewhere to live! That was my hassle when I come - I want to move on, I want to go back to work, and I want to do this, I want to go to college, to university - I want to do all that stuff. But it was after two months of living here I realised I'm not even ready to do that - I'm not ready to go back to work; I'm not ready to even study; let alone to come to terms with what has happened. [Gloria - 1:3:35]*

Interviewed Women with children highlighted their children in the Significance Charts they drew, and often emphasised how focusing on their children helped them cope.

*If it wasn't for my daughter I wouldn't - some days I don't even think I'd get out of bed; because it just seems too much - because you've got so many people to get to know; different names, different faces, different dates, times. It does get quite confusing. But - again - just take each day as it comes; and just get through it. [Louise - 1:12:26]*

Focusing on their children was a way of concentrating on what they had, rather than on what they had lost. In the Groupwork, women took many photographs of their children, and used these photographs in making albums or calendars for themselves (Figure 6.31), as well as posters for the refuges and input to the research. However, feedback about the Groupwork, from both women and workers, also emphasised that it was really positive to have an activity for the

women themselves, given that most creative and fun activities were usually focused solely on the children.

“Taken inside the refuge flat - it makes me smile and think how much my daughters like Minnie Mouse. Central is a calendar picture of my daughters and another child in the refuge, which I made as part of the project.” - Rija

Figure 6.31: Image of calendar produced in the Groupwork - Rija

Some Interviewed Women emphasised the practical life skills they had gained in the refuge, including women who were fairly new to the UK, or had been kept very isolated.

*I'd never lived by myself since I came to this country - I'd never lived by myself in the UK - so I didn't get to do anything by myself. I didn't learn about going on trains, going on buses - all by myself; I just didn't do that. But now I've learned how the DLR [Docklands Light Railway] works, how the Overground works - I had to study it all - look on the internet.*

*When I was first travelling I had to write down my journeys - just in case I missed anything on my way - so I could check. And if there was a problem on the line, I just couldn't find my way! Now I can find my way everywhere - even without going on TFL [Transport For London website]! It's good to know all of that! [laughs] [Faith - 2:8:31]*

*At first I didn't know anything - like for my electric, for my key - I didn't know where to go - I didn't really understand how the electric worked. So when I first came here [laughs] - for the first two weeks - I did not put the light on, because I was really really scared that if I did put the lights on that the electric would go, and I wouldn't know what to do. But then gradually I got used to it; so that now the electric stays on for nearly three weeks - which is not bad. [Aliya - 2:4:39]*

A refuge stay was therefore an important part of developing personal resources and skills for the next stage of the journey. However, being in the refuge was difficult for some Interviewed Women, particularly when they felt that they had dealt with all the practical and emotional issues they could, and now were just waiting to move again.

*I feel like I'm used to it [in the refuge]. But I don't want to get too settled because I know I'm going to go again. And also it stops me getting involved in a lot of things - I never knew I was going to be here for a year - I thought I was going to be here for about six months. So like if I knew I'd be here longer I would have got involved in a lot more things - just to like keep myself busy; but I didn't really want to get involved in something just to be moving away. [Jenny - 1:9:18]*

### ***Needing support other than the refuge***

Several Interviewed Women had also accessed specialist support other than the refuge, whether for themselves or their children. This ranged from nursery places for young children, youth groups for older children, to counselling for women themselves. Some women did not, however, find individual counselling appropriate, particularly at a time when they were dealing with a lot of practical issues as well.

*I had a bit of counselling for a while; but I'd say I wasn't ready to do the counselling. I might be a bit later. But it didn't help me in the way that I thought it would help me - it just made me talk about things that wasn't really helping myself. [Jenny - 2:13:12]*

*I also went to [women's organisation] to do group counselling; and that was really good - that helped me quite a lot - so that's when I cancelled*



*the [individual counselling] and continued with the [women's organisation]. [Aliya - 2:13:24]*

Another concern of some Interviewed Women about accessing any services around mental health was that this could be stigmatising, and indicate that it was themselves who were the problem, rather than the abuser's behaviour. Some of the Interviewed Workers also emphasised this concern for women with No Recourse to Public Funds, who would only be assisted financially if they had children, or were assessed as Vulnerable.

*Sometimes they [single women with No Recourse] can be concerned about it - especially if the women are funded under the Mental Health department - if they're classed as Vulnerable Adults. Because what they feel is - are we being stigmatised? Is that label going to go around with us forever? Is it going to affect our future right to work? [Worker R - 1:3:28]*

Some Interviewed Women had the support of their religion, and making that connection in the area of the refuge had been really important.

*I've always wanted to do it [go to church] and I didn't; but - when I came here - I did. And it's made me feel clean again - not that I was dirty but - I don't know - I felt that I'd mixed with some real horrible people; not that I'd done anything wrong. But it made me feel clean and good - and that's what I needed to feel; because I did feel dirty - I don't know why - but I did. [Violet - 2:6:38]*

*It's to be able to find a way - and I think that's why the church does a lot for me - it just gives me faith that I can continue, I can go on. Things what wouldn't make an interest for regular people makes an interest for me in the church: the story of Job where he lost everything - and he had to get it all back. And they say God gave him it all back, but I think - by the sweat of your brows you shall live! - so he got it all back [laughs]. [Cathy - 2:17:42]*

Being in the refuge therefore enabled women to access a range of support, both from the keyworkers, and from outside agencies; whether for dealing with issues from the past, or looking forward to their futures.

## ***Ongoing legal cases***

Whilst they were in the refuge, some Interviewed Women had ongoing legal cases, which they felt were hanging over them or determining their actions as they waited for a resolution. These included cases on immigration status as women with No Recourse applied for Leave to Remain, as well as criminal and family law cases. Having moved away from where they had lived with the abuser, Interviewed Women talked about poor communication to them about the progress in legal cases, such as Maud with a criminal case against her ex partner.

*I just feel that the police took the information from me, and then - that's it - you're on your own now. Whereas - I can understand why people don't go to the police; they say all the time - if you see a crime, you've got to report it; why? Why - basically? Like Crimestoppers say - if you report a crime you get a reward; like - in my position - I didn't want a reward, but I just needed to get it off my chest, and I just needed him caught - basically. I needed to try and get my life back.  
[Maud - 1:13:21]*

Violet was dealing with ongoing criminal and family law cases, and found the various processes and timescales very concerning in terms of settling her son and getting on with their lives.

*By my doing this move he's [ex partner] acted in terrible ways - towards my family, you know; and I've just kept it going. I've kept - every time I had messages or anything I had to keep ringing the police - you've got to keep reporting absolutely everything you can.*

*All the criminal court has been done, but it's literally him asking to see our little one. And the courts are saying at the moment - and the CAFCASS officer - no way whatsoever; not until you complete various courses... and he's not even tried to do them. I've allowed him to send cards or letters to my solicitor for the little one - but he's not even done that.*

*He's saying that - because the course takes nine months wait - he's not prepared to wait that long; so he's trying to appeal - to see the little one before he does this course. [Violet - 1:8:5/3:6:19]*

Violet felt that the progress she and her son had been able to make, practically and emotionally, was at risk because of being held in limbo by the ongoing legal cases and the ongoing uncertainty of what decisions would be made.

### ***Day to day life***

Interviewed Women had varied experiences of day to day life in the refuge, from boredom, to stress, to enjoyment and celebrations. Many emphasised how important it had been for them to meet other women who had been through domestic violence, and that they had made good friends. Some highlighted the support from other residents as at least as important as the support of the workers.

*I've been lucky enough to have the people who live here who have been really nice as well; so that helps as well. People who live here muck in with each other, and it's nice - like family-run! I know they're not all like that! [laughs] That's why I say I'm lucky! [Caroline - 1:7:30]*

*Well - you know - if you've been through it yourself; I think one of the things that refuge should be aware of is that sometimes it's better to have somebody - not necessarily on the staff - but somebody who's been through those issues [to meet women when they first arrive]. So that when a girl gets there, or a woman - you know - somebody can pop along and say - hello, I'm [Elizabeth] and I used to be here; and I made it! [Elizabeth - 1:11:20]*

Women who took part in the Groupwork Process showed the friendships they had made by taking many photos of themselves and their new friends. Friends from the refuge were also highlighted in some of the Significance Charts Interviewed Women did after leaving the refuge, showing close friends that they were keeping in contact with.

Women also used the Groupwork Process to document both the routines and the new experiences of their day to day life in the refuge. The photography enabled communication of these experiences; as well as the participants highlighting that the Groupwork Process had been an enjoyable experience in itself, in

contrast to all the difficult and serious issues they were dealing with whilst in the refuge.

As examples of portraying routines, Janet photographed views on her walk to work, as well as cleaning materials and equipment, and the communal areas of the refuge after she had cleaned them (Figure 6.32).

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**Figure 6.32: Images of day to day routines - Janet**

Nurgis photographed the bus timetable, highlighting that she had had to find out the routes and changes to take her daughter to nursery (Figure 6.33).

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**Figure 6.33: Images of day to day routines - Nurgis**

After their experiences of abuse, women wanted to mark the relatively ordinariness of their lives now in the refuge. They used the photographs as a way of communicating this, both within the Groupwork discussions and by putting images and captions into the research. However, Nurgis also used the photography to record very new experiences for her - including her second ever journey on a train. It was a journey to a solicitor's appointment concerning her immigration status, so was not a journey she was taking for pleasure; but, via the photography, she reflected on how she enjoyed the lights and colours of the landscape (see Travelling chapter - Figure 5.29).

Similarly, Jasmin's photograph from the seventh floor of a shopping centre is made more powerful, and maybe more beautiful, by her explanation that it was her first time ever in a lift (Figure 6.34).

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**Figure 6.34: Image of first time ever going in a lift - Jasmin**

## ***Opportunities to learn and study***

As well as new experiences, some of the Interviewed Women took up opportunities to study or volunteer whilst they were in the refuge, and others planned to do so once they had left. Violet was studying Law with the Open University, and had started on it during her own legal cases.

*I've always been a little bit interested in it [studying Law] - not massively - but since this has happened it's like I've zoomed in on it! Big time! Because I didn't understand any of the words at all; I was like - what does that mean, what does that mean? The keyworkers really explained everything; but I was such in a mess it didn't sink in.*

*But now - to go in - and they say whatever - and I know exactly what they mean; so it's like - wow! - I feel quite intelligent! And I never thought I could do anything like that; because when somebody puts you down so much... And then I get all this good feedback, and the tutors ring you up and say - that was amazing; so things like that - really boosts you - and it's good.*

*So - hopefully - I'm going to change a few laws when it comes to domestic violence! [laughs] There's a few things that need to be sorted out, that hopefully I can try and do! [Violet - 2:12:3/3:10:8]*

Louise had also been prompted to study because of her experiences of abuse, but later changed her mind to do something more forward-looking for herself.

*I was going to do psychology; but it seems a little deep [laughs]. I kind of got into it for reasons of why this all happened - what it was that made him [ex partner] switch. But I kind of thought now that - I don't really want to go there because I don't really want to go over it all - just to come back to where I am: oh - alright - so that's it... and just lose myself again in the process; and upset myself. So I'm interested in like medicine and sciences - doing an Access course just to see what it's like - and then, if not, I can change and try something else. [Louise - 2:8:2]*

Other Interviewed Women were doing volunteering or studying to fill their time as they waited, or to build up their skills and confidence, and lead to a future career.

*I'm enjoying my courses, and things like that - that's given me some hope. Some people say - at your age, you might come across ageism a bit - but for me I feel that at the end of my course I will be able to go forward. Because I'm doing Fashion Design and pattern-cutting - which I've done years before - then for me if you can't get a job because you're too old to get a job; then just go private yourself. So - there's a way out - and that's what keeps me going. And it's the best thing that's happened to me in the past eight years! [Cathy - 1:4:21]*

### ***Length of stay in the refuge***

Being in the refuge was, therefore, an experience of both day to day routines and major new experiences and learning; but also an opportunity for significant support. Many Interviewed Women emphasised that the refuge had provided an essential bridge between leaving the abuse and coping with the aftermath, and being able to access other services and get on with their lives.

*So there is stuff out there. A lot of it you have to do for yourself, but a lot of the time you're not ready to do it for yourself. [Helen - 1:14:6]*

However, many felt that when they had reached a point where they were ready to do things for themselves, the lack of rehousing options meant that they ended up staying in the refuge longer than they needed to; so that it was holding them back.

*Maybe if I was working - maybe it would have been better [in the refuge]. For a very long time I was worried about not having anything mentally to think about... so I registered at the library and do lots of reading to get my brain active - I felt I was losing it somehow! [Faith - 1:6:27]*

*I'm quite bored of it now - I feel a bit stuck because I've come from what I've come from and this is just like - it's a waiting room. You're in No Man's Land really - you're just waiting for other people to just pick you up and move you to wherever else it is that you need to go. You're just waiting on others really, which is quite annoying. [Louise - 2:1:47]*

Rather than applying for social housing, other Interviewed Women dealt with the feeling of having to wait too long by leaving to private accommodation.



*That's why I left - because I didn't think I was getting any help in a sense; and I would have been there like another six months and where would I be? [Maud - 2:10:42]*

Many Interviewed Workers highlighted the crucial initial role of the refuge, and the distinctive support they could provide; but that the most positive process for women in a refuge tended to take around six months, and women were consistently ending up staying longer than this.

*I always say that the first month is probably the hardest. If you can get a woman through the first weekend, and her first month, and she'll turn and say - actually I'm glad I've done it - made the move.*

*If a woman comes in on a Friday you know there's a high chance she'll go back; because that weekend - even though we offer them support over the telephone, and if need be we would come out to support her - but it's just so unfamiliar, and not having anything - new people. I always think the first weekend is absolutely the toughest.*

*If a woman comes in on Monday I always think she's more likely to stay than if you have a woman come in on a Friday evening.  
[Worker S - 1:8:26]*

*Women can get institutionalised after about six months - they get really nit-picking rather than independent. By then the majority are staying because they are waiting for Housing. Some do need to stay longer emotionally and need the support to face moving on; but others are staying too long. [Worker F - 1:3:28]*

Interviewed Workers highlighted that women with No Recourse to Public Funds tended to stay the longest in the refuge - up to two years in some cases.

*We do try not to have them staying for more than two years; but No Recourse are unfortunately the ones that stay the longest because their immigration takes priority over most things. Because without having secure immigration they can't get secure in anything else.  
[Worker R - 1:7:48]*

Women staying longer than they need to in refuges also effectively reduces the capacity of refuges, even if the number of bedspaces stays the same. The Woman-Journeys Datasets show a reduction in women accessing women's

refuges from 14,338 in 2003-4 to 11,546 in 2008-9 (Figure 6.35). Whilst some of this reduction represents women’s refuges being taken over by Registered Social Landlords and redesignated as Supported Housing, there is only an increase of around 500 women accessing Supported Housing over these six years. Non-accommodation services such as Floating Support have increased in some areas over this period, partly with the aim of preventing women from having to relocate; however the Woman-Journeys Datasets include only women who have relocated (for example to private-rented accommodation, whilst also accessing Floating Support).

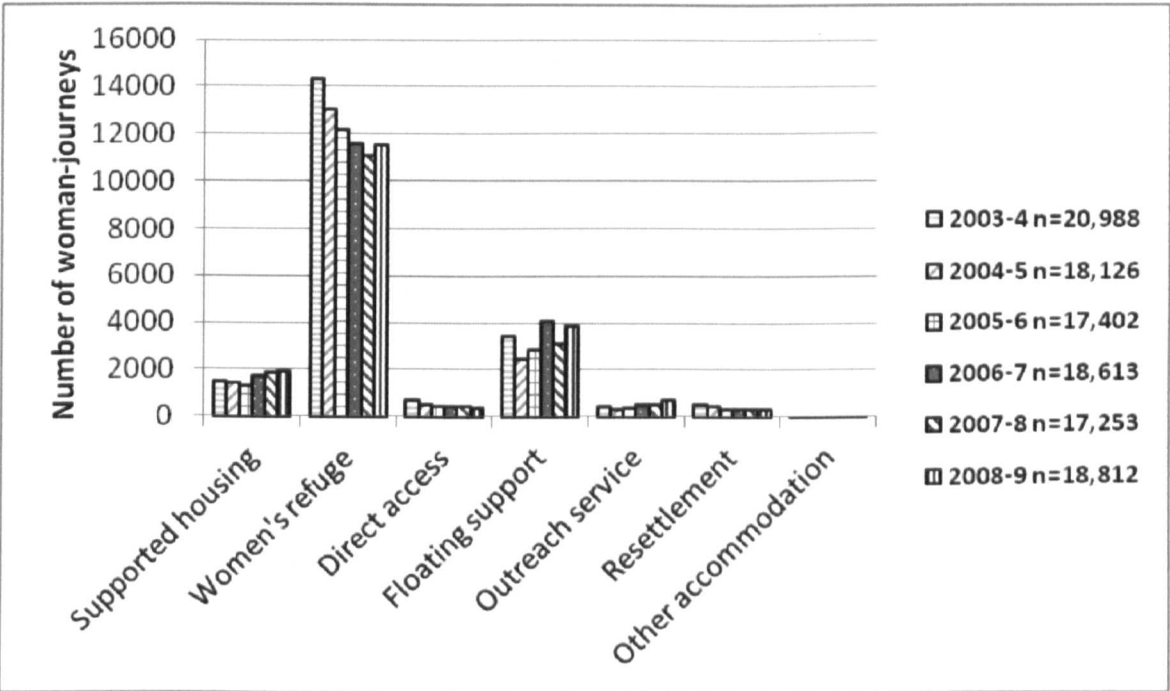


Figure 6.35: Graph of types of service relocated to 2003-2009

Both Supported Housing and Floating Support would tend to offer distinctively different types of support than women’s refuges. Supported Housing may offer less specialist support around domestic violence; and Floating Support will be offered on a one-to-one basis rather than providing contact with other women who have experienced domestic violence. There has therefore been a striking reduction in the availability of the distinctive services of women’s refuges; even before the more recent cuts discussed by Towers and Walby (2012).

## 6.2. Feeling in the refuge

Before reaching a point where they felt they were just waiting in the refuge, Interviewed Women talked about a wide range of thoughts and feelings; from the time of initial arrival through to a stage of feeling ready to leave and continue their journeys.

### *Initial fears*

Many Interviewed women talked about their feelings and emotions when they first arrived at the refuge, including fears both about the abuser, and about where they had come to. Many were scared of being tracked down by the abuser, and did not know if they could trust anyone.

*I was really really nervous, you know, that everywhere I looked over my shoulder. I was convinced I was being followed.*

*I didn't want to tell any people my real name or anything [...] When I went to join the doctor's I was worried about giving my old address - you just think - say they find out this, or that - you know it makes you very very paranoid. I mean even though I've been here a long time I'm still not - what's that word when you feel - I've not let my barriers down; I'm still very cautious what I say to anyone. [Violet - 1:6:23/1:8:21]*

Several said that it was only once they got to a refuge that their experiences really hit them, and it became difficult to take anything in.

*The people in the [refuge] office they start to talk to me but I arrived on afternoon time and it was late and I was tired; so it was just basic information - what I should do now. But I was just like numb - completely numb. What are they talking about? I think - should I keep going? - but... No choice. I am here.*

*But you doesn't understand - the first three weeks - to be honest - I don't know if I remember fifty per cent of it. It was like a machine - a programme: OK - do you understand this paper? Yes, fine, OK. I was just going like a completely mental person...*

*Everyone reacts in a completely different way... Me I am just like I am closing myself inside and completely leave me alone; I don't want to talk*

*with anybody, I don't want to see anybody... Please I need time to sort my mind. So the first three weeks it was just completely in shock.*  
[Anna - 1:12:27]

Some felt that they needed more intensive support from the refuge in the first few days, or needed language support to understand what was happening.

*I come here [refuge], and I feel safe; but I was frightened Friday, because I never realised this place wasn't - there was no-one around on weekends. [...] And it's all of a sudden - now - the reality of the past year has just hit me.* [Maud - 1:11:4]

*When I arrived here I was still scared - I didn't know the area and I didn't know anyone. None of the staff spoke Bengali at the time - my husband had always promised me that I would learn English but then he never let me out.* [Parveen - 1:3:9]

As discussed earlier, Interviewed Workers also emphasised the importance of that initial arrival at the refuge as a pressure point as to whether women stayed or returned to the abuser.

### ***Ongoing emotions***

After their initial feelings at the refuge, some Interviewed Women felt ongoing mental and emotional effects from the abuse, and some sought medical help to deal with this.

*I'm on anti-depressants; and some days it's OK, some days I don't think about it, and then other days it's like being in a fantasy - lack of sleep; dreams - waking up and not being able to go back to sleep; reading numerous books to try and take my mind off it - to try and get yourself to sleep. Sleeping tablets. It's not - I don't know - it's not easy; but you just have to get on with it and take each day as it comes.*  
[Louise - 1:11:37]

*Poor doctor - absolutely great doctor - we really struggled - we really struggled to find something that would work. It didn't matter what he gave me - I wasn't sleeping, I was cleaning all the time! [laughs] It was bad - I was jumping a mile when the doorbell goes; so it took a long long time; I would say it took four/five months, and probably longer than that.* [Helen - 1:11:30]

Others did not use medication, but talked about the ongoing impact of the abuse on them mentally and physically.

*I'm trying to be brave around my daughter, and around other people; but when I'm sat down, I'm just a mess. And I refuse to take anti-depressants or anything because I'm a firm believer that - we take tablets because we need them. I've been getting a lot of chest pains this last weekend - and they're frightening me as well; but because I've got [illness] I don't know if it's that, or it's the stress. [Maud - 1:11:24]*

*That mental abuse - I try to put that behind me - but that's one of the harder ones to kick. The physical abuse stops - it's out the way now - but the mental abuse preys on your mind - I don't think I could face anybody in that town again; I'm not sure I want to after that. [Cathy - 1:4:11]*

Some Interviewed Women emphasised how their feelings had focused into anger at their ex partner.

*He ripped my life apart. Completely and utterly ripped my life apart. It's been so - I'm starting to feel quite angry with him now. I've got no friends, I can't see my family - I can't do this, I can't do that - all because of one man. That is so sad.*

*I told this to the doctor - the doctor is so proud of me - I had a dream; and I turned around and I told him [ex partner] that he was talking bullshit and to go away and leave me alone! [laughs] I don't know if I'd dare tell him that in real life; but you know I did it [laughs] - and even though it was a dream it felt good! [laughter] It really felt good! You're talking bullshit - go away and leave me alone! And then woke up in a complete and utter panic attack that he was going to find me! [laughs]  
[Helen - 1:12:13]*

Even in the safety of the refuge, many women were therefore still dealing with the impact of the abuse.

### ***Feelings of safety***

Though some Interviewed Women emphasised that they took a long time to begin to feel safe in the refuge, other said they felt relieved and safe from the first night.

*Relieved - total relief. That was the first night I'd slept - because I felt safe - even though I didn't have a key, and I didn't have a lock on the door - I felt safe. I thought - well, he'll never find me here. So it was just total relief. [Elizabeth - 1:8:19]*

*I was just so relieved! [laughs] I was relieved to be out! I didn't have to go back - knowing that I didn't have to go back - it was like 50 tonnes taken off my shoulders!*

*I wasn't really caring whether there were other people in the house [laughs] - I was just glad that I was in a room by myself. You know, I could think without being manipulated - or abused; I could think, relax, not hear a word from anyone! For the first few days that was a great honour indeed - it was great. [Cathy - 1:9:37/1:9:41]*

Many Interviewed Women talked about feeling safe in the refuge, but also feeling wary of any new contact; and considered the risks in deciding to take part in this research. This was the same for the women deciding to be involved in the Groupwork Process, though this did not require anyone to share their personal experiences. However, during the Groupwork Process, the women who participated emphasised that they felt safe to do so; and put many photographs they took into the research as a way of telling their stories. Some of them specifically used the photographs and captions to communicate their feelings and emotions, both negative and positive (Figure 6.36, Figure 6.37, Figure 6.38).

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Figure 6.36: Images expressing feelings - Janet and Samantha

**Figure 6.37: Images expressing feelings - Mia**

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Figure 6.38: Image expressing feelings - Rija

### ***Freedom and happiness***

Despite the difficulties and frustrations of being in the refuge for some, many Interviewed Women talked passionately about their sense of freedom to be themselves, and their happiness and peace. This was the case even for Interviewed Women at a stage when they did not know what would be happening longer term, as well as for those who had left the refuge.

*But - the person that I am now - I don't think I could be this person if I go home - if I was to go home. And I am much more happier with the person that I am now - before, I used to hide in a shell... but the shell is cracked [laughs]. I'm really really really happy; and really really really grateful for all the help that I've had. [Aliya - 2:2:48]*

*It's a great feeling of peace - and that's how I felt when I went into the domestic violence shelter. There's some people that say it was terrible, but - because I was looking for peace - I didn't have no peace at all... So just to find peace - I was satisfied - because peace becomes more than gold and silver [laughs]; and I found peace. [Cathy - 2:20:21]*



As well as a place of personal happiness, the refuge could also be a place for communal celebrations, such as children's parties, and these featured in many of the Groupwork Images (Figure 6.39).

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Figure 6.39: Images of birthday party - Jasmin and Koli

### 6.3. Where you are in the refuge

Refuges could tend to be Augé's (2008) "non-places", as discussed in Chapter 2, because women had travelled there to seek safety, rather than aiming for a

particular location. However, the safety and freedom of being in the refuge, whether it was felt immediately or over time, also enabled women to begin to relate to the place where they had found themselves.

### ***Not a chosen place***

As discussed earlier, at the point of leaving, few Interviewed Women had had a choice about the refuge they went to; and this was typical also in the Helpline Survey. They therefore found themselves often in an unknown and unchosen area. They also had to make decisions as soon as possible about their longer term location if they wanted to apply for social housing, because applications are to a single Local Authority and registered in date order. Some were able to exercise more agency in this next stage of rehousing from the refuge, but Jenny found that the Council she applied to tried to argue that she should stay in the area where she had happened to find a refuge space.

*But my Housing Officer - he was saying to me - well, if you can stay in the refuge that long I'm sure you can stay in that Borough. So I said - well, for one, I've got a right to choose where I want to go; and for two, when you go into a refuge you're not looking at a location you're just looking about being safe. [Jenny - 1:10:41]*

Refuges can be very different in terms of the facilities and services, and also in terms of the types of areas where they are. Interviewed Workers emphasised that it could be difficult if a woman ended up in a very different type of area than what she wanted.

*I think, once people have overcome the fact - that they're now safe; I mean obviously that is the first priority of all the women that come here - that they're actually safe. But once they get settled in and they feel less at risk, I think they may start to think - what have I done? I've come to this little town, and it's not what I thought it would be; and I don't really like it. [Worker A - 1:2:1]*

*If they're London women they often just want to be out all the time, on the phone all the time. So we explain to women what it is like beforehand - so the referral can take quite a while - but it's better than*

*her coming and being shocked that there's not lots of transport and everything. [Worker F - 1:2:10]*

In contrast to women finding themselves in places they did not like, most Interviewed Women had been relieved simply to be somewhere safe, and surprised that the refuge itself was a lot nicer than they had imagined.

*It wasn't a dungeon, it wasn't a fenced area where people were just dumped there and wait for a name to be called, you know, when they want to. But it was a nice, comfortable place; with somebody who was there to listen, to explain what you'd been through; and to be offered a room which was quite comfortable - with all you need for a baby. A safe place. And the promise to get the help that you're going to need to build you up again - a good place. [Gloria - 1:11:35]*

The availability of women's refuges was therefore key to women being able to move to a safe area, and women needed accommodation to be able to go to an area they did not know. Whilst the Woman-Journeys Datasets show that women relocated to different types of services, they were statistically significantly more likely to cross Local Authority boundaries to access accommodation services (primarily refuges and Supported Housing) and to travel further to such services<sup>65</sup>. The mean distances travelled to accommodation services was 26.4 miles in 2008-9, compared with 3.7 miles for non-accommodation services; and for just those women who migrated across Local Authority boundaries the mean distances were 38.3 miles compared with 18.2 miles. Women's refuges were strongly the most likely services that women would migrate across Local Authority boundaries to access, as well as to travel the furthest, indicating that such services are an important means by which women travelled the longest distances away from their origin area<sup>66</sup>. Even so, women's refuges were almost

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<sup>65</sup> Woman-journeys datasets. Test for differences between Accommodation and Non-accommodation services and whether or not women crossed LA boundaries - Crosstabulation. For 2008-9,  $n=18694$ , Chi-Square = 4015.982 (df=1)  $p<0.001$  - The association is therefore statistically significant, and Phi = -0.463 suggests that the association is strong.

<sup>66</sup> Woman-journeys datasets. Test for differences between types of service accessed and whether or not women crossed LA boundaries - Crosstabulation. For 2008-9,  $n=18694$ , Chi-Square = 4705.849 (df=6)  $p<0.001$  - The association is therefore statistically significant, and Cramer's V = 0.502 suggests that the association is strong. The adjusted standardised residuals indicate that woman-journeys to Women's Refuges were extremely likely to be Migration rather

the largest category of services accessed by residential mobility (3,157 - 37% - in 2008-9) as well as by far the largest category accessed by migration (8,302 - 82% - in 2008-9).

### ***Finding your way around***

Arriving in a new, and generally unknown, place, Interviewed Women talked about what they did to start to find their way around. Some explored by themselves, whilst others appreciated the information from other women in the refuge.

*I'm one of those people where I just put my stuff down and have a cup of tea, and then I'll just take my daughter out and go and have a look - just to take my mind off the situation a little bit; and just take in a bit of the scenery all at the same time. Just learn your way around.*  
[Louise - 1:12:13]

*You literally rely on somebody else telling you - which in this little house, that's what we try to do. You know, we sit them down and say - are you OK for tea and coffee or whatever; do you know where the shops are - but it's very much up to us women here.* [Elizabeth - 1:11:46]

*The first Saturday that I actually came - I was told about the [gallery] so I went to the [gallery] and from that I walked past [tube station] and - oh my god - I didn't even realise! I was walking for about three hours, and I ended up in [central London]! But I had no stress - my feet weren't hurting - I wasn't over-thinking; it was really nice! [laughs]*

*It's nice to know that you can actually do things like that - whereas back at home, Saturdays and Sundays, I would not be allowed out unless I was with someone.* [Aliya - 1:7:48]

The women who took part in the Groupwork Process<sup>67</sup> talked about how they had first explored the area, often not going far to begin with, but finding the local shops and the places they had to; such as the GP or the school. Some were pleased to find shops and chainstores they knew from before, whilst noting the lack of other aspects they missed from where they had left. Maps and leaflets

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than Residential Mobility (a.r. = +62.5) in comparison with all other service types; and to have the longest mean (28.0 miles) distance travelled to access them.

<sup>67</sup> See Appendix 4 for an outline of the groupwork.

were used to highlight where particular places were, and the South Coast Town group produced advice pages for future refuge residents about the best places to go. The Groupwork Process therefore generated communal knowledge, rather than just individualised experiences, and recognised this knowledge as valuable.

Women also used the photography as a reason to go to particular places, and talked about noticing them in a different way; as well as being able to share the information in the group that looked at the pictures.

*Samantha: I felt like such a tourist.*

*Mia: Yeah - taking pictures!*<sup>68</sup>

The photography documented how they were getting to know the area, and particular places such as parks, or the beach (see later - Figure 6.42, Figure 6.43); and both groups produced posters for the refuges so that they could share this with future as well as current residents (see next chapter - Figure 7.45).

### ***A sense of home***

Some Interviewed Women talked about feeling a sense of home in the refuge, despite its temporary nature, whilst others did not. Some contrasted their refuge room with having had much more space and possessions where they had lived in the relationship, but that that had not been what they would call a home, because of the abuse.

*I've never ever regretted it - you know, coming from this big enormous house into this room - the room that I was in, it was absolutely tiny. But it was all over now, and I'd think - thank God - I was having terrible nightmares that I was back there; and then I woke up and I thought [sigh] I'm in this room - alright, it's a little room, but we're free, and we're away. [Violet - 1:7:1]*

Some of the refuges, however, were self-contained flats, and Interviewed Women talked about how this could be both more isolating, and more homely.

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<sup>68</sup> Quote from a session of the Groupwork which was recorded and transcribed.

*I think a self-contained flat gives you that extra - it's easier to settle I think, if you know what I mean. If you're going to be here - like - six months; it's not home, but it feels more like home - doesn't it. Because when you're in the kitchen and people come in, and you're a bit teary, you don't want to see people. [Maud - 1:21:17]*

A sense of home was particularly highlighted by the Asian women who took part in the Groupwork Process in a Midlands City; with many of their photographs being taken in the refuge of pictures, decorations, and even Indian films on the television which helped them feel at home. However, there were photographs within the refuge from most women, including emphasising a sense of home (Figure 6.40, Figure 6.41).

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Figure 6.40: Images of the refuge - Janet, Riya and Jasmin



## ***A sense of place***

Many Interviewed Women also talked about a sense of home in the local area, and an increasing sense that the refuge area was a place that they wanted to settle. For some this was also because they had now spent so long in the refuge that the thought of going somewhere new would be very stressful.

*I lived here [the refuge] for nearly a year, but I was growing with it; and every time I was really worried because if a house came up outside [Sussex town] I'm going to be stressed again. Because I'm going to be learning a new place again - with my child - I think it was going to be a nightmare for me. But I thank God because I was offered a place in [Sussex town] - exactly what I wanted. [Gloria - 2:3:2]*

Other Interviewed Women had hoped to move elsewhere, to be nearer family or friends, but this had not been possible. Julien Rosa had been refused rehousing by the Council, and so had arranged private renting in the same area as the refuge because her children had now become settled at the local school.

*I was hoping to go back where I have connections - but it didn't happen, so I just decided to go private in the end. And with the kids going to school as well. I still want to move near my family; because it's really like I'm alone all the time. I still want to go to [town in West Sussex] but I'll stick here at present. [Julien Rosa - 2:1:22]*

Violet wanted to settle in the area of the refuge because her son had settled at school, and she had made friends in the time (over a year) that she had been in the refuge.

*I'll definitely stay in this area; or if a property comes up - like I say - but I don't want to go too far afield; because of the church, and friends now - I've met some lovely people, some really nice people. Really nice people - very helpful and understanding - not that I've told them where we are, but I think - because we've been here so long - they've kind of guessed, you know! [laughs] [Violet - 2:4:18]*

However, such connections do not count as a 'Local Connection' in Housing legislation, and she found that the Local Authority, which covered several



different towns, would not accept her for housing in that town, or a neighbouring town (her rehousing is discussed in the next chapter).

Many of the Groupwork Images are of the local area around the refuges, including views of streets and houses, countryside and parks, the beach and the city centre - all emphasised as places that they liked. Some women commented that they had got to know the area around the refuge in a few months better than they had known the area where they had lived in the abusive relationship for years. Many of the women were new to photography and surprised by how well the pictures came out, but also sometimes surprised by how beautiful they found the area where they were now living. Their captions (Figure 6.42 and Figure 6.43) also talk of how positive the area makes them feel.

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Figure 6.42: Images of the local area - Twinkle, Janet, Jasmin and Mia

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**Figure 6.43: Images of the local area - Nurgis, Twinkle, Jasmin, Janet and Rija**

## 6.4. Conceptualising the refuge

Women's time in the refuge was not just a time of feelings and emotions, but also a time and space for thinking and making sense of their experiences, and where they now found themselves. This echoes previous literature on the role of refuges, but, in the context of women's journeys, conceptualises the refuge as a distinctive stage in equipping women for moving on in their journeys. The role of the refuge was particularly highlighted as supporting both autonomy and collectivity. Women experienced a wider space for agency as they made sense of the abuse; but they also did this in the context of sharing time and space with other women who had experienced abuse, which enabled them to put their individual experiences into a more collective context.

### *Widening space for agency*

Several Interviewed Women talked about the refuge as a place where they could think; and that this was very different from when they were in the abusive relationship.

*It's more quieter - you can think; before I could not like think about things, you know - too much on your mind, you know. [Julien Rosa - 1:10:36]*

Though it could be difficult at times to think about their experiences, many highlighted that dealing with their experiences increased their ability to make future decisions and plans. Helen found herself agoraphobic when she first arrived in the refuge, but as she was slowly able to widen the places where she could go, she felt it widened her space for personal agency.

*I've gone from my room - when I first got here it was my room - and then the house; and then outside the house in the garden; and then the shops were safe, the Post Office was safe; the doctor's was safe. Now it's all the bits in between there are safe; and then the whole of [town in East Sussex]. I've even been to [next town in East Sussex] on the bus - did OK - got there and got back. So I'm hoping - over the coming weeks - that that's going to become safe; but at the moment [town in East Sussex]. I*

*can go round and about [town in East Sussex] quite easily; I can go down to the station, to the shops down there; I can go into town, I can go to the health centre, I can go to the college - I'm quite happy; all around [town in East Sussex], I'm fine.*

*I've just been so lucky really - really have. It's just that - after years of hell - all of a sudden I'm in this place - and I don't mean the flat - I mean this wonderful place; and it just feels amazing. And I just think - feeling like that - helps you then to move on with other things as well.  
[Helen - 1:15:20/2:2:31]*

The Interviewed Women who drew Significance Charts after they had left the refuge often detailed the wider range of people and agencies they know knew, and that it gave them wider circles of support and opportunities. However, some also emphasised the work they were doing themselves, to rebuild their confidence and sense of self.

*That voice is in there - telling you you're rubbish, you know; so it's now training your brain that - no, I am not rubbish, OK. I woke up feeling that I am rubbish, but I am not rubbish - I'm going to go out; get up, have a bath, and go out there smiling; because I am not.*

*To me it's the bad things that happened are actually still sort of stealing a part of my life away - because you can't do anything until you come out. So it's like four, five years that have just gone down the drain because you haven't been able to do what you wanted to do as an individual - trying to please someone else, or trying to be somebody who you're not; to just be in that relationship. [Gloria - 1:12:39/2:1:42]*

*You don't actually realise how much you do until everything gets so messed up that you have to restart again - pick up and go through things bit by bit by bit. And if you're in an emotional state anyway, it just seems that much harder; because everything is enormous - it's like huge stones that you've got to keep picking up and try and reassemble something out of what's just crashed down around your ears. It's not nice, but - it's happened, so you just have to get on with it; or you'd cease to do anything.  
[Louise - 1:10:7]*

## ***Making sense of the abuse***

The space to think could therefore be very difficult, with Interviewed Women talking about trying to make sense of the abuse for themselves, as well as seeing other women in the refuge dealing with similar issues.

To try and make sense of the abuse, Faith talked to friends and family and was astonished that other women she knew had experienced abuse and felt that it was the norm. She was determined that would not be the case for her and her children.

*I've come to realise that it's almost like a norm in my culture - it's weird. It's really weird.*

*When I started speaking to friends I had before I came here - who happened to be from Nigeria - and they were amazed. They said - you left for that?! They said - that's normal! They said - do you know what happened to me? - he hit me this... or he pushed my head... or he did this...*

*And I said - why did you put up with such a thing?*

*Even people I wasn't expecting at all - people married for years and years and still together... and all the time... It was so weird - how many times this has happened.*

*I thought it was just me... but people are going through it; and they see it as a normal thing...*

*So I got to know about my culture - not good things. I got to know about my culture - things which I don't agree with at all. And I don't want my kids to see it as normal in any shape or form. [Faith - 2:6:9/2:6:30]*

Many Interviewed Women wanted to share the insights they had gained from making sense of the abuse, and to offer advice to other women.

*So - get out! - don't stay; it's not you - it's not your fault. That's what I'd say - definitely - don't even think it is; because they're going to blame you - it's always your bloody fault. Well, it's not. They say it takes two to tango - but he's doing all the leading. So - it's not you - he's manipulating you; so get out. Even if you've got kids, then get out -*

*it'll be difficult, but there's help there. So - that's what I'd say.  
[Elizabeth - 2:11:8]*

*It's like being in a barrel with a whole load of lobsters in the bottom and you're trying to get out but there's something pulling you down...! But what you think is a load of lobsters is just one man - so just get out and keep on going - and don't look back! [Cathy - 2:19:20]*

## ***Sharing with other women***

As well as individual motivation, several Interviewed Women talked about the importance for them of sharing ideas and thoughts with other women in the refuge.

*I've made a lot of friends; a lot, a lot of good good friends - like sisters in all this. There's one who has gone [abroad] and we still keep in contact with each other - Facebook and all that - we talked on Skype! - and it was really fun with the e-mails and everything. [Julien Rosa - 2:7:47]*

*I've been lucky - I've still got friends from the last refuge, and I've still got friends from this one as well - friends that's moved out. So you - it's a bond in a way; and it's something that you can always go back to and talk about; or you can move on together. [Louise - 1:10:46]*

Aliya had found something that helped her, and so ended up running a session in the refuge.

*Yes - what actually happened was that my hair was falling out quite a lot, so I kept on going back and forth to the doctor's. And they said to me that my iron was really low; so I started taking iron medication - but I didn't feel as though my hair was growing back.*

*So I checked online, and I found this egg treatment for hair loss; and I think I tried it for about a month or so - every two days. And it actually worked! So I got really excited and I told [refuge worker] and she was like - that's really really good, what are the ingredients? And she said that there are other ladies going through the same things that I am going through, so she recommended I get everyone together and show them how to do the hair loss treatment. And that was last Tuesday; and I think about six people attended. [Aliya - 2:16:24]*

Many Interviewed Women contrasted the connections they had made with other women with the isolation they had experienced in the abusive relationship, and in the initial travelling, when they believed that they were on their own.

*I find that [isolation] odd; because you think you're the only one that's experiencing it... but it's millions of women - each sitting there thinking - what have I done wrong now? And you haven't. I was totally amazed.*

*So it's been funny - and you meet some nice people on the way. So if all these women are terrible to their husbands - and that's why they've left them - then they seem to be very nice women! [laughs] It's true - men think that we're complete utter bitches, we're making their lives hell, and it's all our fault... and then you disappear and leave them, and you meet other like-minded women; and you think - funny... I quite like you...! [Elizabeth - 2:11:23/2:13:24]*

As well as being important whilst they were together in the refuge, many also felt that the friendships would continue after leaving the refuge.

*I feel it's nice - I've met some good friends here [the refuge]; which weren't my plan! I was like - I've come here and I'm not here to make friends and I'm not here to make enemies - but I have made friends, and I will keep in contact with them - definitely. It's nice - and the kids have made really close friends - so I wouldn't want to cut myself off. [Violet - 2:8:12]*

The refuge had therefore enabled an important collective process, including for women who had not been expecting or seeking that. Making such connections with other women was often seen as an important part of being able to make the next move out of the refuge, which is discussed in the next chapter.

## **6.5. Conclusions**

Women's refuges offer a distinctive place on women's domestic violence journeys, providing a wide range of support based on women's and children's needs, over and above the safe accommodation whilst women deal with ongoing legal cases and consider their housing options. Being located all around the country they enable women to move to all types of places; and, as discussed earlier, the evidence is that women want to be in all types of places. Women's

refuges provide both somewhere for women to go, but also somewhere for women to be; and become more able to move on.

Interviewed Women talked about using their time in the refuge to deal with a range of feelings about the abusive situation they had left, and their fears and hopes for the future. They also valued the opportunity to develop skills, to study, and to make sense of their experiences; particularly with other women who had experienced abuse. Women's refuges enable these processes of active waiting, and most Interviewed Women were very positive about their periods in refuges. However, both Interviewed Women and Workers estimated an optimum stay of around six months, after which the positive benefits started to dissipate as women experienced the frustration and dependency of waiting too long. Just as the degree of disruption in women's lives is not necessarily about the distance travelled, the journey is not necessarily only progressed by moving. A refuge stay - whilst literally stationary - can provide an important opportunity to move on in all kinds of ways; however there comes a point when the liminal space of a refuge becomes a negative space of limbo. Women awaiting rehousing in social housing tend to have to wait longer than six months in refuges, and this both stalls their personal journeys, and reduces the capacity of women's refuges to help other women on such journeys.



## **Chapter 7. Women's Domestic Violence Journeys: Settling**

The broad chronology of a migration journey would tend to end with a sense of settling in a new place; but the evidence of women's domestic violence journeys indicates a more complicated process of degrees of settling or not settling. As the previous chapter discussed, resettlement from a refuge is often at a timing that is out of women's control, and when the energy and activity of moving on have dissipated and women's journeys have somewhat stalled. This chapter explores the disjuncture, therefore, between rehousing as an event and resettling as a process. The chapter starts with the procedures and practicalities of rehousing from the refuge, and the extent to which women may be permanently in temporary accommodation, with settlement indefinitely postponed. The chapter then explores women's feelings and actions of becoming (re)settled; and concludes with processes of (re)making home and a sense of self and identity.

### **7.1. Rehousing from the refuge**

#### ***Where to get settled***

Most Interviewed Women who had been in the refuge for more than about five months talked about feeling that they wanted to 'get settled' and that they could not do that whilst they were still in the temporary accommodation of the refuge. In addition to feeling that they needed to be rehoused, some felt they were still dependent on the actions of the abuser as to whether and where they could settle. For example, Julien Rosa's husband had now left the country, but this meant that she was no longer seen as at risk and was refused for rehousing by the Local Authority. However, her husband had given up the private tenancy when he left, so she had nowhere to return to either. Others still had ongoing legal cases, including for child residence and contact; or were concerned that the abuser might start such proceedings at any time.

Women do not necessarily seek rehousing in the same area as the refuge. In the Refuge Survey, half of the women whose details were recorded on rehousing<sup>69</sup> moved to a different Local Authority from where they had been in the support service; and the Interviewed Women were also about half and half on whether they intended to try and settle in the Local Authority of the refuge or a different Local Authority. For mothers of school-age children their decision was often primarily about settling their children in school; with some women not wanting to move again if it would disrupt their children. However, Louise was trying to move to a neighbouring Local Authority because a friend from the refuge had been rehoused there, so that would provide continuity for her daughter.

*She's [daughter] changed schools quite a few times now; but I want her settled - properly settled. And hopefully - in this area that I'm trying get into - she'll have like my friend's daughter and son goes to this school; so she'll have people there as well - and that might help her settle in as well. [Louise - 1:13:2]*

Jenny highlighted that it was the uncertainty of the timing of rehousing to a different Local Authority that made it difficult for her to settle her daughter's schooling.

*And my daughter's three-and-a-half going on four so she's meant to be starting school; and I haven't got her in no schools down here because - what's the point? - for just such a short amount of time. So stuff like that - that's where it affects you - if she was a bit younger then I'd be a bit more relaxed; because I'd be like - well she's not in school. But because it's close; and they're saying - what school's she going into? And stuff like that - but I don't want to explain to people that I'm not staying round here. [Jenny - 1:10:9]*

There were therefore individual reasons for where Interviewed Women were hoping to settle, but a shared sense of a time when they became ready to do so.

*I was so ready to move out of the refuge - I'd been in there just over a year; and I was just so ready to move out! [laughs] I think - if I'd been in there much longer - I'd have started going downhill. And it was almost as if - towards the end - you were just treading water; because there were*

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<sup>69</sup> 12 out of the total sample of 34 had been rehoused; six in the same Local Authority as the support service - see Chapter 3 and Table 3.1 for further details on survey methodology.

*things you could no longer do to move on - until you are actually in your own place. You need to be on your own, in your own place, before you can then take those next steps. [Helen - 2:2:45]*

## ***Bidding for social housing***

Though four of the Interviewed Women had left owner-occupied houses, they were not now in a financial situation where they could consider buying again; so all were looking at rented accommodation after the refuge. They had had to prioritise their personal safety from the abuser over the housing security they had previously had; and this was the case also for Interviewed Women who had left permanent social housing tenancies<sup>70</sup>.

The two Interviewed Women with No Recourse to Public Funds were not able to make any future plans to be rehoused from the refuge, but most of the other women with children who had decided where they intended to stay applied for social housing via a Local Authority. Women without children would not normally be considered for social housing unless they had additional vulnerability, particularly around physical or mental health; though some Local Authorities developed additional agreements or protocols, and Aliya was able to bid for social housing in this way. So, only some had the option of social housing; and not all of those in the end were able to access it. Local Authorities also varied in the Priority given to women applying from the refuge, so that some of the Interviewed Women were bidding as 'Band A' (the highest priority) whereas others were bidding as 'Band B'<sup>71</sup>.

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<sup>70</sup> Since the Housing Act 1996 (HM Government, 1996), Local Authorities have the option of giving Introductory Tenancies to new tenants, providing fewer rights for the first 12 months; and many councils have adopted such schemes (which they must then apply to all new tenancies). By moving, women who previously had secure tenancies would come under such schemes. In addition, under the Localism Act 2011 (DCLG, 2011), from April 2012 local authorities can give "flexible tenancies" (ie. fixed term) rather than "lifetime tenancies". Again, changes do not affect existing tenants *unless they move home* and have a break in social housing tenancies; as many women escaping domestic violence would.

<sup>71</sup> Local authorities have an allocation scheme for determining priorities in allocating social housing. Most have 'banding schemes' with four or five bands (eg.1-5, A-E), which include criteria of housing need and urgency of need to ensure the council fulfils its statutory duties (eg. priority need and statutory homelessness under Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996) and manages its housing stock.

Many were uncertain how long the bidding process would take, after they had been accepted for rehousing; and generally found the bidding process long and frustrating.

*It's a bit stressful, because you're bidding and bidding and bidding; and seeing people getting places and you're thinking - that should have been me! But then, people in different circumstances - higher band than you, or same band as you - but maybe one more child than you, or whatever. It is quite stressful and upsetting; but you're just waiting for the next bidding date and just bid again. You keep phoning them - where am I; what's going on? [Louise - 1:12:38]*

*I was accepted in December and I've been bidding since then. I thought it would be quicker, but I'm eligible for a three-bed - because I have a boy and a girl - and a lot are one- or two-bedroom, so it's taking a while. There are about thirty people ahead of me when I try to bid. I thought maybe I could go for a two-bed because the children are little; but I can't bid on a two-bed because I'm not eligible. [Faith - 1:5:23]*

If Interviewed Women were rehoused via the Local Authority route, the actual properties were unlikely to be owned by the Local Authority; with most being Registered Social Landlords such as Housing Associations, or else rented by the Local Authority from private landlords.

### ***Going private***

Some of the Interviewed Women had been in private rented accommodation when they were in the relationship, and were considering private rented for rehousing from the refuge; however some were concerned about the very different financial situation they were now in. Affording private rents when they had been in employment, and with a partner in employment, was different from the prospect of going private on their own.

*I don't want to be on benefit - but it was difficult with the flat and having children [in the relationship]; and now with this flat - it helped me to get out of here [the refuge], but now it's putting me more in debt - which I shouldn't have to be. [Julien Rosa - 2:3:25]*

Interviewed Workers also highlighted the changes to Housing Benefit, and the prospect of a Housing Benefit cap in areas of high rents.

*I think the majority of our women are looking to go into social housing; because of their fears around what the Government is doing to the Housing Benefit system. And also the fact that private rented is less secure; and is often of a poorer standard than social housing. I mean - whilst we do present private rented accommodation as an option - I would always say to women what the drawbacks are; but also what the positives are - I do tell them that private rented accommodation is likely to be quicker than social housing; because that's the reality of the situation. [Worker A - 1:5:19]*

Women without children, and without additional needs, would generally not be accepted for social housing, so Interviewed Women without children were often planning to save up a deposit and move to private rented.

*I didn't want to be there [the refuge] two years - be there two years - because, being single, the government doesn't give you a Council property unless you're mentally ill or something. And so I didn't want to waste time, I just wanted to go forward; because if I didn't go forward... the day I stopped going forward I'd be depressed. So the thing was just to go forward, get that deposit down - regardless of what people thought or said. [Cathy - 2:5:34]*

Cathy's journey (Figure 7.44) had included periods of sleeping rough, and returning to her partner, because she was not aware that she could access a refuge and therefore felt that she would only be able to find somewhere to stay if she could afford it by herself.

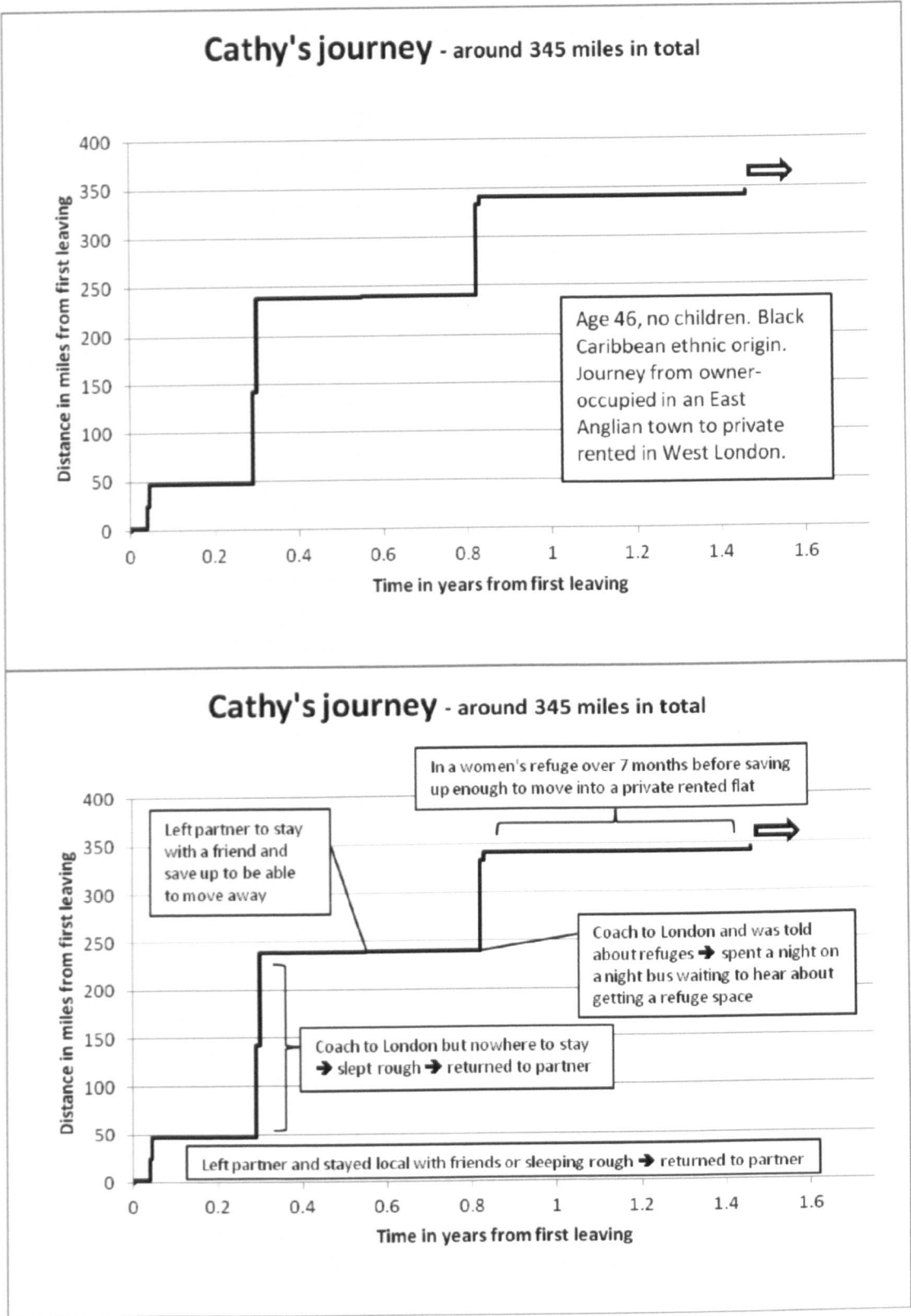


Figure 7.44: Graph of Cathy's journey over time and distance

She ended up travelling over 300 miles, despite only ultimately moving from an East Anglian town to London. She had spent much of her adult life in the United States and worked once she returned to the UK, so only gradually became aware of some of her options for benefits and support. Though she had been in an

owner-occupied house with her partner, he had taken control of all the finances and she was left with no savings. Once she was in a refuge she immediately focused on saving up for a deposit to be able to rent privately. She was so determined to have her own place where she could begin to settle, that she was able to leave the refuge after seven months: the equal-shortest stay amongst Interviewed Women who went on to tenancies.

However, some Interviewed Women with children also ended up moving to private rented accommodation, despite initially hoping to be rehoused by the Local Authority. Violet and her son stayed in the refuge for over a year as she bid on social housing to try and stay near her son's school.

*I was bidding on things and I weren't getting anything. And - to be honest - the only things that were coming on were the two-bedrooms miles and miles away, where I didn't want to go because that would mean my little one had to change schools, we'd have to change our church and friends and everything. Or there were like one-bedrooms, and they said - well, why are you not bidding for one-bedrooms? And I said - well, why should I? - I've got a child! But they said - well, if you're that desperate you should bid for one-bedrooms. [Violet - 3:2:1]*

When Violet contacted a local councillor the Local Authority gave her one offer of rehousing and said they would take her off the list if she did not accept it.

*But that was a very small one-bedroom - when I've got a little boy - and it was all for over-55s and it had no garden - there were all allotments. It was just not suitable at all. So I said - just because of this I feel you're pushing me in a corner, like a rabbit in the headlights. So I'm saying to you - I want you to help me; and you're offering me this or not helping at all!*

*And they said - because of what you've been through, we do understand, but... his exact words were - what makes you think you're entitled to a two-bedroom house or a new build? And I said - well, why not? And they said - it doesn't work like that; you have to take this or else you're off the list, and we won't be helping you to go private. [Violet - 3:1:19]*

She felt it was unsuitable to move with her eight year old son into a one-bedroom flat amongst elderly people (most were considerably over 55), and

ended up arranging a private rented flat from someone she met at the local church.

*But really she [the owner] didn't want anybody from the Council, but she said - I'll give you a chance; and luckily everything's been OK. I passed all the references and things like that; because that's all a big worry as well - you've got to pass all the references. And I've never ever had my own place before, so there wasn't anyone like a landlord to get a reference from... but it was all fine - so I was really lucky.*  
[Violet - 3:4:23]

Of the Interviewed Women who had been rehoused by the final interview, four of the women with children were in private rented (Julien Rosa, Violet, Louise, Maud) and three were in social housing (Gloria, Tracy, Jenny). Of the women without children with them, one was in Supported Housing (Caroline), one in private renting (Cathy), and four in social housing (Helen, Elizabeth, Aliya, Anna).

In general there has been a reduction in the availability of social housing, and an associated increase in private renting, and the Woman-Journeys Datasets also show this trend in terms of the previous tenure for women accessing support services, with rented social housing reducing from 38.2 per cent in 2003-4 to 29.9 per cent in 2008-9; and private rented increasing from 11.8 per cent to 16.4 per cent over the same six years. This trend could change the trajectories of women's journeys as private rented may be more quickly available, but also more precarious in terms of getting settled because of the higher cost and less secure tenancies.

### ***The actual move***

Whether Interviewed Women moved into private, social or supported housing from the refuge the move, when it came, tended to happen very suddenly and was often quite difficult both practically and emotionally. It was a time of considerable financial pressure. As soon as women signed a housing tenancy



they became liable for the rent, whilst still being liable for the rent at the refuge, and so most had to move out straight away.

*I saw the place on the Friday and moved in officially on the Monday. Yes - basically - the only thing I'd say is that the refuge do not give you any time to move. So - literally - once you see the place and get the keys - you're out.*

*I tried to agree to stay to the Tuesday, but they wouldn't have it. So I moved in at the weekend and officially left on the Monday - because I had to get my gas transferred. I was lucky as the heating was on; but some people haven't been - so you'd be expected to move even though you haven't got heating. [Elizabeth - 2:1:10]*

Some Interviewed Women were able to apply for a Community Care Grant to help towards costs of a cooker, beds and furniture, but they did not necessarily have time to apply and get a decision before they had to move in. Helen found that, because of her previous years of working, she was on a contributions-based benefit and therefore not able to apply.

*You can get a Community Care Grant if you're on ESA [Employment & Support Allowance] to restart your life and what have you; but you can only get it if you're on Income-based ESA, you can't get it if you're on Contributions-based ESA. You're getting exactly the same money, but you can get it on one and you can't get it on the other; and of course I was on the one where you couldn't get it. Because of that - for the same reasons - you can't get a Budgeting Loan; so I couldn't even get a loan to help.*

*I wasn't entitled to any help with furniture at all - which was a bit of a nightmare as I'd got - nothing [laughs]. What am I going to do? - I haven't even got carpets - what am I going to do? But - I found how many friends I had - I didn't realise I'd made so many friends. There were about seven women turned up that were non-refuge - that turned up at the refuge on the day I moved and helped me with all my boxes and stuff down here; which was - humbling - really humbling. Somebody gave me a sofa, somebody else gave me another sofa - somebody gave me a TV, somebody gave me a bed, somebody gave me a fridge - somebody gave me a washing machine! - god - who gives you a washing machine! [Helen - 2:7:23/2:1:19]*

Other Interviewed Women had bought various small items whilst they were in the refuge, but then had difficulty transporting them to the new accommodation.

*To be honest, it was a bit awkward because nobody - I don't want to sound negative towards the refuge because they were brilliant; if it weren't for them I wouldn't be here now. I've got my car and my flat, and my little boy's lovely - we're just really lucky, after all we've come from. But, nobody helped me at all - so much stuff I had accumulated in my room! The church offered to help, but I must have done twelve trips there and back! [laughs] [Violet - 3:5:1]*

Interviewed Workers also talked about feeling uncomfortable that women had to move out of the refuge so quickly, but that they were under pressure that women could not stay on if they were no longer paying rent.

*It's often unfurnished properties on the Rent Deposit Scheme [for private rented] - it used to be more furnished - and so women are having to wait for a Community Care Grant; but they have to move - even with children - on the day of the tenancy - and into an unfurnished property. We encourage women to save up for some floor covering and a duvet, so at least they can sleep on the floor with that; and a little cooker - and they can take some pots and pans from the refuge - we try to do that. [Worker M - 1:2:1]*

Workers also noted that private rented places tended to be in poorer condition than social housing, and Cathy found that when she moved into a private rented flat none of the repairs she had been promised had been done, making for a difficult start to living there.

*If I had to sign another lease I would tell them - no thank you - because I'd rather look for something else. It came with a lot of problems and they said - oh, we'll have it all fixed before you move in! And I said - are you sure? And nothing was fixed, and nothing was done - on the first day I had a miserable day - kind of - because I felt I could be outside looking at the area and I had to sit down and wait for the plumber to come! [Cathy - 2:11:17]*

The actual move could therefore be very sudden and difficult, practically as well as emotionally, so that the process of moving towards settlement was disrupted by a stressful event of rehousing.

## ***Still temporary***

Even after rehousing, many Interviewed Women felt that they were still in a temporary situation, and might have to move again. For a few this related to ongoing issues with the ex-partner, but for most it was the continuing temporary nature of the tenancy, whether private or social housing.

*I was lucky; and I get this for a year and - providing I've been a good girl! [laughs] - I can stay on - it's permanent. Well, it's not permanent - because the Government's changed legislation - but it's renewable each year - automatic. [Elizabeth - 2:3:23]*

Some Interviewed Women found themselves talking about where they had been rehoused as permanent, and then correcting themselves as they detailed more complex arrangements.

*Like a representative from the Council came - I think he deals with that sort of Temporary accommodation - but he came along with someone from the agency. So it's not like I've signed over any of my rights or gone onto the private scheme - I'm still under the Council, it's just that they've basically got the property because they probably haven't got enough. So I don't actually know fully - I'm not Private, but I do actually have a landlord. But it's through the Council. [laughs]  
[Jenny - 2:3:14]*

However, after six moves in the past two years (See Figure 5.21), Jenny felt positive that she would have three years in this temporary accommodation.

*So I think it's for the next three years, which feels really really comforting to me because I know I'm going to be in one place! [laughs]  
So, just knowing about that makes me feel so much happier as well. Yes - it's really good; it really was worth the wait, you know. [Jenny - 2:1:35]*

The policy and housing context, therefore, means that neither private nor social housing provides permanent accommodation, even for women who leave a permanent social housing tenancy due to domestic violence. Women are less and less able to settle permanently at the end of their journeys.

## 7.2. Feeling (re)settled

At every stage of their literal journeys, women were also working towards achieving less tangible aspects of settlement, such as safety, independence and a sense of home. These resettlement processes have been explored in the domestic violence literature discussed in Chapter 2, such as Humphreys and Thiara (2002) on resettlement support and Abrahams (2007; 2010) on long-term outcomes for women. This research identified similar aspects of (re)making safety, home and identity whilst exploring them within the context of women's literal journeys, and the implications of such journeys at a range of scales (discussed in the next chapter).

### *Feeling safe*

Many Interviewed Women talked about feeling safe as being a long process; as something that both gradually developed, and that they had to work to achieve. Julien Rosa still felt her abuser's presence, even though she had moved to a different town; but when she heard that he had moved abroad she felt safer.

*I feel so grateful that he's gone - because when you walk you feel that he's behind you all the time - and now I just feel relieved. Big relief - yes.*  
[Julien Rosa - 1:8:2]

Some talked about different ways of coping with difficult days; such as Gloria who talked about bad mornings both in the refuge and after rehousing.

*But obviously there are times when I wake up on the wrong side of the bed; and I think - oh my God. But I just think - sit on the bed, play my best track that I like listening to; and suddenly it just changes the way I woke up - it just brightens up my day.*  
[Gloria - 1:13:14]

Some Interviewed Women still felt directly threatened by the abuser.

*I am petrified that - if he [ex partner] gets released - that's no longer going to be an option [staying in flat]. I am scared that something's going to happen - if you know what I mean - I don't believe that things*

*can be that easy... because it's gone wrong so many times that I expect it to go wrong again. [Maud - 2:14:42]*

Several did not think they would ever feel completely safe.

*I feel safe here. Especially now I've got the dog - although that wasn't the reason I had a dog. Well, I say I feel safe, but if I thought he was around I wouldn't - I'm still very wary of what's outside there. I don't feel frightened; it's just that I'm aware - I don't think I'll ever feel one hundred percent safe really ever again. Ninety-nine percent... but I don't think I'll ever feel safe. [Elizabeth - 2:14:11]*

For many Interviewed Women, the front door was a powerful image of whether they felt safe or not. Living with their abuser, they had felt unsafe to go into the place that they had called home; and so a front door they felt safe to go through was a definition of a true home.

*You don't need to be scared to go in - you just go in. You know, when I was back in [the relationship] I used to be scared to go in - I just stood there. So - that's a big difference - to be happy, to be relaxed - it's incredible. [Julien Rosa - 2:10:46]*

The front door was also used as a metaphor for independence.

*I've got my own front door - so what if I can't afford the curtains! [laughs] I'm safe - you know - I've got my life back. [Elizabeth - 1:8:35]*

## ***Independence and isolation***

Independence was frequently highlighted by Interviewed Women; that they could now do what they liked and see who they wanted to see.

*Yes - it's lovely to say - I'm going to pick where he goes to school; I'm going to pick - me and him [son] together - what activities would we like; yes - we're going to do that. So - let's go to McDonald's, or let's go to anywhere; or let's have a picnic - we can do what we want without having to check in - is it OK if I take him here? - is it OK if I take him there? Why should you? It was always - where are you?*

*Why should you? I used to drive like a maniac - to be back in ten minutes. So - I haven't got any of that - so it's safe; and mentally I feel much more safe than I did - stable - because I'm not rushing, panicking. [Violet - 2:11:1]*

*It was really daunting - I didn't know whether I was coming or going - but now that I'm in my own place everything is just different. I've regained my independence, I'm able to plan what I want to do when I want to do it - and I'm at peace with myself. [Gloria - 2:1:37]*

However, the other side of being on your own was a feeling of isolation; particularly after a long time in the communal setting of the refuge. In discussing their Significance Charts<sup>72</sup>, some Interviewed Women highlighted how few people they did feel close to now.

*At first - you know - all of a sudden you are on your own again; you are under pressure, you have to do everything on your own - so it's like - oh, my god. When I was first there [house] I felt so lonely again - I didn't want to isolate myself again. Sometimes I don't feel confident enough to go out and meet other people - I feel quite isolated. Maybe gradually it will feel better. [Tracy - 2:3:21]*

In the Groupwork Process, many women focused on communicating a message to other women that things would feel better. Both groups produced posters (see Figure 7.45) for their refuges with positive messages to women they imagined in the refuge in the future, such as:

*"Don't feel TRAPPED!!";*

*"good luck to new women who come here!";*

*"Help is at hand".*

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<sup>72</sup> See Chapter 3, section 3.5 - an example is at Figure 6.30

**Figure 7.45: Image of Poster produced in Groupwork in South Coast Town**

Mia produced a series of photographs and captions of what she wanted to emphasise to other women - both the battles and struggles to make new friends and new roots (Figure 7.46), and the prospects of a positive future (Figure 7.47).

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**Figure 7.46: Images of messages to other women - looking back - Mia**



Figure 7.47: Images of messages to other women - looking forward - Mia

In general, Interviewed Women who had been rehoused emphasised the positive aspects of independence, and the confidence and freedom they felt in their lives.

*I feel a bit more independent now; that's how I like to be - independent - doing my own thing; I'm absolutely buzzing from it actually! [laughs] I'm really happy.* [Jenny - 2:4:33]

*I feel a breath of fresh air! [laughs] I feel so much better. It's like living life with maybe a hundred pounds metal weights on my life it felt like; and all the weights have gone off!*

*There's a new set of pressures now; but the pressures that I have now is nothing like the pressures that I left - so it's like a breath of fresh air!*

*I've got so much confidence... how can I explain it? It's like a bird being free of the birdcage!* [Cathy - 2:21:32/2:1:15]

### ***Support to settle***

Just as they emphasised the importance of the support of the refuge workers when they were in the refuge, many Interviewed Women found it difficult that there was often no continuity of support when they left. Many refuges did not have a contract to provide resettlement support, and even those which did tended to provide it via different workers, and women did not necessarily want to build up a relationship with a new person. Several also felt strongly that the support to settle after the refuge was too short term.

*I'm not confident. Well - with everything that's gone on this year I feel that - OK, they put an alarm on for me yesterday once I had the phone line on; so, alright, I'll give them credit there. But, it's only like 13 weeks - and what happens after 13 weeks? So they take the alarm out and then...? It's my lifeline... So I feel - I don't know - you're isolated in that way. The protection just goes - as if it doesn't matter now. Yet - whilst he's in prison he's got longer to hate me, hasn't he. If he does carry on down that road then it's just going to build up and build up.*  
[Maud - 2:9:12]

Many Interviewed Workers also felt disappointed that they could not provide emotional support to women after they had left; and provided telephone support if contacted.

*And women are here for months and months; and they maybe don't even feel they need much support - but just the fact that there's the worker there in the office and they can come and use the phone. And then when all of a sudden when they leave, they're like - oh my goodness - there can be a panic there; and quite often you can get a few phone calls in those first couple of weeks; which we'll obviously respond to as well as we can. But some of us would feel - and often they would say they'd like the same worker, because obviously you've built up a relationship with them over that time; but it wouldn't be possible. [Worker B - 1:7:3]*

The sudden end of both practical and emotional support at the moment of rehousing was seen by both workers and women as a pressure point for the process of resettling - of feeling at home.

### ***Feeling at home***

Interviewed Women talked a lot about a sense of home - where and whether they felt at home.

*It is very emotional, because you've set up home and you've tried to make things work [in the relationship]; and you've got to leave somewhere that you thought of as home. And you do become quite attached - even though it's just four walls and a roof - but, again, you make it yours; you put your stuff in there that you like, and then you have to pick up and leave it.*

*So - it is stressful and emotional; because you become attached to things. But it's just material at the end of the day - so it can all be bought again - and again and again and again! [laughs] - however many times you go through it! [Louise - 2:4:19]*

Some emphasised that where they lived with the abuser had not really felt like a home, either at the time, or looking back at it now; echoing Wardhaugh's (1999, p.96) discussion about women feeling "homeless at home" due to violence.

*We had a home but it weren't our home; and it weren't a happy place. So you can live in a shoebox and make it your home - and I've made this room [at the refuge] my home - but home's going to be exciting now [laughs] and lovely! [laughs] [Violet - 1:10:44]*

Feeling at home became a process that they achieved for themselves; which has parallels in the international migration literature discussed in Chapter 2, such as Stefansson's (2006) discussion of whether individuals who regained their housing after the war in Bosnia could ever regain their sense of home. Whilst some women felt at home in the refuge, others thought that they would never feel fully at home again; and several emphasised that people were more important to them now.

*Home is what you make of it. I'd rather say it's about people rather than places. [Sarah - 1:4:21]*

*It feels like home here [the refuge] - it feels like a whole extended family with the workers and the other residents. I never had that feeling before - I never had family in the UK. [Koli - 1:3:33]*

*Me and my daughter [laughs] - that's home! She's home for me, I'm home for her. So - it would just be us - the two of us - that would be home; no matter where we are. [Louise - 2:9:11]*

However, others found that where they had been rehoused was becoming a real home for them - both the flat or house, and the area.

*So - it's lovely - you just please yourself and do what you want; if you don't want to wash up on the night time it doesn't matter - you can do it next morning; and it's things like that that make it a home.*

*It sounds awful doesn't it! - a sinkful of washing up makes it a home! [laughs] - but you get what I mean. [Helen - 2:6:23]*

*I want to stay in that area for ever - I want to grow old in that area! [laughs] Yeah - I do. It's the sort of place I can see my little one growing up - making new friends around there. I am very happy around there. [Jenny - 2:7:28]*

### 7.3. (Re)-making home

Home was therefore a place, or potential place, but also a process of home-making as women established or re-established the connections with people or things that helped them feel at home. The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 discussed the often gendered nature of homemaking; such as Gedalof's (2009) research with migrant mothers, highlighting their practical and emotional homemaking, including within family and other inter-personal relationships.

#### *Old friends and new friends*

In the Significance Charts and the interviews, Interviewed Women highlighted the importance of friends and family; who they were in touch with, who they had lost touch with during the relationship or since leaving, and new friends they had made. Some detailed how they kept in touch with people via Facebook, Skype and other means, if it was either unsafe or too far to meet up. Many were still struggling with how and when to be in touch with people who also knew the abuser.

*I miss my friends - my old friends - I can't contact them at the moment; although I'm sure I will do... Christmas will be the big thing, because I'll send everybody cards and that - I don't know whether I'll give them my address - I may do, I may not. But last year it was very taboo to do that. I've got friends all over the place that do know my situation; but they would never tell him. But this will be the time when people say - where's [Elizabeth]? - oh, she's got a new place. I'll probably give them my telephone number or my e-mail address - I think that's safer.  
[Elizabeth - 2:8:32]*

Having previously been tracked down by her ex-partner, Jenny planned how she would deal with mutual friends who might disclose where she was now moving to.

*And if he [ex partner] was to end up down there [new area] - then someone's definitely told him. But how I say to do it - if you know people and you know they could talk - you tell everyone a different area; like you might tell one Shepherd's Bush, or you might tell one Kennington*

*or something like that. So - if it gets back to you - you know exactly who said it [laughs]. So that's the way I do it now!*

*Like - apart from my family - I haven't told anyone where I am. So I know if someone comes to me now and says - oh you're in [Shepherd's Bush]; I know exactly who's said it... So - OK you're the one who's spreading it about... [Jenny - 2:15:19]*

For most Interviewed Women, an important aspect of making a home again was that they could reconnect with friends and family.

*I mean last week I went to visit Great Uncles that I hadn't seen since I was about seven! It's like I've always wanted to take my mum and do that; and I never have because I weren't allowed to go anywhere overnight. So we went for like five nights - and I can do what I want! I haven't got to ring if I want to come home late - I can; it's just having a life - and that's why I feel so lucky - and it's what I've always wanted. [Violet - 2:6:12]*

*I'm happy most of the time; because my family are so supportive. I think every weekend since I came out of here [the refuge] - they've always come - they've travelled; you know, my cousins from [Northern city], my sisters from [outside England] - they've come. My brother came from [Europe] where he was with the army. So many visitors! [laughs] [Tracy - 2:9:47]*

*I don't think I was as close to my son [before], because he was sort of piggy in the middle; but now he's much more close - he's taken it really well. So I'm grateful for that, because I thought he might - I might lose him. But - if anything - well he's saying - you should have done it years ago, mum. But I didn't know that at the time. And he's alright - now he's got his degree he's more settled. [Elizabeth - 2:9:17]*

As well as making friends in the refuge, as discussed earlier, Interviewed Women also talked about making friends locally in the area where they were rehoused.

*I take walks in the city - I meet with other mums - and it's just nice - I don't feel lonely at home. I don't feel depressed - like I don't have anyone to talk to or anything - there's always something to do: taking [son] to playgroup or going for a walk, or sitting on the beach - I just live two minutes from the beach.*

*These people [friends from playgroups] I never knew before; and they don't even know my history, my background - they don't even know that I was in an abusive relationship; they don't even know that I lived in a*

*refuge before. So they just accepted me for who I am - someone new - someone new in the neighbourhood. [Gloria - 2:4:18/2:7:6]*

*I go out and I talk to people, I joined the library - there are sometimes things happening like a farmer's market. And people in the shops are very friendly; and I don't feel lonely - I quite like my own company. My next door neighbour, she pops in quite a lot; and I've got my parents living nearby, so they come once a week - so I'm OK really.  
[Elizabeth - 2:4:49]*

## ***Making the home nice***

Being able to have people visit was important for many of the Interviewed Women who were rehoused, and they talked about making the home nice for themselves and visitors.

*The first thing I done was do my daughter's room - because like she's never had her own room; she's been in with me so long in here [the refuge] - so I wanted her to have her own little place where she knows that it's her room. So we done it all pink in there, and stuff like that - just to see her happy makes me happy! I said - I'll do my room later on, but let her have her little room. So that's kind of made my little one feel a lot more settled as well.*

*And like doing it up [the rest of the flat] - it's like a blank canvas - there's nothing much to do, but it's like dressing it up with my own personality on it really. [Jenny - 2:6:14]*

Many talked about the security of having their own place after the insecurity in the relationship, and in the temporary accommodation of the refuge. Some had been able to bring a few possessions from the time in the relationship, whereas others were starting again with everything.

*It's going to take quite a while to get settled in, but I'm going to enjoy every minute of it. I picked up a sewing machine up at the charity shop - three quid I paid for it! - so I picked these covers up - I think I paid a pound each for them - and I got a couple of extra ones to make cushion covers and things like that with them; so I'm pretty handy.*

*I've got a corner unit coming this week and I've got all my - one of the few things I did manage to bring out of the relationship was that he*

*bought me for Christmas and every birthday - believe me, I'm not looking on them with sentimentality! But - every Christmas and every birthday he would buy me a Swarovski crystal; so I've got loads of those - and they're packed very very carefully - still in the box - very carefully packed and padded. So I'm getting this unit and I can put those out - so - things like that. They've not got sentimental value but I absolutely love them - just for them - so I can't wait to have them out and enjoy them.*  
[Helen - 2:4:26/2:6:36]

*Oh, this is unbelievable - it's like a dream come true! It's lovely - it's all tidy, it's kept all nice; and everything's mine - no-one can come and take that away. This sofa is my sofa, this TV is mine - mine and [son] - and that's the big difference; it feels nice and I feel that - even though we left all our stuff behind, we've got new stuff now. We've got everything we need - and each other - so it's lovely!* [Violet - 3:6:6]

#### **7.4. (Re)-making self**

Interviewed Women's accounts include a sense that home and settling are about both people and places; and women had individual definitions of what it would mean to settle. Whilst accommodation and possessions were important, they also emphasised friendships, culture, work, their children and family; and their own sense of self and identity in being able to settle.

##### ***Identity undermined***

An aspect of the abuse that many Interviewed Women talked about (echoing discussion in the literature, such as Stark, 2007, p.215) was that their sense of self and identity had been undermined by the abuser.

*In the beginning, you compromise a lot - you change who you are - to be somebody that he wants you to be. So, in the end you don't have - you're not yourself.* [Gloria - 1:1:23]

*I feel that I have been in the right to - to be me; and not to blame myself. Like before I came here [refuge], I was always blaming myself - or thinking that I'm the one who is wrong. But now I've realised that - it's not like that; and I stop blaming myself again.* [Tracy - 1:8:35]



As discussed in Chapter 2, abuse can fragment women's subjectivity, and MacCannell and MacCannell (1993) highlight how an abuser attacks what matters to a woman. Cathy felt that her partner would have targeted anything he knew was important to her.

*I never told him that it bothered me if I lost my teeth; because if I said - so long as you don't hit my teeth! - he maybe would have... Because in this world it's presentation that matters - presentation tends to count a lot; so that's why it's good that I came out intact. [Cathy - 1:18:6]*

She is someone for whom her appearance is really important, and was studying fashion whilst she was in the refuge, but she felt that she had become like a tramp in the relationship.

*When I lived in America, everyone in my town was used to me being decently-dressed and everything; but then [in the relationship] I was just a tramp - people laughing at you because you're walking with holes in your boots. [Cathy - 1:3:2]*

She felt that her partner was pleased when she lost her job, as she then had no financial independence.

*He never complained... so he just thought - ah, I've got somebody now. I felt that he was thinking that - you know - now he can say anything he wants, because I can't go anywhere. So when he was drunk he would say "you fell down the chimney" [racist comment] - he would say anything to me - which he would never have said to me before - so I had no respect. [Cathy - 1:6:23]*

Part of women's journeys, and being in a safe place, meant that they were beginning to remake a sense of self after the abuse. In their Significance Charts, several commented that it felt important to see themselves and their children as the centre now, because in the past, they had not been able to focus on themselves at all.

*So it's nice now - I can enjoy my son, and my family. Family means so much more than it did - I realise that; that's all you need - your friends and your family. Whereas - before - I probably thought all I needed was him - I thought all about him. [Violet - 2:10:17]*

*My priorities have changed - that's a big change. It's now the kids first and foremost, and then me... and then finally him; whereas it used to be him always first... and then the kids... and then maybe me. [Faith - 2:5:41]*

## ***A sense of belonging***

As well as their sense of self, Interviewed Women also talked about how their sense of belonging had been undermined.

*I felt, I thought, I don't like belong anywhere - I don't belong here and there. You feel like you are wrong - for me I was thinking always that I was all wrong; I'm doing the wrong thing, when he says so. And then, when I see that I do belong somewhere, I do fit somewhere - at last - for me, I never thought that there would be help in my situation; I never thought there would be help - not at all. [Julien Rosa - 1:11:2]*

For some Interviewed Women it was still a very long process to believe that they deserved to be helped, that they deserved to belong anywhere. For some, who were still in the refuge, they felt that they had no sense of belonging.

*At the moment I don't feel I belong anywhere. I'm all over the place at present - in pieces - because of what I've been through and everything. [Shakira - 1:4:11]*

*I'm on my own and don't belong nowhere. Where I did belong they didn't want to know, so there's no such thing as belonging. [Sarah - 1:4:16]*

Whilst others said that belonging was not important for them.

*The one good thing I think is - because I've travelled so much - I can manage to settle wherever I go. Yeah - I don't really belong anywhere I suppose - I haven't really thought about it. I just - it's wherever I lay my hat... [laughs] [Maud - 2:15:30]*

*To me to belong - if it was a long time ago it would mean really a lot to belong somewhere; but now I don't say that because I had too many years of hard times. So it's not about belonging any more, it's about freedom and peace. [Cathy - 2:25:23]*

Some Interviewed Women who had been rehoused emphasised that they now felt that they did belong in their new area; whilst others said that, like a sense of home, it was about themselves and their children.

*I really do feel like I belong in this area; I have friends, I have connections - I think that's a big thing - making friends. Because then you're starting to put those roots down. [...] All of that gives you a sense of belonging - in your own place, your own things around you - not just things you've borrowed from someone else, or what have you; it all brings out that sense of belonging.* [Helen - 2:17:16]

*I can't really say that I belong anywhere any more [laughs]; but I want her [daughter] to feel that she belongs somewhere. Somewhere where she can say - oh yes, that's home; oh we've lived here for - god knows how many years - you know. I want her to be able to have a home and say that it's home. And I would like that for myself as well. To have all homely things, and loads of photos - just to be comfortable; somewhere where you can actually go in and be like [sigh] - that's it - door shut - that's it. That's all I want now.* [Louise - 1:13:24]

*I belong to myself I think - I've got my own identity. I feel much better than I did before - I'm not a prisoner and I'm not tied to him forever - which is a good thing.* [Elizabeth - 2:14:35]

## ***Culture and tradition***

Several Interviewed Women highlighted what their experience of abuse had done to their sense of cultural identity, with both positives and negatives about community support and expectations. Whilst some wanted to leave behind some traditional values that they felt had trapped them in the abuse, there was also appreciation of cultural support.

For Aliya, the abuse had made her feel very negative about the culture she had grown up in, and she chose to separate herself from it.

*I saw my mum getting beaten up, I saw my mum being thrown down the stairs; she was kicked and punched when she was pregnant - so all that was normal. It was only until now that I actually found out that it's not normal. So it's quite sad; and the sad thing is that my mum can't*

*actually get away from the situation - because it's like an Asian culture that's actually getting in the way.*

*I don't have no Asian friends; I think I've only probably got one Asian friend and that's it! The majority of my friends they're either Black or White. And - because we went to private school - there were a lot of Asians there as well; and I kind of got put off because everyone's mentality - I believe that Asian mentality is just narrow.*

*[Aliya - 1:1:12/2:5:24]*

However, within the Groupwork Process, the Asian women particularly highlighted the importance of finding places where they could shop for traditional food and clothes, and use their first languages. Traditions and celebrations were emphasised in all the Groupwork Process, with photographs of Christmas trees, Guy Fawkes' celebrations and a roast beef dinner, as well as traditional Bengali food that Koli cooked and photographed - Figure 7.48.



## ***Regaining yourself***

Interviewed Women talked about the process of regaining their sense of self, their confidence, their personality and their sense of worth.

*I'm not in a rush any more - I haven't got to be back to cook dinner, or ironing, or pick up dry cleaning, or pick up wages, or do this or do that... All I was was a skivvy - and now I'm me, and I've got time to - I haven't got to drive up and down motorways and picking people up; and cooking and cleaning and all that. I can go to the shop and not be on a time limit; or just walk around and take in nature. Before I was just like - this, this, this - I was existing and not living; and that's the God's honest truth - that's how I felt. All my life was revolved around what chores I had to do for him - that day - I didn't even have time to stop and think about me, or - look at what a lovely view; it was just all about him.*

*You know, I wake up and - I haven't got no money in my pocket - but what I've got! It's like being on a free drug - being happy! [laughs]  
[Violet - 2:10:6/2:11:10]*

Many women also highlighted their sense of identity as a mother; taking many photographs of their children in the Groupwork Process, and in the interviews talking about focusing on their children's needs.

*I just want no men in my life. I want to see my kids happy - to give respect and take respect. Nothing else matters. It doesn't really matter where I am - it's me and my kids. [Manj - 1:4:21]*

*My hopes are definitely to go back to work - to live my own life, and look after my children; and to give them the best care and the best education - help them, and that sort of thing, towards happiness. I'm just concentrating on my children now [laughs]. [Tracy - 2:9:18]*

*I just want to be a working mum; for her to see that I'm working - making my own money. On my own - I don't need a man to fulfil me; I'm fulfilled already with her - and I can do it; and to be happy - that's all I want really. I want her to be happy like me - because I'm happy. [Jenny - 2:15:45]*

In the Groupwork Process, women also commented on the pleasure of starting to develop new skills in using the cameras; and took photographs to take pride in

their skills - whether Koli's cooking (Figure 7.48) or Rija's craft skills; or Janet's photographs of her employment (Figure 7.49).

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**Figure 7.49: Images of work and skills - Rija and Janet**

Some Interviewed Women emphasised that they were returning to the person they had been a long time before.

*My personality's now come out again. Where I used to laugh and joke and everything - at the beginning of the relationship - now it's coming*

*through more often. I haven't got to be quiet or whatever - because I was frightened of upsetting him. [Elizabeth - 2:12:24]*

*I'm still who I am - I'm just able to be who I am. Because you kind of forget who that person is when you're in a relationship like that. So - I don't feel I've changed; I think I'm just becoming who I am again. But with more awareness of abuse - yes. [Helen - 2:15:49]*

However, for many it was a very long process, and Cathy talked about how it was difficult sometimes to remember yourself before the abusive relationship.

*[I had] a couple of pieces of clothing I didn't wear because my mind is still trying to figure out - what do I wear? - after being so long in isolation... you tend to forget what your style was. So you make mistakes and buy things and then think - no, this ain't me.*

*I have to start again - start to try and accumulate clothes, try to accumulate my own identity - because that was lost. [Cathy - 2:2:50/2:17:14]*

And Anna highlighted that - for her - her sense of self was still very fragile:

*Me - myself - on one way I am weaker; on second way I am tougher. Tougher like - I don't know - it is like you are walking on the thin ice... above you are tough, but underneath you are not - you know what I mean. The border between is very very crisp. [Anna - 1:24:3]*

There was a sense of regaining self, but also a sense that the journey was an often difficult process towards a new sense of self.

### ***Getting back to work***

Most Interviewed Women had been in employment in the relationship and were keen both for themselves, and financially, to get back to study or work. They were frustrated by how this had been disrupted by having to relocate because of the abuse; and some also highlighted how difficult it was to explain the gap in their work record, or to obtain references from previous employment which they had left because of the abuse.



*How to get these references? Let's say I ring to London but they don't know exactly what happened... you know what I mean... So it helped me because I get them from the voluntary [work]; and I did ask [keyworker] if she will help me, if she will write something - not about work - but something... So, luckily, OK I had them... but otherwise - what could I do? [Anna - 1:12:3]*

As a nurse, Tracy had to keep her registration and refresher courses up to date.

*I'm HRN [Registered Nurse] - so if you're out of practice for six months or so you have to do another CRB, references and so on. And because I was out of work - I had a very big gap - so I'm in a dilemma about whether to say - because it's confidential - so whether to say that I was in a refuge... I think - maybe - it will affect the posts which I'm applying for. So it's a real dilemma for me - whether to say or not - to explain - what was I doing between jobs? So it's very difficult for me.*

*I haven't [decided what to say] - but obviously when you go for interview they'll have to know. So sometimes I just - forget about it - and leave the application, or not go to the interview. I don't know what to say. I don't know what the result will be - if I say it out; so it's really difficult. [Tracy - 2:2:39/2:2:49]*

Others were planning a change of career, now that they were on their own and had different financial and childcare issues.

*Now that I'm on my own I've got my responsibilities to do and to face; so I'm just debating whether I should go back to work - or to study for the next three years whilst [son] is growing up. And I think to myself - because I was a carer before - that I don't want to do that any more. I just want a nine to five job - Monday to Friday job - so that I can have more time with my son; and like - being a carer - you're just working across 24 hours; but I can't do that any more, because I have a child. So I've applied to the Open University to study from home - so hopefully I'll start in September. I don't want to go out to work where I just work for the sake of working - I want to do a job that I really enjoy. [Gloria - 2:3:43]*

For most, their main concern was to get back to work, as a significant aspect of feeling back on track.

*I'm looking for anything at the moment - anybody who'll take me at the moment! That's how it is at the moment. Once I get into a job - a position - then I can look for what I really want; because I know that what I really want is going to take a bit more time. And if I don't get*

*there, I'm doing Pattern Cutting at the college. As a teenager I've done fashion design, but I didn't do pattern cutting - and pattern cutting is the basis of all fashion design work. So it's a case of - if I can't get a job in that area - I'll just do the saving thing and start doing work for myself.*  
[Cathy - 2:6:45]

### ***A new sense of identity***

In addition to a sense of getting back a sense of self, there were many ways in which Interviewed Women talked about having a new sense of their identity. For some this was connected to being in a different type of place than they had lived before.

*I love it now! I feel as if I've always lived here [laughs]; I mean - I'm a city girl, and I've ended up living in the middle of the sticks! [laughs]*  
[Elizabeth - 2:5:7]

In the Groupwork Process, some women also talked about how their changed circumstances also changed what they could see themselves doing.

*Samantha: Charity shops! You know, until I came here I'd never been in a charity shop in my life - but here it's like good stuff. Like, in London, if someone sees you going into a charity shop that is like - well - your life is over!*

Interviewed Women's experiences of escaping abuse had had a significant impact in their lives, and for many this had become an aspect of their new identity, surprising both themselves, and people who knew them before.

*Everyone that I spoke to afterwards they were like - I can't believe you done it! I was like - yes, I done it. And when months come to months - yeah, I've really done it; yeah, I've really done it - yeah. And now it's like - it feels really good.*  
[Julien Rosa - 1:10:6]

Many felt that they were now much more aware of abuse, though they had not come across domestic violence until their own experience.

*I grew up never experiencing it with my family - with my parents; my dad is a Muslim and my mum is a Christian, but there was never anything. So the whole thing came to me as very strange - I couldn't believe it!*

*It was so unbelievable to me - it was something I'd never seen before. So to say it out it was something like shame - if you can understand that. I couldn't say some words - I couldn't say it - it was like something abominable. [Faith - 1:6:43]*

*And sometimes you just walk past people every day and they might look like just normal - well, we are normal! [laughs] - but their lives are normal you think. It might look like everything's fine, but you just don't know - people can look normal - you don't have to have a black eye or be all bruised; because a lot of it's mental as well. So - you just don't know. [Jenny - 2:12:3]*

Though some talked about helping other women who experienced abuse, they did not necessarily want this to be the main part of their identity; and Anna talked about how she and her friend from the refuge did not want to be defined by that shared experience.

*But it's important that it is not coming back every time in the conversation; not very often, but it is. And if anyone mention all the time that it is women from the refuge, I don't think it is healthy for anybody - for us. It's better if we just go and we dive into normal life.*

*Me and [close friend] we are not like this - do you remember blah, blah, blah? Maybe when we get like grannies we will! [laughs] - do you remember in the refuge...? - whatever [laughs]. But we just look forward. [Anna - 1:22:35]*

For some women - such as Sarah - a new identity is a formal way to be more safe.

*I've now changed my name, National Insurance Number, ID - everything to be safe. I'm trying to be completely different. [Sarah - 1:3:7]*

However, for most Interviewed Women a sense of new identity was more a way of trying out new ways of living their life.

*I've gone through dyeing my hair, trying to change my appearance - I don't know if it was fear of seeing him or what. I've gone through quite a lot of transitions - it's weird - maybe it's just because you can be*

*yourself. I always wanted to dye my hair - so - why not? - I can now;  
wear what you want, eat what you want. [Violet - 2:10:24]*

The Asian women who took part in the Groupwork Process took a lot of self-portrait photographs, and photographs of each other in a wide range of different outfits in the refuge. Many of the outfits were not clothes that they would wear outside, but the photographs were a way of exploring a sense of alternative selves. Most of the images could not be put into the research directly, but Jasmin wanted to include one of herself looking very serious. She said it was “the first time I ever wore Western clothes - I was worried about how I looked”. She also talked about how she had not come across pets in a house before; but was becoming used to a friend’s cat, and documented this new sense of herself with photographs of the cat (Figure 7.50), and herself holding the cat.

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Figure 7.50: Image of cat - Jasmin

Women were therefore exploring new senses of self, and considering new options for their futures, as they moved on from the abuse and began to settle in a new area.

## **7.5.     Conclusions**

A sense of settling was a very individual and complex process for Interviewed Women, involving their sense of self, identity and safety, their children, family and friends; as well as the practicalities of place and accommodation. In contrast, rehousing from the refuge was a sudden event over which they had very little control. Whilst women could exercise some choice in whether they applied for rehousing in the Local Authority of the refuge, or elsewhere, many were not eligible for social housing or were refused it. Whether seeking private or social housing, women had little say over when they moved out of the refuge, and the move was therefore often extremely pressured practically and financially. It could also be emotionally pressured as there was little formal continuity of support; and many women would have wanted a short period of support from the refuge, even though they were no longer at risk in terms of the abuse. Some women therefore experienced rehousing as an isolating, and even somewhat forced, event through which they found it difficult to retain their confidence and progress in moving on from the abuse.

However, there were many positive accounts of resettlement as women valued their independence and freedom, as well as enjoying the practical activities of home-making and getting to know a new area and neighbours. Though each stage of their journey had brought difficulties and disruptions, most women were positive about feeling safe and increasingly settled in themselves; with a sense of home and belonging that was sometimes now more about people than places. They saw themselves as both regaining aspects of self and identity from before the abuse; but also developing new sense of self and belonging in where they had found themselves - literally and emotionally.

The reality of housing policies and tenancies means that many women would be experiencing further accommodation moves, whether or not they wanted to, because of being on short-term social housing or private tenancies. Even if they had originally left a permanent social housing tenancy, they were now more than likely not able to expect to settle permanently if they remained in rented

accommodation. Therefore, despite feeling settled in a range of ways, Interviewed Women had often lost their housing security for the sake of their (and their children's) personal security. Settling, as part of their domestic violence journeys, continued to be a complex process as they exercised personal agency within a range of constraints; and the implications of such journeys are explored in the next chapter.

## Chapter 8. Implications of the journeys

The evidence in the previous chapters of the nature and extent of women's journeys to escape domestic violence enables a range of implications of these journeys to be identified. These implications are explored in this chapter at four connected levels - for women and children; for agencies and practices; for places; and for policies and legislation. The implications of domestic violence for women and children have been widely discussed in the literature, and this research identifies similar losses and mental, physical and practical impacts. However, putting such findings in the context of the actual journeys women make enables more detailed discussion of the three other levels: of agencies, places and policies. At each of these levels, empirical conclusions are drawn, and possible responses identified. The chapter therefore includes specific recommendations, which lead into the broader reconceptualisations and conclusions of the final chapter.

### 8.1. Implications for women and children

The implications of the abuse for women and children can be very significant and have been widely researched (as discussed in the literature in Chapter 2; from, for example, Kirkwood's (1993) identification of ongoing effects of a web of emotional and physical abuse to Pain's (2012) highlighting of long-lasting fear and trauma). However, the implications of relocation journeys, for those women who move, can both exacerbate or mitigate the impact of the abuse itself. Women use space to try to escape the abuse; both initially to put sufficient distance between themselves and the abuser, and subsequently via an engagement with a place where they believe they are safe to resettle. The literature on gendered movement was discussed in Chapter 2, and women's domestic violence journeys exemplify stories of both containment and mobility, as discussed by Hanson and Pratt (1995). Journeys can bring further disruption as well as safety, and, as discussed earlier, the disruption for individuals does not simply relate to the distance travelled, but to the circumstances and practicalities of complex journeys over time and space. The disruption also

cannot be simply categorised along demographic lines, though having children is particularly significant for aspects of women's journeys. Similarly, though the Interviewed Women came from a range of different backgrounds, and had different demographic characteristics, the commonalities and differences in their experiences did not divide along demographic lines. The very individualised journeys for women therefore bring a wide range of negative implications; as well as the positive outcome of escaping the abuse and beginning to resettle (see chapter 7).

### ***Losses of leaving***

Many Interviewed Women highlighted the immediate losses of leaving, as they had to leave work, college, family and friends; and children had to leave school. Though the losses were sudden, the journeys often took years (see Figure 5.20 and Figure 5.21); until women were becoming settled and could re-establish these aspects of their lives. The impacts of losses were therefore long-lasting.

*Well, before I moved here [the refuge] I was going to get on a college course - I was just one month away from that starting - so I couldn't do that, and that was a big implication. My daughter was already in a full-time nursery for that, you know, so that I could go to college - so it was all set out. It was like my whole plan has had to be restarted. It was like - the qualification I wanted, I should have had it now. I didn't want to be doing it at 21 - I wanted to be doing it at 19. [Jenny - 1:11:43]*

Some Interviewed Women also emphasised that the abuser had not had to change or lose anything; that he was often still in his home, work and with his family and friends. In contrast to the "trailing wife" of migration literature (Cooke, 2008, p.256), these women had both to migrate and to cut contact even with friends because they were fearful of being traced by the abuser to their new location. Because of the actions of an abuser, who had often himself stayed put, women had been forced to become a 'fugitive wife', estranged from places and people.

*I've got my best friend at the moment; she's been my friend for years, and a good support if I've had problems. But she's not talking to me at*



*the moment, because I couldn't tell her - I haven't been to see her in a year, because I've been staying with my other friend who knows everything - because he knows her address.* [Maud - 1:9:28]

Some had left owner-occupied houses, and others had left permanent tenancies; and all had left many possessions because they had been unable to afford or organise removals or storage. The Woman-Journeys Datasets show that just under 9 per cent of women were leaving owner-occupied accommodation; which is lower than in the general population<sup>73</sup>. This may indicate that it is women with less access to personal financial resources who are more likely to have to access public resources such as support services.

Many Interviewed Women also left considerable possessions as well as their home.

*I left all my possessions - everything - just a house-full of stuff. And once I was actually in the refuge and they were saying - well you're definitely not coming back; so I was like - no, I'm not coming back; you know I can't live like that any more. And they said - well what about all the stuff in the house? So I said - well, just sell it; I said - get what you can for it, and the rest just chuck it; you know it's no good to me any more.* [Louise - 1:3:21]

As well as the financial losses of leaving work, and leaving possessions; there was the additional financial impact of having to set up home again once women were rehoused from the refuge. Women therefore faced the immediate losses of leaving, and the impact of those personal and practical losses throughout the stages of travelling, waiting and resettling.

### ***Mental and physical impact***

As well as the mental and physical impact of the abuse itself, Interviewed Women highlighted the impact of the relocation, and all they had left behind. Maud found herself dreaming of her cat which she had had to leave abroad.

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<sup>73</sup> Over 60% of the population, according to the 2011 Census (Office for National Statistics, 2013)

*My cat's still there - and I'm here; and I've paid fifty pound for someone to look after my cat. Because it's six months for a blood test - plus, as well, I don't know how - but his passport's been packed in with the stuff; so I can't get the blood test done without the passport. Because he's chipped and everything - I brought him from Britain - and the longer it's going, it's another six months. And my friend who has him says she can't keep him no more. So I've got that stress - and he's [my daughter]'s baby; so I'm worried. I actually dreamt about him last night - he'd got one eye and lost a leg; like he's been attacked - honestly, it's so.*

*[Maud - 1:23:19]*

Some Interviewed Women talked about getting flashbacks of the abuse, and also of fearing that they would be followed to their new location. They feared that what they had hoped to achieve by relocating could be instantly lost.

*I'm free - to a certain extent - but there's still - you get those flashbacks; feeling like - god, he could turn up. Because he'll hate me for the rest of my life - because I've done this; especially when we get to the money from the house.*

*[Elizabeth - 1:10:12]*

The journeys themselves had also taken their toll physically, and Interviewed Women who had made multiple journeys sometimes talked about feeling lost, tired and unsettled by the repeated moves.

*Thinking about it - in one way I am proud of myself that I build my life; but in the second way I am so tired of this. Because I think - inside - it makes you like age-plus - just tired. And - today - if someone say to me I will have these years again in my life, I'm not quite sure I will be able if possible to do it again... I will just give up. It is - I think - too much.*

*[Anna - 1:23:45]*

However, many Interviewed Women, particularly those who were feeling more settled - and those who had been rehoused from the refuge - talked about the overall positive impacts of escaping the abuse.

*I feel stronger. I feel more - whereas before I felt like I was all over the place with different parts of me being pulled in different directions - I feel that I'm coming back into myself; you know - I'm gathering everything back.*

*[Louise - 2:7:43]*

*I have the control for myself now - so I don't have to rush somewhere and then come back; I'm not under the timing - I'm free! And if I want to go*

*out till half-seven, or six - you know - I don't have to say, or rushing - I don't have to do this before he comes... I'm really a human being again - yes! [laughs] Really a human being again. [Julien Rosa - 2:9:49]*

## ***Impact on children***

For Interviewed Women who had children the impact on their children, and their children's needs, had often been central to the decisions they had made on their journeys. For many, it was the impact on their children that triggered them leaving, and both the Woman-Journeys Datasets and the Refuge Survey indicate that women with children were more likely to travel out of their local authority and travel further to access services.

Travelling with children brought practical and emotional issues as children dealt with their own losses and fears, and some Interviewed Women found it difficult to explain to their children why they had had to move, and to deal with their children's feelings and reactions.

*It's hard for a child to understand what's happening, what's going on. Because - without going into great detail with a child, it's hard; because you've got to explain to them certain things, but kind of sugar-coat it; so that it's not a major impact. And my daughter's been - I've not been just - bang, there it is - the facts. I've sort of - when she's asked something I'll answer it; but I'll answer it in a way where it's like it doesn't really matter; rather than being angry about it, or upset about it. You know and she'll ask - well, did you cry? - and I'll say - yeah; and she'll say - did it hurt? - and I'll say - yeah, but it doesn't matter now; it's over and done with now - it doesn't matter. So she seems to be OK with that. [Louise - 1:9:28]*

*And my daughter hates me, because she's lost her friends - she's got difficulties with social - she's Asperger's - so, of course, she's made friends and all of a sudden she's got to go as well - so she's suffering. And I wouldn't let her out, so she says - I'm going to run away; because you won't let me out - it's wrong. But I couldn't explain to her - because he's [ex partner] always nice to her - do you know what I mean. [Maud - 1:5:12]*

However, many talked about becoming much closer to their children, and focused on their children, as they made the journey together; and children were by far the strongest theme and greatest number of photographs of the Groupwork Images (Figure 8.51 and Figure 8.52).

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Figure 8.51: Images of children - Koli, Janet and Twinkle

**Figure 8.52: Images of children - Janet**

Most of the Asian women had never used a camera before and had no photographs of their children, whilst others had left photographs behind when they escaped the abuser. Photographs of children were used to emphasise the children's dependence, their innocence; and how important and enjoyable it was to see their children happy, growing and having fun.

In the Helpline Survey, many women thinking about relocation raised the needs of their children in considering where and whether to go; including the needs of disabled children, and the impact on children's schooling. Some raised that their children had experienced direct abuse, or were at risk of this if they did not leave. There were also women who did not have children with them at the time of the call, but raised the needs of their children who were currently in care, with other family members, or with the father; and that they needed to stay close enough to keep in contact. Their decisions were therefore affected by the needs of their children, even though their children would not actually be relocating with them.

The impact on older and adult children who did not live with them was also highlighted by Interviewed Women, who were concerned that the abuser might threaten their children, and use them to find their new location. For Helen and Maud, the abuser was not their adult children's father, and both felt particularly guilty that their children might be affected.

*I've told my son a little bit, but I'm scared I'll frighten him, and I really don't want to. So I don't know what's best - do you know what I mean. And he's come on so much - like I said - he's doing this degree; and I'm so proud of him - he's settled down, he's got a nice girl, he's getting married.*

*I'd hate to think that my life could upset his. [Maud - 1:17:31/1:17:37]*

Elizabeth had been concerned that her son would have to decide between her and his father; but was reassured when he supported her leaving.

*It's still difficult for him - because like - daddy's got the cheque book. But - at the same time - I'm the child's mother and he still - he said - you look better than you have for years! [Elizabeth - 1:9:48]*

However, she felt that she had to miss her son's graduation, and was concerned that she would not be able to attend his wedding.

*I couldn't go to my son's graduation - which upset me in a way; but then, that was my choice, because I didn't want to see him [husband]. I couldn't bear to see him. I've seen some of the pictures - that are on the internet - of my husband; and I just had to turn away when I saw him, because it sends the shivers up my spine. [Elizabeth - 2:13:37]*

The impact on children, both dependent children with them and adult children, was therefore a major implication for women of their journeys. Some Interviewed Women also faced ongoing issues of child contact (as discussed in detail in other research, for example Coy et al., 2012), including the fact that this could compromise their safety by disclosing their location to the abuser.

In general, Interviewed Women did not strictly separate out the implications of the relocation from the wider implications of the abuse; because they all felt they had had no option but to relocate because of the abuse. However, their accounts included the responses they received from agencies in dealing with the implications, and this highlights how agency practices could enable less disruptive journeys for women who have to move.

## **8.2. Implications for agencies and practices**

As discussed in earlier chapters, the responses of statutory and voluntary agencies can be important at different stages of women's journeys, either facilitating or inhibiting women's choices and routes. Understanding the complex trajectories of women's journeys (such as the journeys graphs discussed earlier), indicates the individualised nature of the journeys, but also how agencies could assist women to navigate difficult junctions and routes. Conversely, poor agency responses at key stages can complicate or block

women's attempts to achieve safety by relocating, and it is clear that improved agency practices could make women's journeys less disruptive and more effective in escaping abuse and its impacts.

### ***Different routes and different lanes***

The fact that Interviewed Women outlined unique accounts of their journeys after leaving the abuser highlights the wide range of issues they were dealing with. Some had made multiple moves, others had not; some had contacted numerous agencies, others had not; some had been on a journey for years, others for months. It is clear that there is no one route to safety and security, and that it can take different women very different periods of time to navigate from the abuse to a more settled place.

Many Interviewed Women highlighted the important role for them of the women's refuge in offering an over-arching understanding of their needs, and support through different phases, and dealing with different statutory agencies.

*If the refuge was not there - seriously - there's going to be big problems with people who've been abused; who go to the council and they give you somewhere to stay. Yes, it's nice to have somewhere to stay, but you're on your own with a child in all that; and what about help - there's still nothing. So, the help you get here [the refuge] - it's the best.  
[Gloria - 1:4:50]*

Yet even in terms of women's refuges, Interviewed Women had different needs and experiences.

*But some places like refuges don't help you so much - and some are really good. Some refuges don't help very much; others help with everything.  
[Manj - 1:4:7]*

Most, however, emphasised that the women's refuges they had stayed in were much more than just safe accommodation; they provided a flexible range of support and understanding that enabled women to make and carry out the decisions for the next stage of their journeys. Many Interviewed Women said



that they had not known about refuges, had not been told about refuges even when they contacted statutory agencies about the abuse; and had therefore had misconceptions about refuges that delayed them seeking help. This shows the need for a greater understanding of women's needs at different stages, and more effective communication of the role of women's refuges.

*If I'd knew there was a place like this [the refuge] I'd have gone a long long time ago. And it's not what you think - it's not all drug addicts and beaten-up women all rough, and they're going to knock you out - because that's what I was imagining; that I would not survive - that it would be like being in prison. [Violet - 2:8:30]*

*I would encourage everybody who had been abused to go in a women's refuge. A women's refuge is not a prison - it's a place where you can get - it's a safe haven. It's a haven where you go and sit and not think about someone behind you; and all your worries; you're just yourself, and whether you've got children or whatever - it's a place where you start all over again. [Gloria - 1:4:38]*

The potential role of women's refuges in providing holistic support is often under-estimated (and under-funded) by statutory agencies, who therefore give poor advice to women. And women themselves have frequently never heard of refuges before and are therefore highly reliant on such advice. Overall, though there is clearly no single model journey for women escaping abuse, women need support through a wide range of needs and stages; and good advice at key points.

### ***Difficult junctions***

Interviewed Women consistently identified two key points that had been very difficult in both emotional and practical terms, and that difficulties at these junctions in their journeys had made their experiences much more problematic. They had many suggestions as to how these points could have been navigated more smoothly, with the help of changes in agencies and practices.

## Leaving the home

One key point was the time of leaving the home; whether leaving the abuser or whether because of threats from an abuser they had previously separated from. Several Interviewed Women found that the agency response was not intense enough or timely enough for the level of distress and danger they were in; or was a single standard response regardless of their particular circumstances.

Elizabeth felt that it would have made so much difference if she had been met by someone when she arrived at the station of the town where she had been given a refuge space.

*I think - for somebody to be met is most important - particularly if you're in a new town. You know - just to tell them to get off a train and get on a bus or a taxi - no, somebody should meet you. And we've said this - all of us here. Even if it means like - stand under the clock - so long as we know your name, you know my name; I think it would make so much difference.*  
[Elizabeth - 1:11:6]

Anna had reported her partner to the Police, and had other agencies involved, but found that at the point of needing to leave she could not find a refuge space, could not find any accommodation, and was advised to go and stay with friends for a few days. She felt that there should be short-term crisis accommodation always available and offered, so that women in her situation did not have to put their friends at risk, or return to the abuser that night.

*Because not always is it a good idea to go to friends; and to be honest - with a situation like that - friends they might just close the door; not because they're bad or nasty, but because they're scared as well.*

*So there should be somewhere - if it's really really serious or high risk - some places where they can just take these women to have help then; and support for this couple of days till they will go to the refuge. I think that this is important. Because if you don't have money you couldn't stay anywhere.*  
[Anna - 1:15:23]

Julien Rosa felt that she would have been safe to stay in her local area if action had been taken by the Police against her abuser; and if she had been offered

accommodation for her and the children by the Council. However, the Council had not offered her this and said that her only option was to go to a refuge in another local authority.

*If I could like stay and not get the kids unsettled - like stay in my own place; and get more support; and for like him - I don't know - getting more track on him. Or like move us to something in the same area - like another house - not to move completely from an area to another one. That would be something really nice - just to settle the kids and everything. [Julien Rosa - 1:2:9]*

One of the implications of an inflexible response at the point of leaving was that many Interviewed Women had lost most of their belongings. They highlighted that agencies did not seem to recognise the distress and cost of this, and they had not been offered any help to protect their property. This was despite Local Authorities' responsibilities (under Section 211 of the Housing Act 1996) to protect the personal property of anyone to whom they have a homelessness duty (HM Government, 1996). Many Interviewed Women emphasised that practical and financial help - a timely loan rather than expecting a grant - at this point would have made a real difference.

*I know it's not down to them to pay for it or whatever, but I'm on benefits at the moment - but all these cabs I've had to get, it's just been really hard. And storing all my stuff - it's like I've used my nan's house and I just feel I've used it like a dumping ground; the washing machine's there and everything. And I'm like - nan, I will get it out soon, I will get it out! But she's like - when? - and I don't know when - one day in June! But I will get it out. And I'm just thinking - if I didn't have my nan - like, before, I didn't so I'd have to pay for storage, so I had to give all my stuff away, you know - just so I don't have to travel with it. People are saying - why are you giving such a nice settee away? - and stuff like that; and I said - because I can't travel with it all. [...] The price they charge for storage is so much - it really is - they know people are desperate, they really do; so they go rocket high - the prices. But I just think - for other people - that would be really difficult to get to store your stuff and that. [Jenny - 1:12:37]*

*I think - from the first time I made the report [to the Police] - they should have put a plan in, I'll be honest with you. I needed to know - and I think those services could have sorted out my belongings.*

*There's just so much could be done to say - look, we can offer you this now - don't worry about your stuff, we've got people who can move it there. Or even if I've got to pay later - but they could do it then - because financially it's a problem. I don't have the money to do it - I've already borrowed sixteen hundred pounds off my mother over the last year; I owe my friend a hundred and forty pounds; I've got six hundred pound for this van coming now; and they've just quoted three hundred and eighty pound for this - so I did put in for a Community Care Grant and a Crisis Loan. Even if I've got to pay it back, I really need to get this stuff all in the one place.* [Maud - 1:23:15/1:23:46]

Local authorities seemed to be unable or unwilling to respond to the level of emergency at the point of leaving; and then, if a woman crossed out of their area at that moment of crisis, considered themselves to have no further responsibility towards her.

### **Leaving the refuge**

The other key point on their journeys that many Interviewed Women thought could have been made better by changes in agency practice was the point of leaving the women's refuge. Most of the refuges were no longer commissioned, or had never had a contract, to provide resettlement support; whereas many Interviewed Women wanted support from the worker they knew to continue for a short time in their new accommodation. Some emphasised the importance of continuity, whilst others felt they actually needed some more intense support through the change from communal living to living on their own.

*I was quite a bit nervous to say that it's not good for us when we are in the refuge - all of a sudden - you just cut the connection; so you're on your own - no support at all. So I think more support is needed - for someone to settle down and be secure - I think they have to do follow-ups; you know - two/three visits - like [family support], to follow up that everything is OK. And then they will discharge you after - not long term - but not just to leave you.* [Tracy - 2:4:34]

*I do just wish they'd give you a bit more support when you leave. Once you leave the refuge, that's it. And it's very difficult - if you are still going through court cases - you haven't got that support, and somebody to come with you. Or advice - it's very very difficult.* [Violet - 3:9:43]

Many Interviewed Workers were also very aware of how problematic this lack of continuity was; and critical about how much of the progress women make in the refuge could be undone by the sudden lack of support at the point of leaving. There was a tension identified between a woman having support needs, whilst other organisations only provided services based on a woman being at risk. By relocating to a refuge, most women then leaving the refuge had removed themselves from direct risk and so were not eligible for any support.

*And part of the work that we do with women in refuges is that hopefully by the time they leave here they're not very high risk.*

*So it tends to be - she's very vulnerable at the point of moving out - and it tends to be emotional support that she'll need more than very practical support. And there just isn't - there's a gap there now with that.*

*It's like they've put all these resources into paying for her to stay in refuge; for what could be - tends to be - eight or nine months for someone to get fully settled into new accommodation; and then - it probably wouldn't be long term support - but for the sake of maybe another four to six weeks of support in just that transition period. That could really make a difference. [Worker B - 1:5:39/1:5:48/1:6:22]*

As well as the gap in emotional support, Interviewed Women also identified a gap in practical support around belongings and setting up the basics in the new accommodation. Part of the issue was that women who were bidding for social housing often had months of no progress (see Chapter 7), and then only a few days' notice when a place came up. In the metaphor of a journey, it was like waiting on a station with no timetable, and then suddenly having to gather everything together when the train came into view. Several talked about having to move out with little time to arrange removals; and some had heard of women moving to accommodation without the power turned on.

What would have been difficult points on their journeys became acute pressure points because of the lack of continuity of support. If domestic violence services are only provided on the basis of levels of risk (rather than need), women who have significantly reduced that risk by relocating away from the abuser also find that they have removed themselves from eligibility for support.

## ***Unhelpful directions***

Several Interviewed Women had had bad experiences with statutory services that had failed to respond as they needed, or failed to give them the information they needed. Violet had called the Police on several occasions when she was experiencing assaults but had not been told about her options to leave, and, even at the point of her leaving, one police officer said there was nowhere she could go; whereas a second officer told her about refuges and arranged a place.

Parveen had the support of Children's Services - she had No Recourse to Public Funds but they helped her because of her child. However, they moved her four times within London within the space of a few days and did not explain to her in her language the reasons why. At one Bed and Breakfast she became locked in the bathroom and was unable to attract attention so ended up jumping out of the window and broke her leg; which made her next journey out of London even more difficult.

*I had all the support - they came to check every day that I was OK. But if they had explained it - explained the process - it would have been better. It would have been easier. It was my first time to leave the home - I was scared - and with the four moves in London they didn't explain.*

*[Parveen - 1:3:39]*

However, it was Housing that Interviewed Women had had most involvement and difficulties with; both in terms of how they were treated, and not being given correct advice or assistance. Maud was told that she was not eligible, despite the fact that she was homeless and had a child; and she felt that she was treated badly.

*Well the receptionist [at Housing] was horrible; and I was asking to speak to someone in private, but there was no-one to speak to in private - so I was having to say everything in front of the other people around. Luckily, there wasn't many there, but still - I don't want to say the position - in front of people.*

*I never met the woman on the phone, but the receptionist girl was looking down on me like I was a piece of dirt - she was only like 18/20, and she was treating me like I was a piece of - you know. [Maud - 1:6:9/1:20:12]*

Other Interviewed Women had similar experiences with Housing, even once they had got past the receptionist and were trying to apply as homeless.

*I'm quite a strong person, but some of the things he [Housing officer] was saying to me someone else might find really offensive - do you know what I mean? And he even put to me one time - well, why did he keep finding you? So I said - well, I'm not writing him a letter telling him to come and find me - he's a perpetrator and he doesn't give up. He's one of them people - he just won't give up - he's a pest, he's a pain in the backside.*

*I just think they need to give - especially women who are in our situation and are vulnerable and have gone through a lot - to give a bit more information; and maybe a bit more support. Because - before - they used to have the Domestic Violence Workers in the Housing; and I think - since the cuts have come - they've got rid of them all. And I just think like that sometimes you really do need someone professional to deal with things. [Jenny - 1:10:46/2:6:47]*

Several Interviewed Women who were homeless and had children were turned down for rehousing via the Local Authority; and Interviewed Workers also had numerous examples of women being turned away from making an application and not realising what rights they might have.

*For most women - you're sitting in a Council and - even if you get there at nine o'clock they'll probably take most of the day to figure out what they're going to do. I'd say fifty per cent of our referrals are from Council officers - who really should be taking Homeless applications - but they won't. And - alright - they have a duty to house however they can - and that includes a refuge - but they won't tell the women that - you have the right to make a Homeless application. They just don't tell them that.*

*So they just direct them; and - obviously - if you're a woman fleeing and in crisis, and you're sat in a Council office with your bags and your children, and someone says - you've got to go here; then you'll go. You'll go. Because at that stage it doesn't matter where you are - you need a bed, and your children need somewhere safe to go. [Worker N - 1:14:13]*

As a result, whilst women may well need a refuge space, and be prepared to go anywhere where there is a space at that time, they end up being relocated for the long term, without being able to consider whether they could stay in the Local Authority they first approached. Therefore their long term location is determined by the often chance location where they were sent to a refuge; and the fact that they were not informed of their longer term housing rights.

Interviewed Workers at specialist Asian refuges felt that this was also the case with statutory agencies assuming only one possible route for Asian women.

*As soon as they know it's an Asian woman they tend to refer to us rather than looking at the individual case - there are mixed refuges in [Midlands town] and that may be what the woman wants.*

*Statutory agencies sometimes assume that because she doesn't speak English she doesn't know anything - so they don't listen to her. And often no options are offered and no safety planning.  
[Worker D - 1:1:29/1:2:34]*

Statutory services frequently therefore determine where women go on their domestic violence journeys; or even whether they go anywhere at all. Providing better information on rights and options would enable more women to consider where they need to go, both initially and for the longer-term. Beyond the initial force of leaving the abuse, women could then be able to make subsequent stages of their journeys less forced.

### ***Route maps and Roadside assistance***

Many Interviewed Women talked about how isolated they had been in the abusive relationship, and how difficult it had been to access information and support as a result. They emphasised that they needed assistance where they were rather than an expectation that they could leave and then access support; without even knowing what that support might be or where they could find it.

*But it should be something that - you know - you stand at the bus stop and there should be posters there with numbers. [...] In that instant*



*that you have actually got time away from that person - that could be your time to phone that number and get that help; so you don't have to go back to that situation.*  
[Louise - 2:5:45]

*I don't think it's good enough to just wait until people can say it out - I think they need to put more campaigns out - so that those who don't even know what's happening; they don't even know until perhaps someone told them how to go about it. Like - for instance - me, I'm a professional, but I stayed for more than two/three years; without knowing how to do it, without knowing what I'm experiencing.*  
[Tracy - 2:8:14]

Because all kinds of women in all kinds of places are forced to make domestic violence journeys, the whole country is being crossed by women attempting to navigate their ways (see Figure 5.17). In the metaphors of journeys; women need mainstream agencies and services to provide route maps for where they could go, without them even needing to know about specialist services. And they need roadside assistance wherever they are - even before leaving home - so that they do not have to set off into unknown, unmapped areas to find a garage for help.

### **8.3.     Implications for places**

Whilst women's journeys are very individualised, in the totality of journeys there are implications for the places they leave and arrive in. These relate to the numbers of women and children involved, and the consequent impact on services. However, until this research quantified and mapped domestic violence journeys, the extent to which the impact varies across the country was largely speculation. The patterns measured and mapped in Chapter 5, indicate spatial churn at the national level and complex multiple-staged journeys at the individual level. However, at the Local Authority level, there was little association between types of places and journey patterns, nor of Interviewed Women's experiences of seeking help; raising the question of whether there is anything specifically local about this migration. In considering the implications for places it is therefore important to be looking at the appropriate scale, and the example of London (discussed later) further suggests that the scale needs to be above Local Authority.

## ***All types of places***

In the same way as Interviewed Women's experiences did not tend to divide along demographic lines, their experiences in different places did not tend to relate to the broad characteristics of those places. Interviewed Women had similar experiences of Housing Departments trying to turn them away in both London Boroughs and far more rural areas; and told of being fed up of waiting too long in refuges in both cities and small towns. They also came from many different types of places, and wanted to settle in a range of types of places too.

The implications of the journeys for places are therefore related to the fact that women need to leave all types of places. The Woman-Journeys Datasets show that women leave every Local Authority in England to access formal support services (let alone women who leave without accessing services); from the Isles of Scilly with a population of under 2,000 adults to Birmingham with nearly a million adults. In addition to the advice and support services provided to local women experiencing domestic violence; there needs to be an awareness that some local women will not be able to stay safely in their own Local Authority. There is consequently a local need in every Local Authority, which is a need to leave due to domestic violence. All Local Authorities therefore need there to be specialist accommodation services in other Local Authorities, so that their women at risk of domestic violence who need to relocate have somewhere to go.

This highlights a tension in that advice and support services provided for local women by Local Authorities are demonstrably local services; whereas women's refuge services are primarily services for women who cannot stay in their local area. If women at risk of domestic violence can stay in their Local Authority, they tend to do so; with the Woman-Journeys Datasets showing that just under half of all woman-journeys were journeys of residential mobility (primarily to access non-accommodation services). This indicates that in most areas there will be women experiencing domestic violence who need advice and support to

relocate away from the abuser, but that a short, fairly local journey may enable them to resettle safely<sup>74</sup>.

There are, however, many thousands of women and children every year who relocate out of their original Local Authority due to domestic violence; and most of these journeys to services are to women's refuges. Some may have travelled further than they hoped because of a lack of refuge places; and some might have been able to stay in their Local Authority if they had been fully advised of their housing rights, or offered additional or more appropriate support.

However, there is every indication that most women who access refuges have already tried and exhausted local options; and this is indicated by the experiences of the Interviewed Women and in the Refuge Survey. For example, Helen tried two moves within her Local Authority before realising she had to move out of the area (Figure 5.20).

So refuges need to be located in a wide range of Local Authorities, but they are not essentially local services; they are national services that need to be hosted locally. A major implication of this conclusion for Local Authorities is that this is not currently the way that women's refuges are planned or funded (see section 8.4 later).

### ***Personal maps and boundaries***

Whilst services such as women's refuges, and policies such as Homelessness legislation, are funded, managed and implemented at the Local Authority level, women's journeys are negotiated and achieved using much more personal maps and boundaries. Many Interviewed Women talked of the places they could imagine living in, what they thought particular places would be like; and estimated how far they travelled via their own sense of where places were - known and unknown.

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<sup>74</sup> There is, however, no indication within the Women-Journeys Datasets of whether subsequent journeys were necessary, or whether safety was achieved.

They sometimes found that the boundaries of Local Authorities did not match their personal geographies and boundaries. This was particularly an issue in thinking about rehousing; as a neighbouring area in London turned out to be in a different Borough, or a Local Authority in a rural area included several distinct towns. Helen had taken a long time to regain her confidence and tackle her agoraphobia, so that initially she felt barely able to leave the refuge. When she was accepted for rehousing by the Local Authority she was told that she would have to go to the first suitable place in any of the towns it covered; which was an impossible prospect for her to face. It was only after the support and intervention of her doctor and mental health services that the Local Authority accepted that she could only bid within the one town.

In general, service responses are provided at the Local Authority (or sometimes the County) level, and their administrative boundaries are therefore powerful in determining women's options. However, women often navigate their domestic violence journeys at either a larger scale of escaping the abuse, or a smaller scale of a known local area and personal geographies for resettling.

### ***The London effect***

In considering the implications for places, it was initially speculated that London might be a region of net arriving, because of its role as a transport hub; however Chapter 5 shows it to be a region of small net leaving. In addition, the Local Authorities Dataset shows that Major Urban Local Authorities tend to be areas that women can relocate within, with large numbers undertaking residential mobility. However, whereas Birmingham is a single Local Authority, London has over thirty Local Authorities, and therefore relocating within London still involved crossing boundaries.

Overall, three-quarters of journeys by London women stay within London, being either residential mobility within a Borough (32.1%) or to elsewhere in London (43.4%); indicating that London is a somewhat self-contained journeyscape rather than having a strong effect on the rest of the country. Residential

mobility in London Boroughs (32.1%) is lower than in Local Authorities as a whole (45.6%), but more short journeys to other London Boroughs mean that overall around half the journeys are still under 6.25 miles (the two left-hand categories in Figure 8.53).

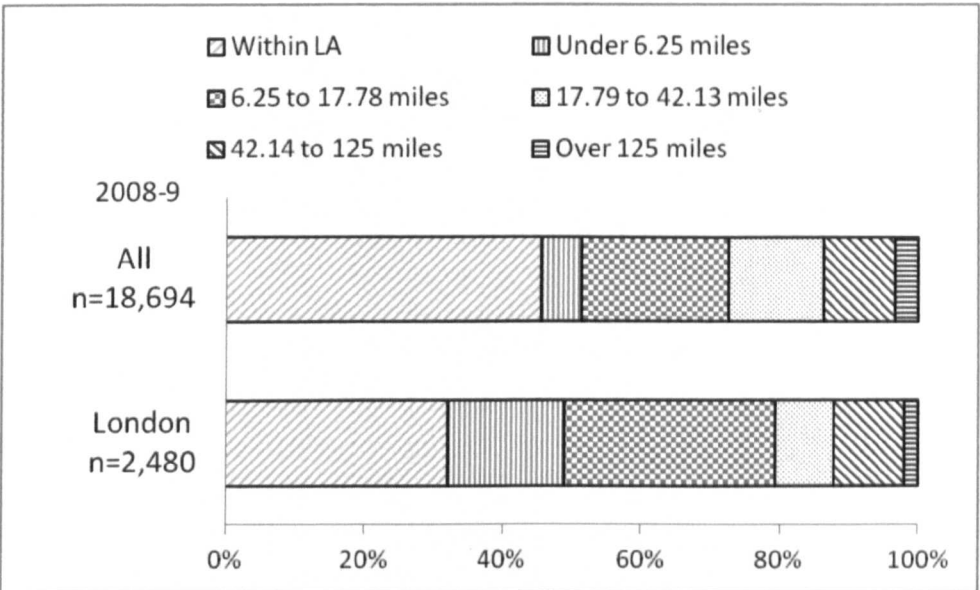
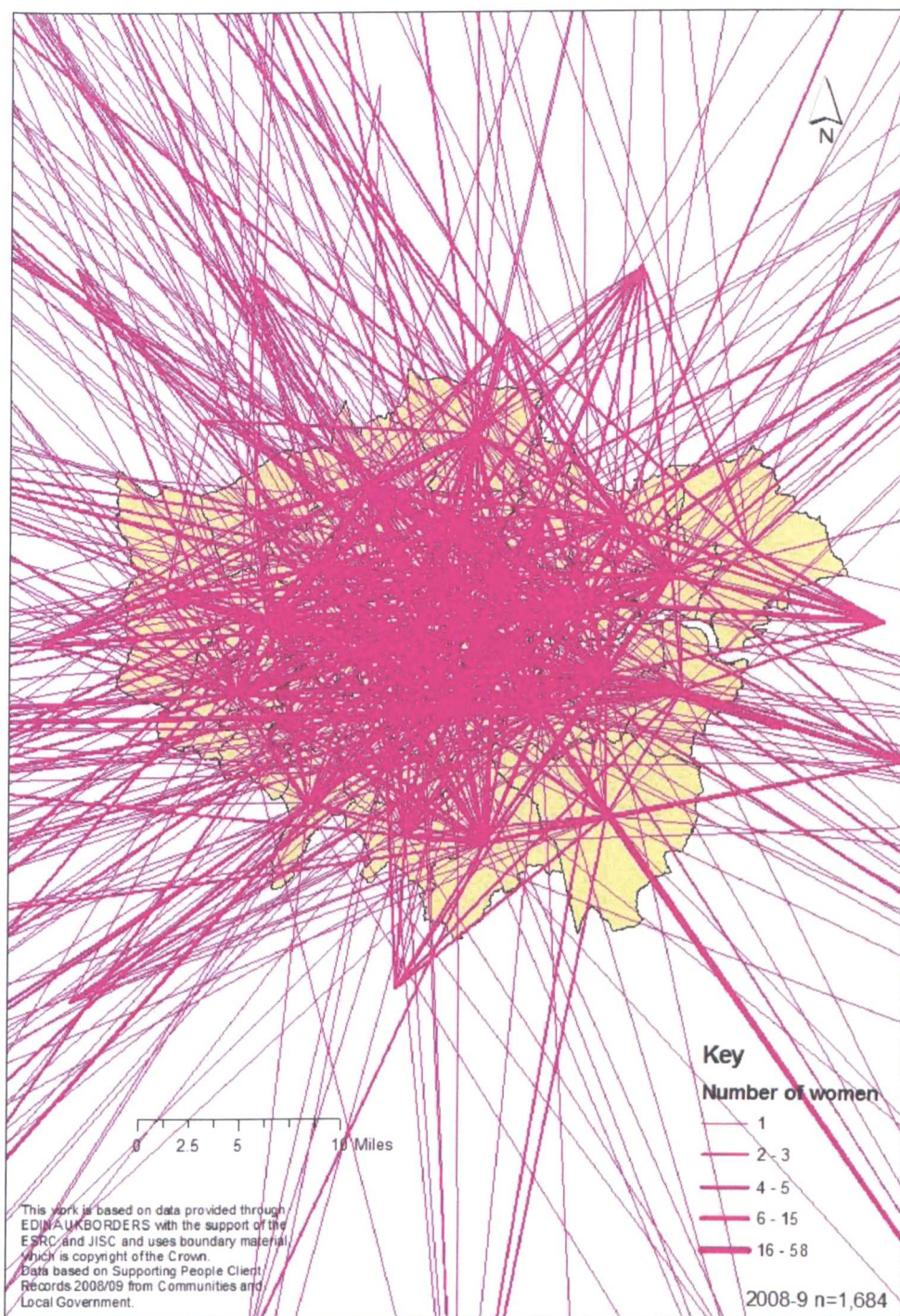


Figure 8.53: Comparison Graph of distances from London Local Authorities and All Authorities

The Woman-Journeys Datasets show that women travel less far to and from London Local Authorities. Compared with the mean for all woman-journeys (20.4 miles), the mean from London Boroughs in 2008-9 is 16.9 miles, and to London Boroughs is 17.7 miles. In terms of migration across Local Authority boundaries, the mean distances are 24.3 miles from London Boroughs and 27.0 miles to London Boroughs, compared with the overall England mean of 36.7 miles. Whilst distance is not a simple proxy for disruption for women, it does suggest that London is more of a self-contained region in terms of women’s journeys; and that women are trying to change their circumstances rather than travel to a significantly different type of place.

The Flow Maps show the mass of woman-journeys within London, with around two-thirds of journeys being to another London Borough (1,078 woman-journeys in 2008-9, 64.0% of journeys from a London Borough). The Flow Map of woman-journeys leaving London Boroughs (Figure 8.54) shows that those women who do leave London leave in every direction, with no strong aggregated flows.





**Figure 8.54: Flow Map of woman-journeys from London Boroughs to services in England**

The Flow Map of women arriving to London accommodation services (Figure 8.55) similarly shows no strong flows into London, even from other Major Urban authorities such as Birmingham, however the woman-journeys are more commonly from North-West of London. This could indicate a slight influence of



London as a public transport hub, with travel less easy from North-East of London.

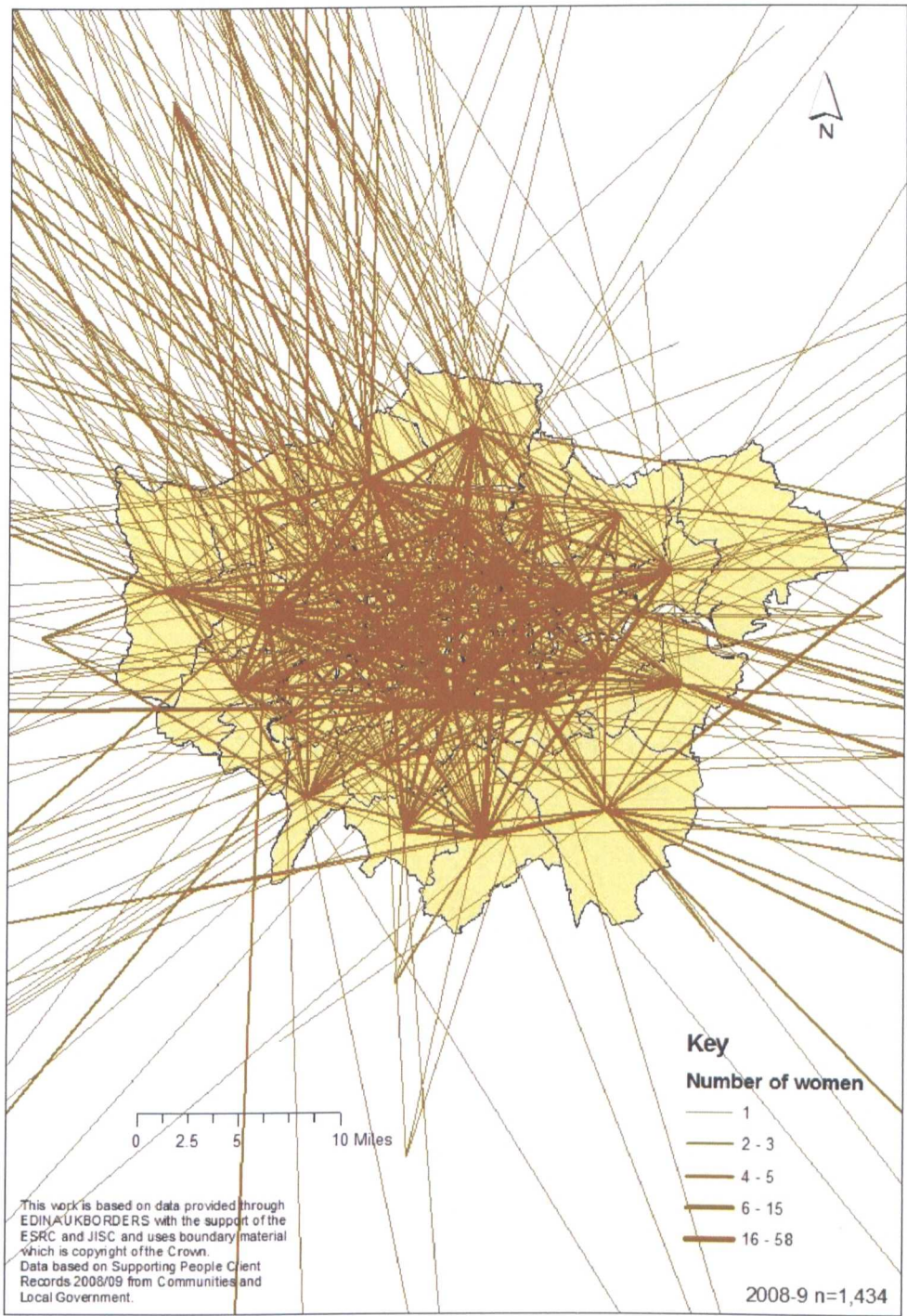


Figure 8.55: Flow Map of woman-journeys to services in London Boroughs

Overall, London experiences a net out-migration of women’s domestic violence journeys, however most London Boroughs have a net balance of women leaving

and arriving. The Local Authority Map (Figure 8.56) shows that three-quarters of London Boroughs have a net leaving/arriving to accommodation services of around zero (between  $\pm 3$  women per 10,000 female population), and no London Boroughs are outliers in terms of net leaving (or leaving or arriving - see Figure 5.10 and Figure 5.11).

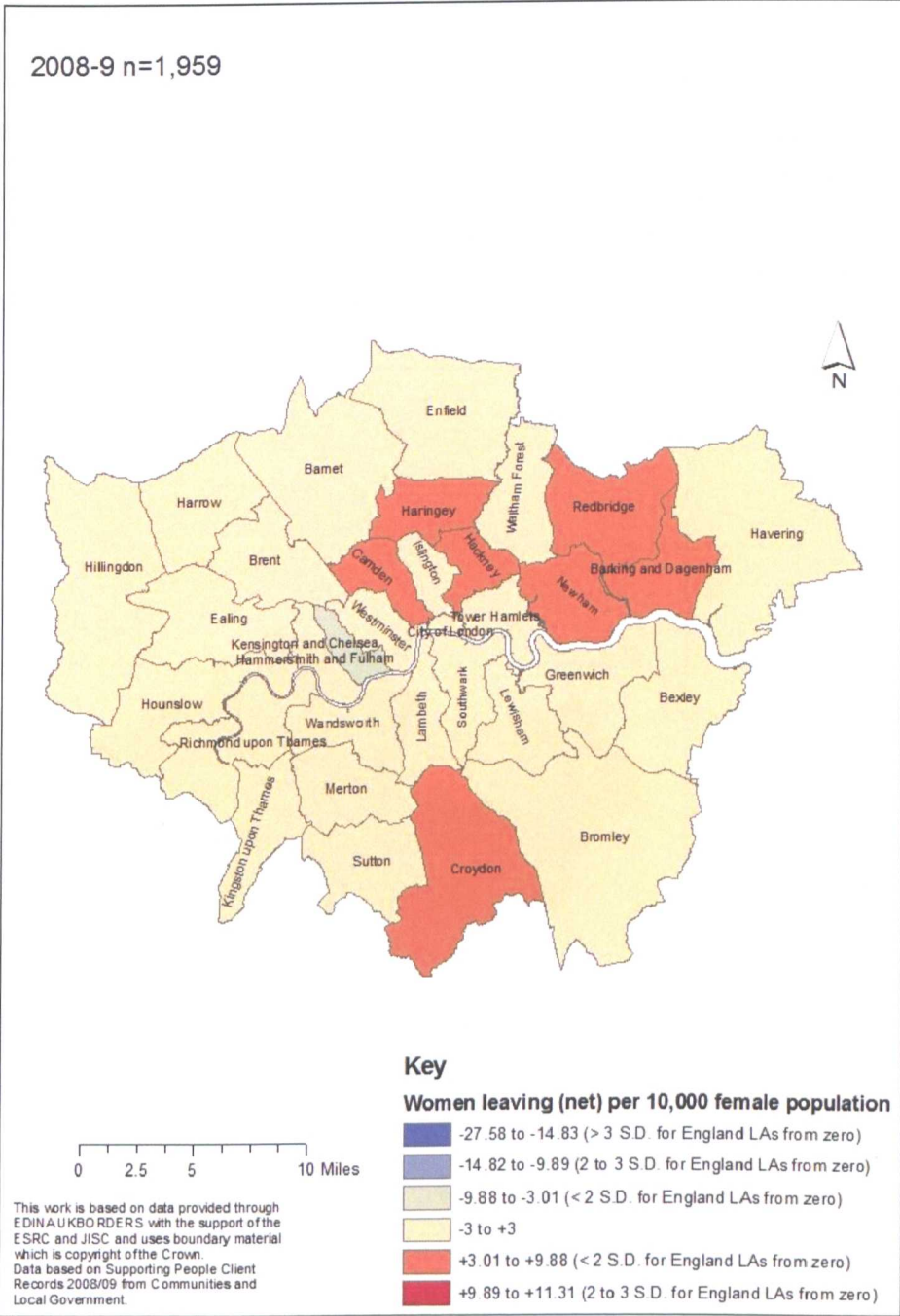


Figure 8.56: Local Authority Map for London of net leaving/arriving to access accommodation services



However, despite the fact that so many journeys from London Boroughs are to another London Borough, the woman-journeys are still very individualised with over 80 per cent (82.5% in 2008-9) being travelled by only one or two women within a twelve month period, and 99.9 per cent being travelled by 10 or fewer women. If there is a London effect, therefore, it is more that it provides a microcosm of the wider spatial churn; rather than having a strong effect on the rest of the country.

Administrative boundaries within London can be significant, however, with London Boroughs implementing different policies, giving rise to strikingly different rates of residential mobility, for example, in Boroughs where the needs might be expected to be more similar (Figure 8.57).



Figure 8.57: Local Authority Map for London of residential mobility to access accommodation services

In 2008-9, Barnet recorded 194 women relocating to access services within the Borough<sup>75</sup>, whereas the similarly large Outer London Borough of Redbridge recorded no residential mobility. This suggests that Barnet and Redbridge women might have been offered different options (or lack of options) rather than simply having such different needs when they were relocating due to domestic violence.

Interviewed Women also found that there were administrative boundaries in London that did not relate to their personal geographies of boundaries. They tended to think more in terms of areas than Local Authorities, and were not necessarily immediately aware of which Local Authority different areas were in. However, Local Authority boundaries were overwhelmingly determining in applying for social housing; so women had to research where boundaries were if they were seeking rehousing in London.

Jenny wanted to relocate within London, but to an area she knew nothing about so that she would feel safe that her ex-partner also did not know it. She relied on the internet to research areas, since she could not afford to travel frequently to the area where she had applied for rehousing.

*I went on NetMums - I had NetMums for here, so I could just change the area - and it also tells you things like little classes the kids can do and stuff like that. That's how I've been doing my research really - putting my postcode in different search engines and see what's local. Thank god for the internet! [laughs] - I don't know what I would do without it!*  
[Jenny - 2:6:32]

Interviewed Workers also emphasised that many women wanted to relocate within London; however, whether in the Midlands, the South Coast or East Anglia, they all had experience of women having to move out of London to their refuges because they could not find a refuge space anywhere in London.

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<sup>75</sup> The majority being to non-accommodation services, hence Barnet being under the median rate for English Local Authorities in Figure 8.57 of residential mobility to accommodation services.

*For southerners everything beyond Watford is 'up north'! [laughs] I don't know - I always find it really funny - but they just find it too far away from civilisation! [laughs] For them, London is where civilisation is!*

*Or they've got lots of local links within London, and because London is so big they think they can move from borough to borough and still be safe - I think that's their main thing. They want to stay in London because their support is so much better than away from London - and they think they can move quite easily and not be found. [Worker S - 1:5:10]*

It is clear, therefore, that the Woman-Journeys Datasets record where women relocated to, but give no indication if that was where they wanted to go.

The clearest conclusion to be drawn from the evidence about places is that women's very individual experiences of escaping domestic violence become a national issue when they cross Local Authority boundaries. The Local Authority level is therefore the least relevant level at which to be concentrating responsibility for addressing women's domestic violence migration journeys.

#### **8.4. Implications for policies and legislation**

##### ***The local and non-local roles of women's refuges***

Women's refuges, whilst varying in some characteristics, are distinctive from other support services accessed by women experiencing domestic violence in at least two key aspects highlighted in this research. Firstly, the clear majority of women who access refuges cross Local Authority boundaries to do so; and, secondly, women's refuges provide a specialist service which includes a wide range of needs-based support (see the next section).

It is therefore inappropriate to consider women's refuges as offering the same service as a direct-access homelessness hostel (in terms of accommodation services); or as floating support or risk-based services (in terms of non-accommodation services).

Table 8.5: Cross-tabulation for migration or residential mobility to types of services

2008-9	Type of service						
Journey type	Women's refuge	Support- ed housing	Direct access	Other accom. Service	Floating support	Outreach service	Resettle- ment service
Migration to another LA	62.5	*-1.6	-14.9	*-1.2	-53.8	-20.5	-16.7
Residential Mobility within LA	-62.5	*1.6	14.9	*1.2	53.8	20.5	16.7
n=18,694	Chi- Square = 4705.849 (df=6) p<0.001 Cramer's V = 0.502						
	Strongest positive association						
	Other positive association > +2 adjusted standardised residuals						
	Strongest negative association						
	Other negative association > -2 adjusted standardised residuals						
*	Association < ±2 adjusted standardised residuals						

As Table 8.5 shows, women’s refuges are strongly associated with migration journeys, whilst all other types of services (accommodation-based or not) are relatively associated with journeys of residential mobility; Floating Support particularly strongly so. As Figure 8.58 shows, over 70 per cent of woman-journeys to women’s refuges were from outside the Local Authority, and it is therefore problematic - in policy and funding terms - to consider them as local services.

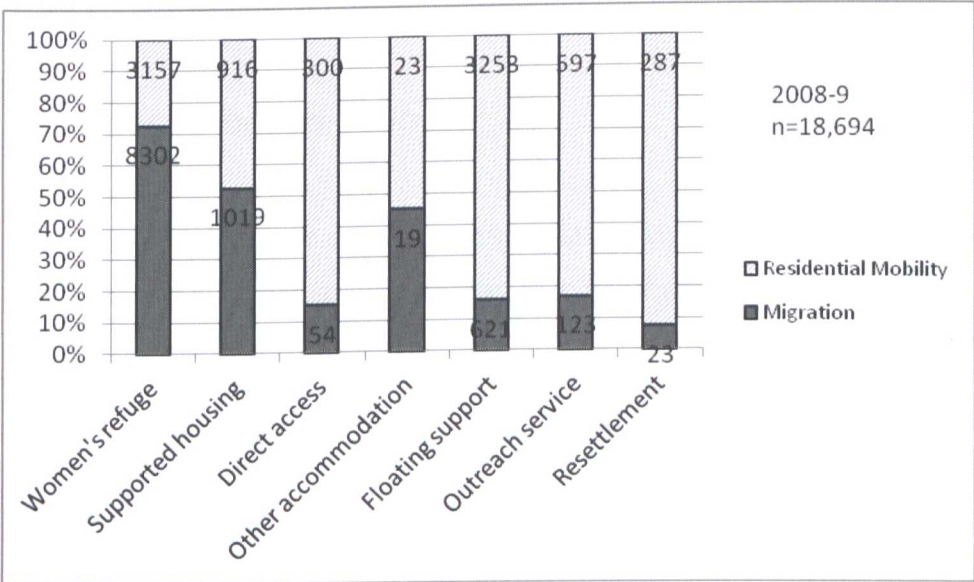


Figure 8.58: Graph of proportion of migration or residential mobility to types of services

Women's refuges are, however, local services in that they need to be based locally - all around the country. Women leave all Local Authorities in every direction possible; and access services in all types of places. This suggests the need for women's refuges in all types of places to make up a national provision enabling women who cannot stay in their local area to escape domestic violence.

Such a national provision would indicate the need for a national funding formula, recognising Local Authorities' essential role in hosting refuges, but not expecting them to fund women's refuge provision entirely out of their budget to provide local services for local people. Refuge services primarily provide for women who need to migrate, whilst all other domestic violence services primarily provide for residential mobility (or staying put). Therefore, a national funding formula for women's refuges would not affect Local Authorities' role in funding and providing other specialist support services for local women, such as Floating Support, Outreach and Resettlement which are consistently accessed by over 80 per cent local women, even amongst those who have relocated (Figure 8.58).

The implications of recognising the distinctiveness of women's refuges in supporting and enabling women's journeys to escape domestic violence are therefore to indicate the need for a national funding formula for women's refuges and a rebalancing of local and national responsibilities in providing such services where women need them.

### ***Needs-based support***

Interviewed Women's experiences consistently highlighted the importance of needs-based support, over and above a risk-based approach to the threats and danger they faced from the abuser. They also highlighted that it was at a refuge that they first met other women who had experienced domestic violence, which enabled them to put their own experiences in context. The work of the refuge therefore included what they did within themselves, and with other residents, as well as the role of workers; and some Interviewed Women talked of continuing to support other women in their future work.

*I want to work with women who have been abused. You know it would be easier for me because it is something that I have experienced - so what I'm going to say to another human being is coming from experience; not just from theory; but from experience where I've been. So that's what I want to do now. [laughs]*  
[Gloria - 1:14:21]

Women's levels and types of needs often fluctuated over the months and years of their journeys away from the abuse - and the impact of the abuse on themselves and their children - and many emphasised their need for a flexible and holistic approach which neither made them over-dependent nor abandoned them at crucial stages.

A greater understanding and assessment of risk by domestic violence services and statutory agencies in recent years, seems to have been associated with a reduction in focus on women and children's needs; rather than a recognition that both are important. Whilst women's refuges routinely carry out risk assessments, many still retain a needs-based approach which means that women can seek help at a time of opportunity rather than having to leave at the time of greatest risk to be most likely to get help. As discussed in Chapter 4, it is not always an incident of abuse that brings women to the point of leaving; nor is an assault necessarily a moment when they are able to leave. Women are often balancing risk with opportunity to seek help, and if services are only offered on the basis of risk assessments, the wider range of needs are not recognised or addressed. Interviewed Women identified what they felt were arbitrary cut-off points by some of the support services they accessed, and a lack of understanding of the impacts of abuse beyond specific incidents of abuse.

By relocating, most Interviewed Women had achieved a complete separation from the abuser (who did not know where they were) and therefore did not see themselves as directly at risk; though some did still need to meet the abuser due to court proceedings, such as Violet who still felt threatened.

*I just wish the family court would be like the criminal court. When someone has to go through the criminal court you can have all video-link and not be near the person; and then family court you have to walk in*

*the same door as them and sit at the same table as them! Not even a metre apart!*

*I think that's - I can't even say the words - it's a bit barbaric really. To have to sit with that person. Because I find it - it affects me for weeks before and weeks after the court.* [Violet - 3:10:14/3:10:22]

However, the lack of direct high risk for most Interviewed Women did not necessarily reduce their support needs; which were often varied and complex both whilst in the refuge, and could continue after rehousing; as discussed earlier.

### ***Pressure points***

Interviewed Women therefore identified key pressure points where their journeys had been fractured or stalled by the lack of appropriate support. They emphasised their need for information and advice before they had ever left the abuser, for more intensive and timely support at the point of leaving; and for continuity of support through the refuge and on rehousing. None of them had actually received such a seamless service; but they identified changes in policy and practice which could make it more possible.

Some of the identified pressure points included financial barriers, such as needing money to travel, and to secure, remove and store furniture and other possessions. However, the availability of small sums of money at that stage would have relieved the need for funding (such as Community Care Grants) at the stage of rehousing; as well as significantly reducing women's sense and reality of losses.

A key source of pressure, however, was the increasing length of stay in women's refuges; beyond the point where women and children were benefitting from the specialist nature of the support. As discussed earlier, both Interviewed Women and Workers identified an optimum stay of around six months for most women, after which the benefits of the keyworker support of women's practical and emotional needs started to be outweighed by the frustrations of being in the



refuge. Women were staying longer than six months primarily because of rehousing issues and/or immigration issues.

Staying too long in refuges undermines both women's emotional and practical journeys; and the work that refuges can do with women who need support. Women staying in refuges for a year when they would only need to stay for six months instantly halves the refuge capacity per year; causing an enormous waste of specialist resources.

### ***Permanently temporary***

The increasing wait for rehousing prompted a range of responses from the Interviewed Women, including for some a decision to move out to private rented accommodation so as to have a self-contained home. For some this had a continuity with having lived in private rented accommodation in the relationship; but for others it was a significant reduction in housing security having come from owner-occupation or a permanent social housing tenancy.

After the initial relief and pleasure of having her own place, Julien Rosa was shocked by the level of rent in the private sector, and concerned about whether she could afford it.

*It's really tight at the moment, because we've just moved; and now the Housing Benefit is saying they will pay less - so I have to work out how much to give to the landlord - because, at the end of the day, as long as he gets his thing he doesn't worry about any of it. So I need to work out what to give to him; and bills are starting to come in - so I have to work it out. But I hope that next month I will work it - and have less things to do.*  
*[Julien Rosa - 2:3:8]*

Interviewed Workers were concerned that women would find themselves stuck in accommodation with high rents, which would limit their options of returning to work; and that with the forthcoming Housing Benefit cap women would find themselves having to relocate again.



*Housing talk to them about private renting and say - it's a nice area, you'll have a garden, you won't be on an estate. So they say to women that they have lots of choices; but they don't explain that they won't be able to afford the rent in the private sector in the future - especially with the Government cap on Housing Benefit. So there's no guarantee that women will be able to stay there, but they're always encouraging women to take private rented.* [Worker M - 1:3:45]

The sense of their accommodation - and therefore their home - being permanently temporary was highlighted by many Interviewed Women who had been rehoused from the refuge; with a sense that they might be forever “settled in mobility” (Morokvasic, 2004). In social housing they were on probationary tenancies, and in private rented they were on short tenancies and were not sure about continuing to afford the rent levels. This was particularly frustrating for women when they thought about the fact that they had only moved from their previous - often more permanent - accommodation because of the abuser.

*He is getting on - living his life - but I left, and all my things - I have nothing nothing nothing.* [Julien Rosa - 2:5:3]

This, therefore, raises the policy question of whether the tenancy status and security could and should be maintained for anyone who has to leave accommodation and relocate due to domestic violence.

If someone leaves their own tenancy due to domestic violence, they may currently be eligible to receive Housing Benefit for both that tenancy and a refuge, so long as they state they would return to the tenancy if it was safe. However, it rarely becomes safe to return, and it is more likely that the tenancy will ultimately have to be given up; but not generally until another Local Authority is prepared to offer a new tenancy. Giving up a tenancy at an earlier stage can lead to someone being deemed ‘Intentionally Homeless’ and therefore ineligible for rehousing.

It could be more effective to reconsider the whole process of Housing Benefit on two properties (which is under threat due to the Housing Benefit cap anyway (Women’s Aid, 2012)), and bring in a policy of being able to retain your housing

tenancy status rather than an actual tenancy of a property that it is unsafe for you to live in; and to retain that status across Local Authority boundaries, if that is a journey you have had to make.

## **8.5. Conclusions and recommendations**

Women's domestic violence journeys are very complex and individualised, but bring a wide range of losses and impacts on women and their children, even if they ultimately achieve safety and positive outcomes. However, generalisations can be made from the evidence of how the implications for women could be made less disruptive by the interventions of services, and changes in policies. In addition, mapping and measuring the implications for places enables conclusions about services and policies at different scales of government.

Whilst all women and children's experiences are unique, there are strong similarities in aspects of their needs which have enabled some standardisation in service responses, such as the development of women's refuges. However, women who need such services often still do not know about them, and there is an ongoing need for public information, in accessible places, whether delivered by posters and leaflets, or by well-trained staff in a whole range of services.

Interviewed Women particularly highlighted their need for assistance where they were - whether before leaving the abuser or on different stages of their journeys - rather than assistance being conditional on them already knowing their way around the system, or reaching a risk threshold, or having the financial and other resources to escape. They emphasised the crucial initial contact with services: that when a woman has the opportunity to seek help, or has escaped at a point of crisis, then agencies need to respond appropriately then and there; rather than talking about options the next day, or in a few days' time. They also highlighted that the lack of continuity of support at the point of leaving a refuge is particularly problematic; recommending a short period of resettlement support which both they and refuge workers highlighted as a relatively small cost

which would bring considerable benefits in terms of longer term settling of themselves and their children.

In terms of the journeys, other particular pressure points were identified which could be ameliorated by authorities carrying out their responsibilities to help women not lose their personal property, by means of assisting with storage and removals at the crucial times. Several Interviewed Women received financial support from the Social Fund (Community Care Grant or Budgeting Loan) to replace some of the essentials they had lost; whilst they would have preferred to have received loan or grant assistance not to lose things in the first place. As well as loss of possessions, many women lose their housing security; and a change in policy around tenancy status could enable women not to lose secure tenancy status simply because they have had to leave that housing due to domestic violence. It could enable them to complete their journeys and know they would not be forced to move again.

These recommendations raise important boundary issues - the boundaries between Local Authority and national Government responsibilities - and the evidence of this research indicates that these boundaries need to be rethought<sup>76</sup>.

Tens of thousands of women and children cross Local Authority boundaries every year due to domestic violence; yet such migration has been so hidden that neither policy nor service provision adequately address it. Women's refuges are regarded as local services, yet overwhelmingly provide services to women who need to cross Local Authority boundaries. This needs to be reflected in a rethinking of funding - by means of development of a national funding formula - to set a minimum threshold ensuring that sufficient capacity for the national level of need is provided in appropriate locations, and not subject to inappropriately local decision-making. It is clear also that hosting refuge spaces

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<sup>76</sup> Whilst Coalition Government rhetoric and legislation emphasises a shift of responsibilities from National to Local, the actual picture is more complex. For example, on 28 June 2013 the Department of Health announced new national eligibility criteria from 2015 to set a minimum threshold for care and support services provided by local authorities (HM Government, 2013).

would not necessarily lead to undue strain on a local authority in terms of rehousing: women leave everywhere, and the indication is that they go everywhere they can. Even with the current lack of any national planning of service location, most local authorities experience around net zero numbers of women leaving and arriving.

Recognising women's domestic violence journeys highlights the implications that result from women and children's experiences of abuse; but also the implications of the subsequent journeys that could be alleviated or mitigated by more consistent agency and authority responses; and changes in policy and service practices to address particular pressure points. Such changes, however, are unlikely without a broader recognition and reconceptualisation of the scale and nature of the problem; which are explored in the final chapter.

## **Chapter 9. Conceptualisations and Conclusions**

Empirically, this research has been able to address significant gaps in the domestic violence literature and the migration literature. The domestic violence literature has addressed help-seeking and leaving, the role of refuges, and resettlement; but has not looked in any detail at the journeys between these locations. The migration literature has addressed gendered processes internationally, but not domestic violence as a cause of migration, and has addressed forced migration and Internally Displaced Persons, but not in the UK. This research has therefore generated conclusions and recommendations on women's domestic violence journeys from the empirical work; and these have been discussed in the previous chapter. However, it is also possible to work with these conclusions and draw on aspects of the literature to unpack the "black box" of travel (Sheller & Urry, 2006, p.208) and (re)conceptualise these journeys. The conceptualisations discussed in this chapter, lead to overall conclusions on women's domestic violence journeys, as well as concepts of forced migration and spatial churn; exile, diaspora and imagined communities; boundaries; and scale. The chapter concludes with methodological reflections on the research, and outlines prospects for future research.

### **9.1. Women's domestic violence journeys**

Despite the fact that tens of thousands of women and children leave domestic violence in the UK every year, including over 18,000 women and 18,000 children accessing formal support services in England, women's journeys are highly individualised. Different experiences of leaving were discussed in Chapter 4; and the patterns of individual journeys across the country were discussed in Chapter 5. The isolation commonly experienced in abusive relationships is often continued in isolated journeys, which are further individualised by fragmented and inconsistent service responses; as discussed in the practicalities of leaving and travelling in Chapters 4 and 5. Beyond the initial force of the domestic abuse, women exercise degrees of agency, which were discussed at the end of Chapter 4; whilst experiencing further force and constraints in their journeys,

which were discussed in subsequent chapters. Understanding leaving as a process, rather than an event, and recognising the complexity of women's journeys, highlights that more effective assistance could be provided en route; and this was discussed in Chapter 8.

All kinds of women travel from and to all kinds of places in a process of spatial churn; which was discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. Women's focus is on leaving rather than arriving and therefore individual distances and overall rates have limited association with characteristics of women or local authorities. Whilst rates of migration vary between local authorities, evidence in Chapter 5 shows that there is a positive correlation between rates of leaving and arriving, so the net effect for most places is around zero. Women tend to go to a similar kind of place to the one they left, but often have little choice; and their journeys have multiple stages where the disruption is not simply related to distance. In terms of Massey's (1994, p.149) power geometry, the issue is not just about movement, but "about power in relation to the flows and the movement". However, some women do travel long distances, and distance is also engaged with metaphorically in their conceptualisation of their journeys; as discussed in Chapter 5. Overall, the evidence that women's journeys are not about aiming to go to a different type of place, and that the patterns are different from other internal migration in the UK, indicate the need for a distinctive conceptualisation of these journeys.

In Chapter 6, women's refuges are evidenced as places that women can escape to; but also that they can be important - if stationary - stages of their journeys. Abrahams (2006; 2007) outlines the dynamic process of work in refuges whereby women can move on in practical and emotional ways, via the specialist support and the sense of collectivity with other women; and similar conclusions are drawn here. However, the evidence in Chapter 6 of women's refuges as integral to women's uncompleted journeys further focuses attention on women and children's needs, beyond services' responsibilities to assess risk. Refuges can be made important places on women's journeys; rather than being non-places, both physically and emotionally, as cautioned by Burman and Chantler (2004).

However, by drawing on understandings from migration research, it is highlighted that positive processes of active waiting in these liminal places can become dissipated into a sense of limbo if women are waiting too long in refuges, as is often the case.

Whilst settling is a complex process, Chapter 7 highlights that rehousing from a refuge tends to be an abrupt event with associated practical, financial and emotional pressures; and a lack of continuity in formal support. As a result, it can be a difficult point in the ongoing process of (re)settlement; as well as often being to a social or private tenancy which continues to be temporary. However, whether or not they have completed their domestic violence journeys, many women are able to continue positive processes of (re)making senses of home, self, identity and belonging, and achieving outcomes of independence and freedom. At each stage of women's literal journeys, difficult practicalities, and degrees of force and constraint were discussed; however there are also degrees of agency, and women actively conceptualise their journeys as going beyond the literal, as discussed at the ends of each of the four empirical chapters.

Women's domestic violence journeys, therefore, incorporate the journey of the surviving self into literal journeys across time and space, via particular routes, means and places. The overall evidence and conceptualisation of the nature and implications of women's domestic violence journeys enables the conclusions and recommendations for service provision and policy within the UK discussed in Chapter 8. It also enables a return to the literature to address the four areas of theoretical concern outlined at the end of the literature review in Chapter 2.

## **9.2. Forced Migration and Spatial Churn**

The journeys of women to escape domestic violence can be defined as forced migration. Over 10,000 women (over half with children) cross local authority boundaries in England every year to access services and nearly 9,000 relocate within their local authority. Many Interviewed Women saw themselves as both 'forced' and 'migrants'; though some were uncomfortable with using the actual

word ‘forced’ because of its implied lack of any agency on their part (evidencing the “tightrope talk” identified by McKenzie-Mohr and Lafrance (2011)) . Their accounts show that they tried not to relocate, and often stayed as local as they could, but that a combination of the threat of the abuse, and the availability (or not) of services shaped where they went initially.

The UK is not commonly considered a country where people experience forced migration<sup>77</sup>. Journeys of internal migration in the UK tend to be seen as options that people take for financial, housing, education or employment reasons (Fielding, 2012); rather than forced journeys to escape threat and abuse. Identification of this forced migration of women and children in the UK requires an engagement with the literature of forced migration discussed in Chapter 2, raising distinctive concerns in comparison with more voluntary migration (King, 2012). These include issues of a sense of displacement - being neither here nor there (Mountz, 2011, p.383); of forced waiting in places of limbo (Hyndman & Giles, 2011, p.366); of social exclusion (Hynes, 2011); and of losing housing rights and possessions.

UN Resolutions emphasise state responsibilities to prevent or resolve international and internal forced migration, such as UN General Assembly Resolution 51/75 section 10 which “emphasizes the responsibility of States to resolve refugee situations and to ensure conditions that do not compel people to flee in fear” (UN General Assembly, 1997). It can be considered a failure of the UK state that women and children are being forced to flee their homes and become internally displaced persons, whether within refuges, with family or friends, or in other temporary accommodation. Recognition of the thousands of Internally Displaced Persons within the UK also highlights the UK Government’s responsibilities to address IDP’s needs according to the UN Guiding Principles. These include every human being’s “right to be protected against being arbitrarily displaced from his or her home or place of habitual residence” (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2004, sec.6.1); and that

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<sup>77</sup> According to the UNHCR, the UK has no Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) or people in IDP-like situations (persons displaced by armed conflict, generalized violence and human rights violations). (UNHCR, 2013, p.41).



“Property and possessions left behind by internally displaced persons should be protected against destruction and arbitrary and illegal appropriation, occupation or use” (2004, sec.21.3). Such responsibilities of the national state cannot be simply assumed to be being carried out by local or other authorities or organisations, as is currently the case in the UK; and the fragmented response which follows was particularly discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 8.

One of the reasons why forced migration due to domestic violence within the UK may have been under-recognised is its representation as an accommodation issue, to be resolved at the local level, rather than a recognition of the national scale of the issue. The previous lack of data on such individual and often secret journeys has hidden the extent of women’s journeys; which this research has now evidenced and discussed. For example, comparison in Chapter 5 between the dense mass of journeys in Figure 5.17 and the lack of net effect in Figure 5.19 indicates how the migration of tens of thousands of women and children becomes almost invisible at the scale of net effect on Local Authorities.

The patterns of woman-journeys on the Flow Maps in Chapter 5 show the total mass of journeys each year; from everywhere and to everywhere that has support services. However, this is not a mass or disproportionate flow from or to any particular area of the country, or from or to particular types of places: most Local Authorities experience a similar number of women leaving and arriving due to domestic violence. Unlike the net flow to the South under the primacy of economic drivers of internal migration identified by Fielding (2012, p.97), this migration is not a net flow at all; it is a process of spatial churn throughout the country.

Spatial churn has been recognised within the UK in other processes of internal migration; specifically the work of Gill on the forced displacement of asylum seekers (2009a; 2009b). However, Gill identifies governmental techniques of relocation to designated accommodation, which is different from the abusive techniques of individuals (perpetrators of domestic violence) and the failure of the state to prevent this forcing the relocation of women and children. The

relocation of women and children due to domestic violence is therefore a distinctive process of internal migration within the UK: distinctive in its causes, extent, implications and patterns. In combining quantitative and qualitative analysis, this research is an example of answering Smith and Bailey's (2006, p.1340) call to address the 'why' questions of differences in migration.

The trajectories of the journeys from individual Interviewed Women's perspectives are complex with twists and turns over time and distance; as evidenced in the journey graphs in Figure 5.20, Figure 5.21, Figure 5.28 and Figure 7.44. Also, in terms of place, they travelled to places they did not necessarily want to go to; and ended up in places they had not imagined themselves living. Such non-straight journeys into the unknown could be characterised as rhizomic (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988), with each stage growing out of the previous stage, rather than planned or even imagined from the start. Rather than static locations of violent incidents on standard crime maps (Home Office, 2011), women's active strategies of relocating are mapped in the Flow Maps. Since women are escaping an abuser who is likely to know their friends and family, the places they know, and the places they have lived in the past, it can be an important safety strategy to travel unpredictably; to make pursuit less easy (Bowstead, 2011). Their individual agency is evidenced in such choices. However, such buried and hidden journeys tend to continue the isolation women experienced within the abusive relationship, and enable the lack of recognition by local and national authorities of the significant extent of such journeys.

Whilst the evidence in Chapter 5 indicates that many journeys to access services are relatively short distances; the multiple-stage journeys evidenced by the Refuge Survey and Interviewed Women gives a more complete picture of the overall geographical distances and the considerable periods of time in mobility. Again, this draws on the discussion of migration literature in Chapter 2, with the sense for some women that they might be forever "settled in mobility" (Morokvasic, 2004). The churn at the national scale is echoed in the disruption of lives turned upside down at the individual scale.

### **9.3. Exile, Diaspora and Imagined Communities**

Women's domestic violence journeys can also be characterised as journeys initially more of exile than of diaspora. As discussed in Chapter 4, most Interviewed Women were very isolated in the abusive relationship and had few connections with anyone who could help; as well as being largely unaware of any other women who experienced domestic violence. In Brah's (1996) contrast between exile and diaspora, these are individual exile journeys of escape away from somewhere.

However, women's experiences in women's refuges - as a communal accommodation service - brought them into contact with other women in a way that was often a revelation. As discussed in Chapter 6, they understood their own experiences of abuse differently, both from the keywork sessions with the refuge workers, but also from meeting other women who had experienced abuse. It became part of their sense of self to recognise the abuse they had experienced; and to recognise when others they came across were experiencing abuse. The period of waiting in refuges therefore also represented an important process of moving on in their journeys; and in enabling settling as discussed in Chapter 7.

They therefore developed shared group narratives (Brah, 1996, p.183) and imagined themselves as part of a community of women who had experienced abuse; both the actual community of women and children living in the refuge at the same time as them, but also a community outside, and in the future. The initial non-relational, non-place (Augé, 2008) they arrived in became a meaningful place where they could (re)create connections and identity. They created a sense of diaspora over time and space - an invisible diaspora in terms of not being distinguishable from the rest of the population - an "imagined community" (Woodward, 1997, p.18). The women who took part in the Groupwork Process were keen not just to produce albums and calendars for themselves, but to produce posters that would remain on display in the refuge for women they imagined being there in the future. The messages they wanted

to convey drew on their own experiences of feeling down, anxious, unsure; but also of being at a stage of a larger journey (see Figure 7.45) - to reassure women that things would get better.

However, as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, women also had very individual experiences which led to very individual journeys. The dominance of individual experiences over group characteristics (beyond being a woman experiencing domestic violence) is also emphasised throughout the data sources. In the Helpline Survey the issues raised by women thinking about relocation (discussed in Chapter 4) were not associated with demographics. The Flow Maps in Chapter 5 show very individual journeys, with two-thirds being travelled by only one woman in a twelve-month period, and 98 per cent being travelled by fewer than ten women in a year. Similarly, in Chapter 5, the very limited association of the characteristics of woman-journeys with the demographic characteristics of women in the Woman-Journey Datasets, further indicates that the journeys are determined by individual circumstances rather than collective characteristics.

These are not, therefore, diasporic journeys, in the sense that they are not embarked upon with a sense of collective identity, following routes that women are aware that other women have travelled before. They are not made with other women escaping violence, and they are not made with the intention to join up with other women escaping violence. However, many women who access communal (rather than one-to-one) support services do end up making powerful and important diasporic connections which help them begin to undo the isolation of exile from previous people and places. Many of those connections continue beyond the proximity of living together in a refuge, and remain as part of a woman's identity as surviving and moving on from the abuse; as discussed in Chapter 7. It can therefore be an important aspect of the role of women's refuges to support such diasporic connections; supporting women to create shared narratives through positive collective activities such as the Groupwork Process in this research.

## 9.4. Boundaries

The data limitations of the mapping in this research mean that women's journeys within Local Authorities cannot be mapped as flow lines, whereas journeys of a similar length that happen to cross a Local Authority boundary can be mapped (see maps in Chapter 5). Using the vocabulary of migration studies, residential mobility cannot be mapped as flows, whereas migration can. However, it is not appropriate to characterise journeys as simply happening, or not happening, to cross administrative boundaries; since these boundaries can be highly significant in terms of women's rights and ability to access support services and rehousing, and therefore affect where they can go and whether they can settle.

Boundaries matter in the provision of services; increasingly so with an emphasis on localism under the National Coalition Government since May 2010 (DCLG, 2011). However, whilst social housing (and therefore homelessness and rehousing policies) is administered at the Local Authority/Unitary Authority level, support services such as Floating Support and women's refuges may be administered and funded at the County level for two-tier authorities (particularly in the past under the Supporting People Programme<sup>78</sup>). It is not surprising that women escaping domestic violence find themselves negotiating what seem to be arbitrary boundaries if they have not crossed a boundary in terms of their temporary accommodation (such as going to a women's refuge within their origin County), but have in terms of seeking permanent accommodation (such as a social housing tenancy). Relatively short journeys in mileage may therefore cause much longer journeys in time and bureaucracy for some women to be able to settle where they have initially stayed. In addition, women found their journeys further fragmented by boundaries between services; particularly the abrupt cut-off on leaving a refuge. No Interviewed Women talked about considering administrative boundaries before accessing a statutory or support service for help; they had only become aware of the implications of such boundaries by the response of agencies.

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<sup>78</sup> No longer ring-fenced as a programme from April 2009.

In the absence of domestic violence - in the absence of the threat forcing a journey across an administrative boundary - individuals would not normally be able to apply to be housed by a Local Authority where they do not have a local connection. Fielding (2012, p.117) argues that this policy is a significant barrier to internal migration in the UK. Mobility between Local Authorities, within the social housing sector, may be available via the HOMES/Move UK Scheme, but this is not designed to deal with forced moves or situations of urgency. Local Authority boundaries are therefore designed as 'moats', sealing each authority off from its neighbours. However, in the past, the Supporting People Programme specifically recognised the need for cross-authority access to housing support for women at risk of domestic violence (Fusco, 2007). In addition, successive Housing Acts (HM Government, 1996) have maintained an exception for individuals who are unable to remain safely in a Local Authority where they have a local connection; allowing them to apply to a Local Authority where they have no such connection - effectively a 'drawbridge' for individuals escaping domestic violence.

Local Authorities are increasingly deepening their moats and pulling up the drawbridges in a variety of ways. As discussed in earlier chapters, Interviewed Women had experience of Housing officers turning them away as not in Priority Need, and of referring them to a refuge outside of the Local Authority whilst not explaining any right to apply to that authority. Women made the journeys they had to - whether they crossed boundaries or not - but they had experience of Local Authorities questioning their right to apply to somewhere where they had no local connection. Interviewed Workers provided more experiences of Local Authorities turning away women who should have been able to apply under the legislation, not explaining housing rights to women, and excessive questioning of women and disbelief of their accounts of abuse. Such strengthening of boundaries has parallels in literature on migration, where borders enact the power of inclusion and exclusion (Massey, 2001), creating an 'us' and 'them' (Brah, 1999).

However, Local Authority gatekeeping can be understood as a response to the tensions of dealing with women crossing Local Authority boundaries in a context of tight social housing resources, increasingly localised responsibilities (DCLG, 2010a), and the lack of a national overview, planning or resourcing for the issue of women's relocation due to domestic violence. There is no national recognition, in terms of policies or funding, of a Local Authority providing women's refuge capacity whilst its neighbouring authorities do not. As a result, whilst the National Coalition Government urges an increasingly local focus on Local Authorities, it is difficult to argue why any Local Authority should seek to provide women's refuge capacity funded from local resources. Therefore, Local Authorities will continue to make local decisions about such refuge services, whilst the women primarily affected by the decisions will be women from everywhere else. Provision across the UK - and therefore of national concern - could disappear in a series of unconnected local decisions; indicating again that the funding, capacity and location decisions need to be brought together into a national formula.

## **9.5.     Scale**

The scale of the issue of women's journeys to escape domestic violence is large; involving tens of thousands of women and children every year in forced moves, and affecting the wider population of their friends, their families, their colleagues, and the services they come in contact with. However, to understand the processes that are going on - and therefore what appropriate responses would be - requires the issue to be looked at from a range of different geographical scales. Most strikingly, as discussed in Chapter 8, the issues are distinctively different from the scales of the Individual, the Local Authority and Nationally.

At the Individual scale, many women travel long distances and make journeys of multiple stages and multiple stays which can be very disruptive for themselves and their children. Other women make short journeys in terms of distance; though the disruption and ongoing safety issues may be complex. Though any

woman might make a very long or complex journeys, women with children tend to make longer journeys, and are more likely to cross Local Authority boundaries; affecting their rights to housing, services, their children's rights to schools, and so many other aspects of their lives. Interviewed Women talked of the many and varied impact on their lives of the abuse, and the journeys to escape the abuse; affecting them over months and years in practical, emotional, health and financial terms. At various stages their journeys could have been made easier, less costly, less disruptive in a range of ways; and this research makes recommendations in Chapter 8 for these particular pressure points for individuals.

However, most of the agencies involved in responding to and supporting individuals through these pressure points are operating at the Local Authority scale; whether they are statutory services or voluntary sector services primarily funded at the Local Authority level. Whilst this local focus - strengthened under the National Coalition Government since May 2010 - may make Local Authorities responsive to the needs of women who are relocating within the Local Authority area; it tends to make them less responsive to women who cross Local Authority boundaries. In referring local women to refuges outside their Local Authority area, Housing departments tend to regard that as the end of their responsibility; and many are also reluctant to accept women who have relocated from another Local Authority.

In terms of support provision, some Local Authorities are also requiring women's refuges to fulfil a quota of local women in the refuge; effectively distorting the provision from its primary purpose of supporting women without discrimination. Such quotas also indicate a lack of understanding of the distinctive role of women's refuges, which is not the same as other specialist support services on domestic violence. Whilst such support services respond to women's residential mobility (as well as women who can stay put), refuges respond to women's migration. By the time a woman tries to access a woman's refuge she has usually already assessed whether it is safe for her to stay in her origin Local Authority, which will depend on the characteristics of the Local Authority (for



example if it includes several distinct centres of population), and of the level of risk and likely behaviour of the abuser. As shown in Figure 8.58, over 70 per cent of journeys to women's refuges are from outside the Local Authority because women who can stay in their origin Local Authority tend not to need the distinctive services of a refuge.

Looking at the Local Authority scale (which is their primary administrative concern), the Councils only see the women who come from elsewhere to their area, and question why they have done so, and whether they should be entitled to any assistance. On the Local Authority Map of the net flows (Figure 5.18), Councils therefore tend to imagine themselves as 'blue': with women flowing into their area making demands on their services. They do not tend to imagine themselves as 'red': as more dependent on other Local Authorities assisting their local women who have to escape then they actually assist women from elsewhere. However, the clear evidence of this research is that, in fact, most Local Authorities are neither 'blue' nor 'red'; they are 'beige': women come to access their services in very similar numbers to the extent that their local women access services elsewhere.

Prior to this research, Local Authorities have not had the evidence that they are part of a de facto national churn of woman-journeys, and national provision of a network to enable such journeys, because that is not how services are planned or funded. However, this research now provides clear evidence for the need for national provision of locally-hosted women's refuges; and this is never going to be effectively provided out of a chance synergy of 354 (in England at the time of this research) local decisions on whether or not to provide local services. A focus on local services for local people (DCLG, 2011), which is appropriate for many Local Authority responsibilities (including provision of support services around domestic violence and other forms of violence against women), is not appropriate for accommodation services for women who have to relocate across Local Authority boundaries.

Whilst there continues to be no national funding formula and no national overview, the costs and consequences of providing women's refuges distort both the location and capacity of provision. No Local Authority is required to provide women's refuges, so decisions to provide or not, to increase or decrease capacity, are made in an evidence vacuum; and therefore without analysis of the consequences at the regional or national scale. An increase in capacity in any location would tend to be filled by women from other Local Authorities, because women who access refuges tend to be those who cannot stay in their local area. However, as discussed in Chapter 7, women will not necessarily be applying for rehousing in the area of the refuge; so it would not be correct for Local Authorities to assume that providing refuge spaces for women would necessarily increase demand on their social housing.

Nevertheless, many Local Authorities do remain anxious about funding women's refuges, particularly if they know that their neighbouring authorities fund less refuge capacity, or none at all. There have recently been proposals to develop a regional approach across London to refuge provision, which could begin to tackle such disincentives to funding appropriate capacity, but actual funding plans have not yet been agreed<sup>79</sup>. Consultation in June 2013 on the London Mayor's Strategy on Violence Against Women and Girls (MOPAC, 2013, p.27) reports "a consensus that cross-borough commissioning of refuges was highly desirable" but that there is a "lack of data which could be utilised in order to take the first steps down this road". This research provides both data and analysis, and highlights that such a regional approach could enable women to be more able to travel only as far as they needed to. However, currently, across the UK, what is essentially regional or national provision is being left at the mercy of local decision-making. For women whose experience of domestic violence forces them to relocate, the most relevant scales of concern are the individual and the national; and yet the current structure of service provision and housing rights operates primarily at the Local Authority level ie. at the least relevant scale.

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<sup>79</sup> Report not published: "Violence against women and girls refuge provision in London: A review of provision and commissioning options", University of York, November 2011. Referred to in "Service Specification: Strand 2.4: Emergency refuge accommodation that offers services to meet the needs of specific groups." (London Councils, 2012)

Scale matters because “politics lies in the power-filled nature of the social relations at all levels” (Massey, 2001, p.16), with organisations and authorities operating at different scales in shaping social life (Moore, 2008, p.218). Pain (2009, p.475) argues that feminist work in particular jumps scales, enabling multiscale analysis which can bind “everyday experiences to wider networks of power and privilege”. The multiscale analysis of this research has provided conclusions on the extent and implications of women’s journeys to escape domestic violence; at the individual, Local Authority and National scales. It therefore provides a basis for re-thinking, re-conceptualising and re-formulating responses at the appropriate scales.

## 9.6. Methodological reflections

In attempting to address an empirical and conceptual gap in both the domestic violence and the migration literature a wide-ranging research project was carried out. This was methodologically complex and generated a total of twelve different quantitative and qualitative datasets ranging in sample size from 20 to nearly 20,000; and including data for up to six years. It was therefore difficult to manage this complexity to enable clarity of conclusions on the extent and implications of women’s domestic violence journeys; and many questions remain. Beyond addressing the overall research question<sup>80</sup>, the first sub question<sup>81</sup> of the geography of women’s journeys at a range of scales became the primary focus because of the rich analysis that was possible based on the administrative data that were accessed and processed. Following on from this, the fourth sub question on policy and practice implications was strongly focused on in Chapter 8. However, as a result, less focus was possible on detailed

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<sup>80</sup> The original research question was: What is the extent and what are the implications of forced migration or relocation for women fleeing domestic violence?

<sup>81</sup> The original sub questions were:

1. What is the geography of these journeys within England?
2. How do women's experiences and understandings of fleeing, returning, or settling in a new area affect their sense of home and belonging?
3. How can services contribute to developing and supporting positive feelings and undoing negative experiences for women and children who have relocated?
4. What are the policy and practice implications of the extent of forced migration or relocation?

analysis of women's sense of home and belonging, including through their experiences in refuges, as raised in the other two sub questions outlined in the introduction to Chapter 3. Some aspects of women's journeys were only, therefore, briefly considered; such as the small-scale creative groupwork with women in refuges which aimed to explore their sense of place in a location of waiting to resettle. Such methods as the groupwork and surveys required complex negotiations with service providers, and were therefore also constrained by working with hard-pressed frontline workers.

The interviews also particularly raised considerable ethical issues, as discussed in Chapter 3. In relocating to escape domestic violence women are leaving an abuser who knows many of the places and people they know; and they therefore attempt to achieve safety by not disclosing where they come from or where they have been on the way. It was therefore a challenge for this research to enable Interviewed Women to be able to trust the researcher with details of dates and places. However, this was achieved, enabling analysis of places and distances to be carried out at the individual scale as well as with the large anonymised administrative datasets. As a result, it was possible to strengthen conclusions where different levels of analysis generated complementary findings, and to reflect on what contradictory findings revealed. For example, the importance of individual factors in where women go was highlighted by the fact that there was a significant tendency amongst over 9,000 woman-journeys for women to go to the same type of local authority as the one they left (Table 5.3 and Table 5.4); however, most Interviewed Women went to different types of local authority. A research project analysing only administrative or only interview data might have risked concluding more strongly either that women go to the same type of place, or that they do not.

On reflection, it is positive that all the methods achieved useful data, whilst all could potentially have been taken further in different circumstances. The mixed methods strategy generated data that allowed the research to go beyond descriptive analysis at a range of scales, towards developing generalisations, explanations, and new conceptualisations (as discussed earlier in this chapter).

Overall, this research project attempted to generate knowledge on women's journeys three dimensionally over time (and stages), space (distances and places), and scale; from the scale of individual women's accounts up to mapping the national picture. The knowledge achieved provides a framework for further research on all these aspects.

### **9.7. Prospects for further research**

Whilst this research has covered considerable ground, both empirically and conceptually, in generating new knowledge on women's domestic violence journeys, there is the potential both for further research, and for further impact of this research. In keeping with concepts explored within the research, the potential exists at various scales.

In terms of the national scale there is potential for further analysis of the generated data, for example more detailed analysis of the flows between different local authorities; such as by using Fielding's (2012, p.7) formula of "migration velocities" to measure the size of flows from particular origins to particular destinations. Access to further administrative data at the local authority scale, such as for the final two years of Supporting People and the less comprehensive current data collection (Sitra, 2011; CHR, 2012), could also enable consideration of changes in migration patterns since the 2010 change of Government.

Based on the existing analysis, there is potential for policy impact based on the evidence that Local Authorities are not the most appropriate scale for refuge and rehousing provision. The data generated for this research could enable the development of a national formula for service provision - both capacity and location - including considering county and regional characteristics. In the same way as London was identified as a largely self-contained journeyscape, a more general regional approach could be explored.

At the level of service responses and policies, evidence on particular pressure points in women's journeys identified in the previous chapter could be explored further and related to current benefit and funding changes. Models of commissioning in some parts of the country fund more consistent provision (for example in terms of needs-based resettlement support) than others; and the new role of Police and Crime Commissioners (HM Government, 2011) further extends the Government's Localism agenda (DCLG, 2011)<sup>82</sup>. At present, Localism does not appear to recognise that, whilst a local focus may be entirely appropriate for a range of services and concerns, it consistently fails those women and children who are unable to remain in their local area due to domestic violence.

As an example at the level of individual women, there is potential for development of the participatory groupwork in a wider range of places, both as a research process and with outcomes for participants. Within domestic violence services, the groupwork process could be used as a basis for collective activities to support women's self-confidence and skills development, with the potential for publication or exhibition of the images produced. The women who took part in the two groups for this research wished there had been more sessions, and said they would recommend such groupwork to other women.

Overall, there is clearly potential both for applying insights from this research, and for generating further knowledge on the extent and implications of women's domestic violence journeys.

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<sup>82</sup> Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 - under section 9, crime and disorder reduction grants may be made to any person. From the 2014-15 financial year, the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice will be devolving the victims and witnesses fund to Police and Crime Commissioners, who could use this funding to commission services on domestic violence.

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## **Appendix 1: Developing the Woman-Journeys Datasets**

### **1. Supporting People Client Records**

The existence of administrative data collected by all Supporting People-funded services (ie. housing-related support services) in England was identified by the researcher in 2007 and access to these data from one service-provider was negotiated for an MA research project in 2008. This identified the potential of demographic, spatial and mapping analysis on the variables within the dataset.

The “Client Record” system was developed by Communities and Local Government (CLG) to record standard information about clients starting to receive services through the Supporting People Programme in England from April 2003. Data monitoring was carried out by each service provider and submitted to the Client Record Office at the Centre for Housing Research (CHR) in St Andrews for data collection, processing and preliminary statistical analysis. Each Administering Authority (ie. County or Unitary Authority) received a complete dataset of Client Record information about their service providers and CLG used the data to report nationally.

The CHR was also able to seek authorisation from CLG for the dataset to be used for special analyses, and the researcher therefore approached the CHR in October 2009 seeking access to the data for this research project. Approval from CLG and CHR, and the datasets, were received in December 2009, and work began with the data following receipt of approval from London Metropolitan University Applied Social Sciences Research Ethics Review Panel in March 2010.

The Client Record dataset includes over 80 variables, including information on the location of the service accessed (by Administering Authority), whether or not the client has moved immediately prior to accessing the service and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) code for the Local Authority where the client’s previous accommodation was. The data therefore enable the identification of any journeys of relocation to access accommodation or non-accommodation housing-related support. The datasets also include socio-demographic information such as sex, age, ethnic origin, economic status, disability and dependent children.

### **2. Coverage of the dataset**

Whilst completion of the Client Record Forms was not nationally mandatory, service providers were usually required to complete them as part of contractual arrangements with their commissioning Administering Authority. The datasets can therefore be considered as approaching the population of individuals accessing such services in England rather than a sample. However, they provide no indication of individuals who relocate but do not access such statutory-funded support services.

Supporting People funding was no longer ring-fenced from April 2009 and central coordination of monitoring ceased in March 2011; however the researcher was not given access to Administering Authority level data after March 2009, with only Regional level data being available. Despite the lack of central coordination, from April 2011 just under two-thirds of Administering Authorities continued to provide monitoring data to the Centre for Housing Research (CHR, 2012, p.3). However, this research analysis is only on the years 2003-9, because of being able to analyse at the level of the 354 Local Authorities of England (after data development see later). It is not clear whether access would be granted, but data do exist to carry out the same level analysis for 2009-11; however data have only been collated for 98 out of the 152 Administering Authorities from April 2011.

### 3. Anonymity and double-counting

Names and dates of birth of individuals are not collected by CLG or CHR. From April 2006 non-mandatory collection of National Insurance Numbers was introduced to allow Communities and Local Government to link records (without identifying individuals) and assess the extent to which clients move from one scheme to another. In 2007-2008 73% of Client Records included the NI number. The only organisations permitted to hold Client Record or Outcomes datasets containing the NI number are CLG and CHR (although CLG do not currently hold this information); therefore the datasets provided to the researcher have this information removed.

All cases in the datasets represent a unique episode of accessing a service ie. for the purposes of this research a unique “woman-journey” (for those accessing accommodation services or non-accommodation services having changed their accommodation) and there is therefore no concern of inappropriate double-counting. Data processing by CHR should have removed any errors of double-entering of cases. However, there is a possibility that an individual woman might access more than one service within a year and this cannot be identified from the data.

In the 2007-08 Annual Report (Supporting People, 2009b), the CHR carried out analysis using the NI number and other key variables to link Client Records and Outcomes and create a linked dataset to enable them to carry out “client-tracking”(Supporting People, 2009a). This was able to track repeat use of services by the nearly 20,000 clients who had accessed services after April 2006 (and therefore had their NI number recorded) and had left services after May 2007 (and therefore had a Short Term Outcomes record completed). The following table is from the 2007-08 Annual Report (Supporting People, 2009b, p.42).

Table 3.2: Number of times that clients have accessed services		
Number of times services were accessed	Number of clients	Percentage of clients
1	18,825	94.7
2	938	4.7
3	98	0.5
4	11	0.1
5 and over	8	<0.1
Total	19,880	100

It is therefore clear that within this annual dataset almost all clients only accessed one service (94.7%) ie. a case equals a client. Therefore, in addition to the fact that each case in this research represents a unique “woman-journey”, the vast majority can also be assumed to represent a unique woman. For ease of reference, and avoidance of de-humanising language of “clients” or “cases”, unique “woman-journeys” are therefore at times referred to as women.

#### 4. Data processing to develop the Woman-journeys datasets

##### a. Women at risk of domestic violence

Supporting People services provide support to a range of “Client Groups” either through specialist services, such as women’s refuges, or through more generic services, such as non-specialist supported housing. Individuals may have a range of support needs and the Client Record therefore identifies both Primary and up to three Secondary Client Group for each case. However this research is concerned with domestic violence as the primary purpose for accessing support and the Primary Client Group variable was used to select only those cases coded “14 = Women at risk of domestic violence”. As a result, for 2008-9, 24,535 cases were selected out of the total of 219,594 SP Client Records.

The variable “SameAcc” identified if a client had moved accommodation at the point of accessing the Supporting People service. Given the focus of this research on women’s relocation, those cases where the woman at risk of domestic violence had not just moved were excluded from the analysis (5,723 in 2008-9), leaving around 18,000 cases per year (18,812 in 2008-9). It is possible that those women may have previously relocated due to domestic violence; however this could not be identified from these data. As a result, this lack of information meant that these women were also not regarded as a comparison group who had not relocated; they had simply not just relocated at that point of accessing a service.

##### b. Socio-demographic variables

A range of socio-demographic variables in the datasets (Supporting People, 2008) were used in the analysis; with some additional processing, such as creating age categories, number of dependent children, and broader categories of ethnic origin. The economic status variable (“P1EconSt”) was not used as it recorded

the status only at the point of accessing the service ie. at the point of relocation. Status at that point would be highly likely to be unemployment, due to the relocation, and therefore give little indication of economic status that could provide useful analysis.

#### c. Accommodation and Non-accommodation services

Whilst the majority of women who had relocated to access services accessed accommodation services (primarily women's refuges, but also supported housing and other services), up to a quarter (4,924 in 2008-9) relocated and accessed non-accommodation support services such as Floating Support. However, no details of their accommodation type are recorded in the datasets, so it is impossible to know if they were in temporary or permanent accommodation - for example, staying in Bed and Breakfast or with friends or family; or in their own tenancy. As a result, to be able to draw clearer conclusions, some of the analysis was only carried out on the data for women in accommodation services (ie. temporary accommodation).

In addition, the data processing to identify the Local Authority (rather than just the Administering Authority) location of the services (see next section), meant that some analysis was only carried out for accommodation services, to be able to draw clearer conclusions.

#### d. Local Authority location of services

For Unitary Authorities, the ONS code for the Supporting People Administering Authority ("SP\_Admin") provided the Local Authority location of the service; however for two-tier authorities, to enable analysis at the Local Authority level, the variable "SP\_Admin" had to be recoded from the County level to the Local Authority level. This affected around 40 per cent of cases in each year; and was therefore a substantial data processing task carried out by the researcher.

Recoding of service location to Local Authorities was achieved for almost all cases (17 missing in 2008-9), by use of other variables within the datasets (particularly Service Name, Name of Service Provider, and management codes), and by use of directories, especially County Council Supporting People Directories (available online), and by use of Service Provider websites. In addition, London Metropolitan University's Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit (CWASU) had created a database of Local Authority locations of specialist Violence Against Women services (which includes domestic violence services) for its research project "Map of Gaps" (Coy et al., 2007; Coy et al., 2009), which was used; and Women's Aid's directory of domestic violence services was also used (Women's Aid, 2011).

Recoding for Local Authority primarily involved identification of service location, but for some services, assumptions had to be made to enable recoding.

- A few accommodation services provided accommodation in more than one Local Authority within one Administering Authority and therefore provided their Supporting People returns without differentiating the Local

Authority (others in similar circumstances did differentiate the services by means of management codes in the datasets). This concerned around 2 per cent of cases (416 in 2008-9) and cases were coded to the first named Local Authority (as was similarly done by the Map of Gaps research mentioned above). The affected Local Authorities were noted so that if they appeared to be outliers in later analysis, this would be taken into account and treated with caution. In terms of the distance calculations, since these were straight lines from Local Authority centroids they were estimates anyway, and it was judged that these locations could therefore be included in the analysis.

- Some non-accommodation services were based in one Local Authority but provided services to more than one Local Authority (sometimes a whole County). Because of the lack of data on the accommodation and location of the women concerned, the Local Authority location of the service base had to be used. As a result, for the analysis on Local Authorities (such as the Local Authority Maps) only data on accommodation services was used, to enable clearer conclusions to be drawn.

#### e. Calculating woman-journey distances

Identification of Local Authority Origin and Destination (service location) produced datasets which were imported into ArcGIS with the software specifically programmed to draw lines between Origin and Destination (Local Authority centroids) for each case. Straight line distances between centroids was used because there were no data to indicate locations within a Local Authority, and no data on means of transport or routes of woman-journeys, so data on distances via transport networks could not be used. The software calculated these straight line distances generating woman-journey distances for each case without missing data. Missing data included missing Origin (77 in 2008-9), non-UK Origin (25 in 2008-9), and missing Destination (17 in 2008-9 - including one that was also a missing Origin). Out of the total of 18,812 women's relocations to access services in 2008-9, woman-journeys were therefore generated for 18,694. However, around 45 per cent of woman-journeys (8,533 in 2008-9) were residential mobility within a Local Authority and therefore lines could not be drawn nor distances calculated. Distances between Local Authority centroids were calculated for around 10,000 Migration woman-journeys per year (10,161 in 2008-9).

These distances give an indication of the distances of women's relocation journeys between Local Authorities, bearing in mind:

- All Origin and Destination location data is only at the Local Authority level and therefore distances are taken from calculated centroids of polygons of various sizes and shapes, whereas a woman may have travelled from any location within a Local Authority to any location within another Local Authority.
- Distances are measured in straight lines ie. likely to be an underestimate and not a reflection of the actual journey a woman took.



- Journeys to services in England from Wales (123 in 2008-9), Scotland (60 in 2008-9), Northern Ireland (10 in 2008-9) could only be drawn, and distances calculated, from the centroids of those countries; and no mapping or distance calculations could be done for journeys from outside the UK (25 in 2008-9).
- Relocation journeys within a Local Authority - residential mobility - could only be given a nominal distance of 1 mile; which is likely to be an underestimation.
- There may be errors in data recording and recoding.

f. Identified sources of error

There are three specific potential sources of error in the datasets, despite efforts to minimise this: incorrect data entry by service providers; incorrect data processing and collation by CHR St Andrews; and errors in re-coding and data entry by the researcher. Analysis of all six years enabled comparisons which could help identify any spurious associations or outliers due to errors or missing data; and outliers were only discussed in the analysis if they applied in three or more years.

In addition, the researcher noted an unexpectedly high number of women recorded as having left the City of London (32 to accommodation services in 2008-9) given its population size. The researcher concluded that this was a mis-coding by service staff around the country recording a woman as having left the "City of London" rather than London, and therefore failing to record the relevant London Borough. The researcher decided that these data should be excluded from the Local Authority analysis; however, in terms of woman-journey distances the error would only result in a maximum of a few miles' imprecision and therefore the cases were not excluded.

Appendix 2: National Helpline Survey questions  
Helpline question checklist - Helpline worker .....

Date ..... Day..... Time ..... ID Number .....  
Is the call from a woman herself? ☐ Yes ☐ No (no further questions)

Did she call about relocating in response to domestic violence? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
**Please complete questions in All 3 Boxes**

<b>What were the issues and factors for her in deciding <u>where</u> to go?</b> <b>(please tick one box on each line)</b>				
Wanted to go somewhere near?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not mentioned	
Wanted to go somewhere far?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not mentioned	
Wanted to go somewhere she knew?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not mentioned	
Wanted to go somewhere she didn't know?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not mentioned	
Transport issues	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not mentioned	
Her particular needs?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not mentioned	
Which needs?				
Her children's needs?	<input type="checkbox"/> No children	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not mentioned
Which needs?				
Any other factors or issues?				

**What was the immediate outcome? (please tick one)**

<input type="checkbox"/>	able to offer her an option to relocate
<input type="checkbox"/>	able to offer her more than one option to relocate
<input type="checkbox"/>	not able to offer her any option to relocate
<input type="checkbox"/>	woman did not want to relocate immediately
<input type="checkbox"/>	other (please specify)
Any other comments?	

1. Woman's age: ..... (exact if possible - otherwise, give age category)

2. Does she have any children living with her? ☐ Yes ☐ No

How many? ..... male - ages ..... female - ages .....

3. What is her ethnic group? (please tick one box from the appropriate section)

**White:**

- ☐ British  
☐ Irish

☐ Any other White background

(please write in) .....

**Mixed:**

- ☐ White and Black Caribbean  
☐ White and Black African  
☐ White and Asian  
☐ Any other Mixed background

(please write in) .....

**Asian or Asian British:**

- ☐ Indian  
☐ Pakistani

☐ Bangladeshi

☐ Any other Asian background  
(please write in) .....

**Black or Black British:**

- ☐ Caribbean  
☐ African  
☐ Any other Black background

(please write in) .....

**Chinese or Other Ethnic Group:**

- ☐ Chinese  
☐ Any other Ethnic Group

(please write in). ....

4. Does she consider herself to be disabled? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please write in her disability .....

## Helpline Survey and Initial Descriptive Coding

Helpline Survey - Questions for each call	Links to initial orienting concepts
Date/day/time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Role of services</i></li> </ul>
Is the call from a woman thinking of relocating in response to domestic violence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Role of services</i></li> </ul>
Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> </ul>
Wanted somewhere near/far	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Geography of the journeys</i></li> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> </ul>
Wanted somewhere known/unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Geography of the journeys</i></li> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> </ul>
Transport issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Geography of the journeys</i></li> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> </ul>
Particular needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> </ul>
Children's needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> </ul>
Immediate outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Geography of the journeys</i></li> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Role of services</i></li> </ul>

### Appendix 3: Refuge Survey questions

#### Refuge Survey

#### Research on women's journeys in response to domestic violence

*This research is looking at the extent and implications for women of relocating in response to domestic violence. These questions will ask you about how many moves you've made in order to access safety. If it is safe for you to do so, it will ask you for the details of the locations you have moved to or otherwise just the number of moves you have made.*

*The information will be used anonymously for the purposes of the research which are to highlight issues for policy and services that improve women and children's safety and well being.*

*The researcher will appreciate your contribution if you choose to take part. If you need any additional information, please ask your caseworker.*

**Would you like to take part?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**a) Have you had to move out of your home because of domestic violence?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**b) If yes, where are you fleeing domestic violence from?**

*Please be as specific as you can be safely e.g. town and county, London borough - name of Local Authority/ONS LA code*

Name of place / LA	ONS LA code	Reason for move from (codes 1 to 2)

1. To leave my home where I was living with abusive partner

2. To escape harassment/threats from abusive partner (not living with)

**c) Did you try (are you trying) any formal measures not to move home?**

☐ Sanctuary Scheme

☐ Legal orders eg. Occupation Order/Non-Molestation Order

☐ Criminal case eg. Partner on Bail conditions/Remand

**d) How many times have you moved since first fleeing domestic violence?  
(ie. zero for both if she has not moved)**

Within the same local authority ..... (number)

To different local authorities ..... (number)

e) Please list the places/boroughs you have lived in since first fleeing domestic violence (ie. N/A if she has not moved)

Please be as specific as you can be safely e.g. town and county, London borough - name of Local Authority/ONS LA code

Remember to include moves to stay with friends/family (even if for just short periods), moving into private rented accommodation, management transfers i.e. by housing association, buying another property etc (not just moves between refuges)

Name of place / LA	ONS LA code	Main reason for move FROM this place (codes 1 to 7)
		[allow for more moves]

1. To leave my home where I was living with abusive partner
2. To escape harassment/threats from abusive partner (not living with)
3. To move away from networks/community because I was unsafe staying
4. To move nearer to friends/family/known area
5. To move nearer to work/school/other service
6. Because it was the only refuge space available
7. Other - please specify

f) Are you waiting for a service space to become available so that you can move to another location? Yes/No

Name of place / LA	ONS LA code	Main reason for intended move TO this place (codes 1 to 7)

g) Please complete this question when you leave the service.

Are you moving accommodation? Yes/No

Name of place / LA moving to	ONS LA code	Main reason for move TO this place (codes 1 to 9)

Codes 1.to 5. as above

6. To move to a(nother) refuge
7. To move to other temporary housing
8. To move to permanent housing
9. Other - please specify

h) Any other comments?

## **Appendix 4: Outline of creative groupwork**

### **Outline of creative groupwork for Refuge - October 2011**

Within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding and the Confidentiality Agreement between Refuge and the researcher, a process of groupwork is proposed to contribute towards the overall research question:

**What is the extent and what are the implications of forced migration or relocation for women fleeing domestic violence?**

It particularly addresses two of the sub questions:

- How do women's experiences and understandings of fleeing, returning, or settling in a new area affect their sense of home and belonging?
- How can services contribute to developing and supporting positive feelings and undoing negative experiences for women and children who have relocated?

The main focus is women's experiences of settling in a new area.

### **Background to visual and participatory methodologies**

The proposal is of a participatory methodology based on the understanding that women are experts in their own lives. Creative image-making processes (photography and collecting images) are proposed to enable women to express themselves as part of a collective and group process - to complement the individual interview process in the research; and to express themselves visually - to enable participation by women who may not wish to take part in an interview.

Visual methods have been widely used in social research and this proposal draws on the ethical standards and knowledge from that (eg. the National Centre for Research Methods <http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/research/outputs/publications/> ) as well as training in participatory photography (<http://www.photovoice.org>). The researcher can provide more information on this background.

### **Risk and safety**

The proposal intends to be of creative value and recognition for the participants as well as data generation for the research project. Safety is paramount within the process. The participatory photography is proposed as process - it would of course be valuable if some images were produced that could be used directly in the research, but this is not essential.

Managing risk and safety for participants and services:

- No need for women to share information about their own journeys in the group
- No images of identifiable people
- No images of identifiable places if they could risk safety
- Informed Consent will be needed for individuals' images to be shared with the group, and for any images to be shared outside the group

The groupwork method has been approved by London Metropolitan University's Research Ethics Review Panel in the Faculty of Applied Social Sciences.

## **Outline of the groupwork proposal**

Recognising the time input required from Refuge, the initial proposal is for 3 two-hour sessions of groupwork with up to a maximum of 6 participants at a service; however this is negotiable and could benefit from being longer (especially Session 3). The costs of cameras, materials, childcare, refreshments etc would be covered by the researcher.

Refuge will provide a co-facilitator from the service - to liaise with the researcher on preparation and to support the women between the weekly sessions with any concerns etc, issue replacement cameras if any problems arise, raise any concerns with the researcher, and participate in evaluation at the end.

### **Aims**

- To explore how women settle into a new area
- To explore the potential of a visual methodology and creative tools in practical support work

### **Session 1**

Talking about taking photos, collecting images - researcher brings images/books as examples

Taking photos as a group with a digital camera

Issuing digital cameras on loan to the participants

#### **Objectives**

- develop/share thinking about images
- practise taking images

### **Session 2**

Talking about the area, looking at a map

Working with the collected images / information

Returning the cameras to get the images printed

#### **Objectives**

- practise working with images
- share experiences of the area

### **Session 3**

Working with women's own photographs / images

Each woman creating her own personal album

Choosing photos for sharing with the group - providing comments on them

Relating the photos to places on the map / other local information / stories

Producing a group display for the refuge

#### **Objectives**

- produce individual album
- share images and ideas with the group
- produce group creative display
- receive feedback from participants
- identify what aspects of the process can go into the research

Sign copyright/consent/release forms for any wider use of the images /words /recordings.

#### **Session 4** - between researcher and Refuge - evaluating the process.

- Has the project done what it intended to do?
- What worked / didn't work - what can be learned?
- What could be done differently?
- What changed for whom as a result of the project?
- Any unexpected outcomes?
- New partnerships, relationships, future plans?
- Is the project transferable?
- What additional knowledge or support would be needed?
- Can the project be sustained / taken further?

#### **Groupwork outputs and outcomes:**

##### **Intended Outputs**

- individual albums by each woman - personal
- display for the refuge - anonymised as necessary
- documented process of methods of creative work - anonymised - for the research

##### **Potential Outputs**

- Research data from the process of creative work about places
- Research data of words and images from participants on the themes of places, and settling in an area
- Development of a creative toolkit for practical support work in services

##### **Intended Outcomes**

- Creativity and building confidence for the participants
- Creating knowledge of a local area - useful for individuals and the service
- Enabling contribution to the research project in additional ways to the interviews

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## Appendix 5: Linking interviews to research concepts and themes

### Interview guides and Initial Descriptive Coding (using seven orienting concepts)

Themes/questions for women in First Interviews - to be covered (not necessarily in order)	Links to initial orienting concepts -> Descriptive Coding
How did you feel about <u>where</u> you lived when the abuse/violence of your last relationship was going on? (your home, the area etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Concepts of home, belonging and safety</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
How long would you say you experienced the abuse/violence before first leaving?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> </ul>
What were the main reasons you left?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of home, belonging and safety</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
What did you consider in deciding <u>whether</u> to go? (can you talk me through the process of deciding whether to go?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
What options did you feel you had?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> </ul>
Did you feel forced to go? - if so, by whom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
What would have made it possible for you to stay (if you wanted to)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
What did you consider in deciding <u>where</u> to go?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> </ul>
Where did you <u>want</u> to go? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Geography of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
Where did you live when the abuse/violence was going on? [fill in form]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Geography of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
Where did you first go? Why? [fill in form]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Geography of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
How did you get there? [fill in form]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Geography of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
How many times have you moved since then; and where to (including back home)? How did you get there? When and how long were you in each place? Why did you move? [fill in form]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Geography of the journeys</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> </ul>
What <u>type</u> of accommodation were you in at each place? [fill in form]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Role of services</i></li> <li>• <i>Policy and practice implications</i></li> </ul>
Any issues on the journey(s)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> </ul>

What were the main reasons you ended up here now?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Geography of the journeys</i></li> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> </ul>
What type of accommodation and service are you in now?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Role of services</i></li> </ul>
How did you feel when you first arrived here? How long ago was that?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of home, belonging and safety</i></li> </ul>
How do you feel now? How is it working out here?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of home, belonging and safety</i></li> </ul>
Do you think you'll be staying here? Do you want to? Why? What are you thinking about in deciding?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of home, belonging and safety</i></li> </ul>
What have been the implications of moving for you? How has it affected you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
What could have made your experience of moving better?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Role of services</i></li> <li>• <i>Policy and practice implications</i></li> </ul>
What could help you settle into a new area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Role of services</i></li> <li>• <i>Policy and practice implications</i></li> </ul>
How do you feel about the journey(s) you have made?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
What does a safe place mean to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Concepts of home, belonging and safety</i></li> </ul>
What does belonging mean to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Concepts of home, belonging and safety</i></li> </ul>
'Home' - what would calling a place home mean to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Concepts of home, belonging and safety</i></li> </ul>

<b>Themes/questions for women in Second Interviews</b> <b>- to be covered (not necessarily in order)</b>	<b>Links to initial orienting concepts -&gt; Descriptive Coding</b>
What has changed for you since the last interview?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Geography of the journeys</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> </ul>
How would you describe where you are now to me?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Geography of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
Can you talk me through this local area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Geography of the journeys</i></li> <li>• <i>Role of services</i></li> </ul>
How do you feel about being here?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Concepts of home, belonging and safety</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
What options did you have? - Do you feel you chose to come here?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> </ul>
How does it compare to where you left originally? Do you still have any links to back there? - what?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Geography of the journeys</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
What's best about being here? Is anything difficult about being here?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> </ul>
What makes you feel at home somewhere? - what do you do to make a place feel more like home?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> </ul>
How did you go about finding new connections here?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> </ul>
What could have made your experience of moving/journeys better?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Role of services</i></li> <li>• <i>Policy and practice implications</i></li> </ul>
Do you think you'll be staying here - do you want to? - why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of home, belonging and safety</i></li> </ul>
What have been the implications of moving for you? How has it affected you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
Could you talk me through the important/significant people and places to you now? - and map them onto the <b>Significance Chart</b> - how has that changed from when you were in the relationship?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Role of services</i></li> </ul>

Before you left the relationship, did you know any other women who had experienced domestic violence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> </ul>
If yes, what did they say about leaving, or not?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
What did you think it would be like to go? How does that compare with what it's been like for you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
Do you know other women who've experienced abuse now? - how do you feel about that? Are you staying in contact with other women? - is that important to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> </ul>
What would you now want to say to another woman experiencing violence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Policy and practice implications</i></li> </ul>
What's the most important thing that anyone did or said to you? - who?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Role of services</i></li> <li>• <i>Policy and practice implications</i></li> </ul>
How important has the support of services been? - in what way?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Role of services</i></li> <li>• <i>Policy and practice implications</i></li> </ul>
How far do you feel you've travelled from when you were in the relationship?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
How do you feel now about the journeys you've made?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
Do you feel you've changed? What feels the same?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> </ul>
Would you describe yourself as forced to make the moves?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
Do you think of yourself as a migrant - because of the moves you've made? - why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
What are your hopes for the future?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> </ul>
What does a safe place mean to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Concepts of home, belonging and safety</i></li> </ul>
What does belonging mean to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Concepts of home, belonging and safety</i></li> </ul>
'Home' - what would calling a place home mean to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Concepts of home, belonging and safety</i></li> </ul>

<b>Themes/questions for refuge worker interviews - to be covered (not necessarily in order)</b>	<b>Links to initial orienting concepts -&gt; Descriptive Coding</b>
What are the main issues for a service providing support and advice for women who have relocated due to domestic violence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Role of services</i></li> <li>• <i>Policy and practice implications</i></li> </ul>
What are the main reasons for women ending up at your service?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
Where have women come from? Have they stayed in other areas?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Geography of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
Where is the furthest a woman has come from? and gone to?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Geography of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
What proportion of women come from this borough?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Geography of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
What choices have women had about staying or leaving? Are the moves forced?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
What would have made it possible for them not to move?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
What choices of where to go do women have when they are here?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's agency and needs</i></li> </ul>
Where do women go to from this service?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Geography of the journeys</i></li> </ul>
What are the implications of moving for women?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Women's practical and emotional experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of home, belonging and safety</i></li> </ul>
What are you able to provide to help women settle into a new area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Role of services</i></li> </ul>
What else would you like to do as a service?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Role of services</i></li> </ul>
What are the main issues in providing support and advice for women who have come new to this area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Role of services</i></li> <li>• <i>Concepts of the journeys</i></li> <li>• <i>Policy and practice implications</i></li> </ul>
Any relevant data from the organisation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Role of services</i></li> <li>• <i>Policy and practice implications</i></li> </ul>

## **Appendix 6: Coding for analysis**

### **Descriptive Coding from analysing interviews from MA Project:**

- **Actions**
  - Deciding to leave
  - Journeys of moving (subsequently separated - see below - into
    - Concepts of the journeys
    - Geography of the journeys)
  - Resettling
- **Feelings**
  - Forced or options
  - Home and belonging (subsequently separated - see below - into
    - Concepts of home
    - Concepts of belonging)
  - Telling or not telling
- **Impacts**
  - Gains of leaving
  - Losses of leaving
  - Threats and fears

### **Initial orienting concepts -> Descriptive Coding**

- **Women's practical and emotional experiences** (Concrete events and expressed emotions)
- **Women's agency and needs** (Women's actions, decisions and intentions)
- **Concepts of the journeys** (Expectations and understandings of travelling)
- **Geography of the journeys** (Concrete travel and places)
- **Role of services** (Actions and expectations of services)
- **Policy and practice implications** (Improvements and problems)
- **Concepts of home** (Experiences and senses of home)
- **Concepts of belonging** (Experiences and senses of belonging)
- **Concepts of safety** (Experiences and senses of safety)

**Additional Descriptive Codes drawn from initial analysis of the interview data:**

- **Connections to other women**
- **Concepts of freedom**

**Total: eighteen initial descriptive codes**

### **Interpretative Codes:**

- Leaving
  - Deciding
  - Isolation or Help
  - Practicalities
  - Force & Agency
- Journeys/Travelling
  - Places
  - Distances
  - Practicalities
  - Concepts
  - Patterns
- Waiting
  - Ideas
  - Feelings & Emotions
  - Actions & Needs
  - Places
- Settling or Not
  - Practicalities
  - Actions
  - Feelings & Emotions
  - Identity
- Implications
  - Policies
  - Places
  - Agencies & Practices
  - Self
  - Children
  - Concepts

### **Pattern codes - more inferential and explanatory:**

-> not necessarily directly related to quoting selections of the interview text

- Implications
  - Concepts
    - Exile/Diaspora
    - Scale
    - Forced migration & Spatial churn
    - Boundaries
  - Places - implications for places
  - Policies
    - National
    - Relevant scale
- Journeys/Travelling
  - Patterns

## **Overall coding for analysis:**

- Leaving
  - Deciding
  - Isolation or Help
  - Practicalities
  - Force & Agency
- Journeys/Travelling
  - Places
  - Distances
  - Practicalities
  - Concepts
  - Patterns
- Waiting
  - Ideas
  - Feelings & Emotions
  - Actions & Needs
  - Places
- Settling or Not
  - Practicalities
  - Actions
  - Feelings & Emotions
  - Identity
- Implications
  - Policies
  - Places
  - Agencies & Practices
  - Self
  - Children
  - Concepts
    - Exile & Diaspora
    - Forced migration & Spatial churn
    - Scale
    - Boundaries