

Additional issues marginalised groups of women face

It is important to stress that barriers faced by marginalised groups of women are related to oppression in society and do not lie with the women themselves.

Issues faced by marginalised groups may include:

- ageism
- class issues
- disability discrimination
- homophobia
- racism
- stereotyping

Additional issues faced by **black women** may include:

- racial harassment
- discriminatory employment practices
- prejudice/stereotyping (e.g. the compliant Asian woman, the strong Afro-Caribbean woman, abuse being more acceptable in some communities, confusion between arranged and forced marriages and the former being seen as more oppressive than other marriages)
- a feeling of responsibility to protect a community which is already subject to racism as well as wanting to avoid reinforcing stereotypes of black men as being violent and dangerous
- visibility in white communities
- the complexity of immigration legislation (e.g. threats of deportation, lack of access to benefits or housing)
- poverty

Additional issues faced by **disabled women** may include:

- regularly experiencing discrimination/oppression
- threats from carers in their own home/residential establishments (e.g. withdrawal of care, losing the children)
- labelling
- isolation
- lack of access to support/information
- lack of practical access to facilities
- organisational and structural barriers - rules and regulations that create increased difficulty or are not interpreted correctly or not understood by staff
- not being perceived as 'credible witnesses' (e.g. because of communication or learning difficulties or mental illness) and, thus, the difficulties of acquiring protection through the criminal justice system
- effects of abuse (e.g. anxiety, depression) being interpreted as signs of mental illness
- attitudes, skills and knowledge of workers
- financial (e.g. higher cost of living experienced by many disabled people; for those with a care package met by local budgets, limits options for women seeking refuge)

Additional issues marginalised groups of women face continued

Additional issues faced by **older women** may include:

- assumptions/ageist attitudes (e.g. her partner being too old/frail to abuse her, the women herself being too old to abuse)
- difficulty in disclosing abuse to family members (e.g. pressure to hold the family together, to be a nurturing role model, to offer stability)
- abuse may be taking place within a residential establishment or may be from sons, lodgers, nephews

Additional issues faced by **lesbians** may include:

- homophobic attitudes
- collusion (e.g. by family members/relatives) to force them to deny their sexuality
- some lesbians who are married are abused by husbands and ex-partners
- fear of their sexuality being used against them if abuse is reported
- fear of losing their children
- difficulty of asking for assistance (e.g. because of previous experience or negative or unhelpful responses from agencies)
- the threat of exposure and possible consequences (losing job/ friends, abuse from the community)

Additional issues faced by **working class women** may include:

- lack of access to employment and educational attitudes
- lower expectations of working class women by some agency staff (e.g. in relation to parenting skills and their ability to manage money)
- poverty
- childcare
- poor housing
- health issues

Additional issues faced by **women living in rural areas** may include:

- lack of access to services
- lack of information about what is available
- increased social and family pressures to stay within a marriage
- social attitudes of close rural communities to domestic abuse
- confidentiality issues within small communities
- limited public and private transport
- difficulty contacting or visiting service providers
- increased risk to safety from high visibility in community, lack of neighbours, delayed police response
- weapons on farms and estates
- attachment to the area and way of life

Additional issues marginalised groups of women face continued

Additional issues faced by **Gypsy Traveller women** may include:

- access to appropriate information
- accessing appropriate accommodation
- when leaving a partner, a woman leaves her whole community
- if a woman leaves she may jeopardise the marriage prospects of her daughters
- they may view their emotional needs as less important due to other pressures in their lives
- lack of access to a 'phone
- lack of cultural awareness of service providers and hence offering inappropriate and inaccessible services

Additional issues faced by **women working as prostitutes** may include:

- men who exploit and abuse them to recruit them into prostitution (e.g. through forced drug addiction and violence)
- financial pressures
- a lack of family support
- a history of ill-treatment and abuse
- fear of her children being taken into care
- attitudes of workers