

nia

SERVICE USER SATISFACTION SURVEY

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

This report describes the process and findings of an independently conducted service user satisfaction survey carried out at nia in June/July 2012. The aims of the survey were to:

- Measure the levels of service user satisfaction with nia's current services
- Identify areas for improvement and good practice
- Provide a meaningful opportunity for service users to describe their experience of nia's services in their own words and make recommendations for change and development

Service users from all of nia's services were invited to complete questionnaires and be interviewed. Separate questionnaires were available for adults and children/young people and interviews could be carried out in person or over the telephone. This made the process accessible to women unable to leave their homes because of safety concerns or due to childcare responsibilities. The processes were conducted by an independent consultant in order to reassure participants of confidentiality and so enable a more candid response.

As a thank you, all adult women who took part in an interview were given a £5 supermarket voucher. If any children or young people agreed to be interviewed, they were to receive a £5 Amazon voucher.

nia has been through a period of change and development over the last year. Periods of such major change in organisations can sometimes result in a reduction in the standard of services provided, or at least a disruption to the remaining services. From the results of this survey, it is clear that the overall high standard of service provision at nia has been upheld throughout what has been a challenging time for the organisation.

Services available at nia are:

- Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service
- Refuge Accommodation
- Safe Choices
- Family Support Services
- East London Rape Crisis – including therapeutic counselling and advocacy

Respondents

Demographic information on respondents is detailed below.

Ethnicity

Black Caribbean	16%
Black British	16%
Black African	4%
Mixed Black Caribbean/White European	4%
Bangladeshi	4%
Sri Lankan	4%
Other South Asian	4%
Other Asian	4%
White European	4%
White British	20%
Not identified	20%

Age

14-19	32%
20-26	8%
27-34	8%
35-44	4%
45-54	12%
55-60	0
61-70	4%
Not identified	32%

Sexuality

Heterosexual	64%
Lesbian	0
Bisexual	12%
Not identified	24%

Services

Safe Choices	25%
Family Support	9%
Rape Crisis Advocate	6%
Refuge	12%
IDVA	18%
Rape Crisis Counselling	30%

SURVEY RESPONSES

Women taking part in the survey were asked a series of questions designed to capture their experiences of, and feelings about, the services they received at nia. Questions ranged from how easy or difficult it was to access nia's services, how friendly and helpful staff were, the changes women have seen in their life as a result of the services they have received at nia and what, if anything, they would change about services and how they are offered.

Overall, women found the services they received at nia to be of a high standard, with the organisation easy to access. They found the staff friendly and helpful and identified a number of positive changes in their lives as a result of their involvement with nia.

Of the women who self-referred, three found out about nia via an internet search engine and either phoned or emailed to make first contact. Women were also referred by external agencies, including their Health Visitor, Hackney MARAC, Social Services and London Rape Crisis.

The speed with which women received services after first contacting nia was a positive aspect of women's experience of the organisation, with one woman "accommodated within a couple of hours". No woman who took part in the survey reported a long wait for services or any problems with accessing the right service once they had contacted the organisation.

An example of good practice was illustrated by one woman who had only a two week wait before seeing a Rape Crisis Counsellor. At a time when specialist sexual violence services are at times working beyond capacity, it is incredibly important for women to be able to access therapeutic support so quickly.

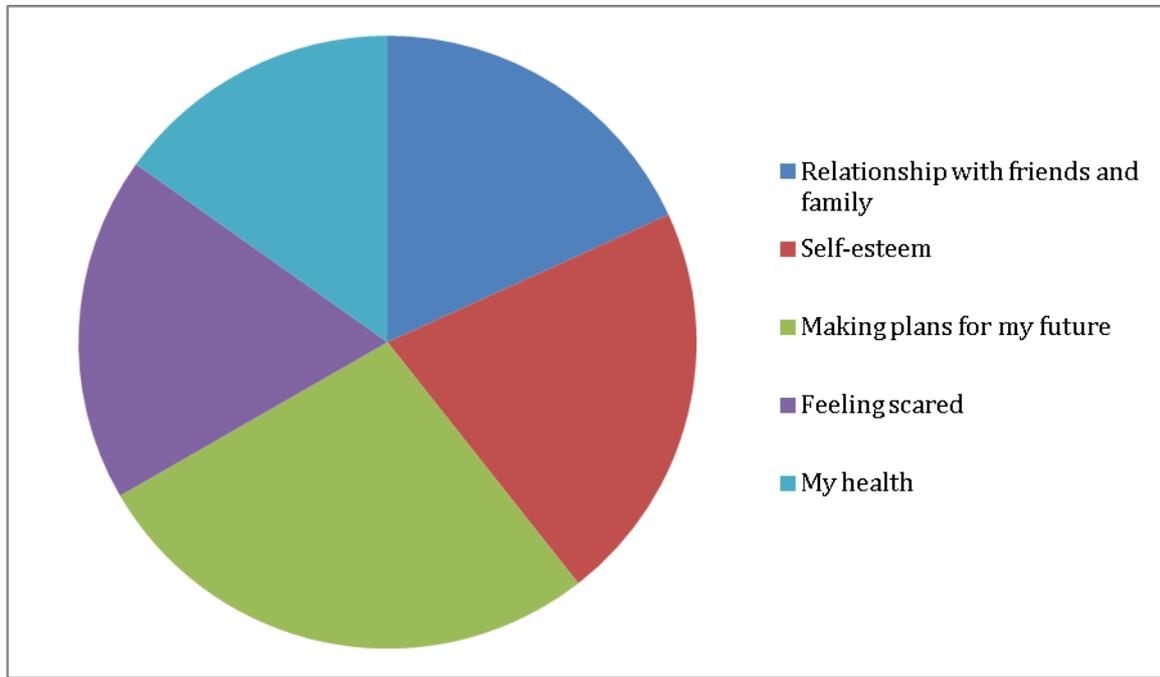
None of the women were aware that nia is on facebook and Twitter. This could either be representative only of this snapshot group of service users, or it could point to nia's social media followers being made up mainly of VAW workers and friends of the organisation. Service users who found out about nia through the internet did so from an internet search engine, rather than through social media.

Of the women who were made aware of nia's social media presence in the survey, nine said they would still not follow nia on facebook or twitter, with 11 saying they would. Of these 11, seven were under 18 years of age, illustrating a youth bias towards social media.

One woman raised the important issue of safety and confidentiality on the internet, saying that while she would now follow nia, she would have concerns about friends and family seeing this. Especially given the young age group of women now happy to follow nia, staff should do some work with service users about the importance of safeguarding their privacy and staying safe from perpetrators on the internet.

Changes nia has helped women to make in their lives

The following chart shows the top five areas where women felt nia had helped them to make changes in their life.



Other areas in which women felt they had made changes with nia's support are:

- Relationship with parents
- School
- Relationship with partner
- Housing
- Use of drugs/alcohol
- Relationship with children
- Employment and/or training

This clearly shows the long-term impact of nia in the lives of survivors and the importance of high quality support and advocacy in helping women to rebuild their lives and start to make new plans for their future.

My future before nia ... and now

In describing how their future looked before they came into contact with nia and how it looks now, women said:

Before I came to nia my future looked hopeless ... I feel as if I'm getting my life back in every aspect

I thought I wouldn't be able to continue ... it all feels very hopeful and, although challenging, I feel I can cope now

I didn't understand how it could happen. Self-blame. Couldn't see how I could get over this – get through it. Felt isolated. Felt weak, frightened. Still trying to keep a brave face on everything, still functioning but very sad inside ... I can see how I can overcome this. I know that it is not 'my fault', I don't blame myself for trusting the perpetrator. I know I can continue to heal. I am powerful again, happy at times, informed, supported

[My future was] not very welcoming ... As it is I can think of having a future again

I feel free of a lot of things holding me back

I felt very low and I felt everything was going downhill. I felt like a failure ... [now] somewhat positive, I feel like I am making progress in terms of reducing my anxiety. I feel more in control of myself

Before I felt suicidal ... now I'm more hopeful for the future and feel at peace

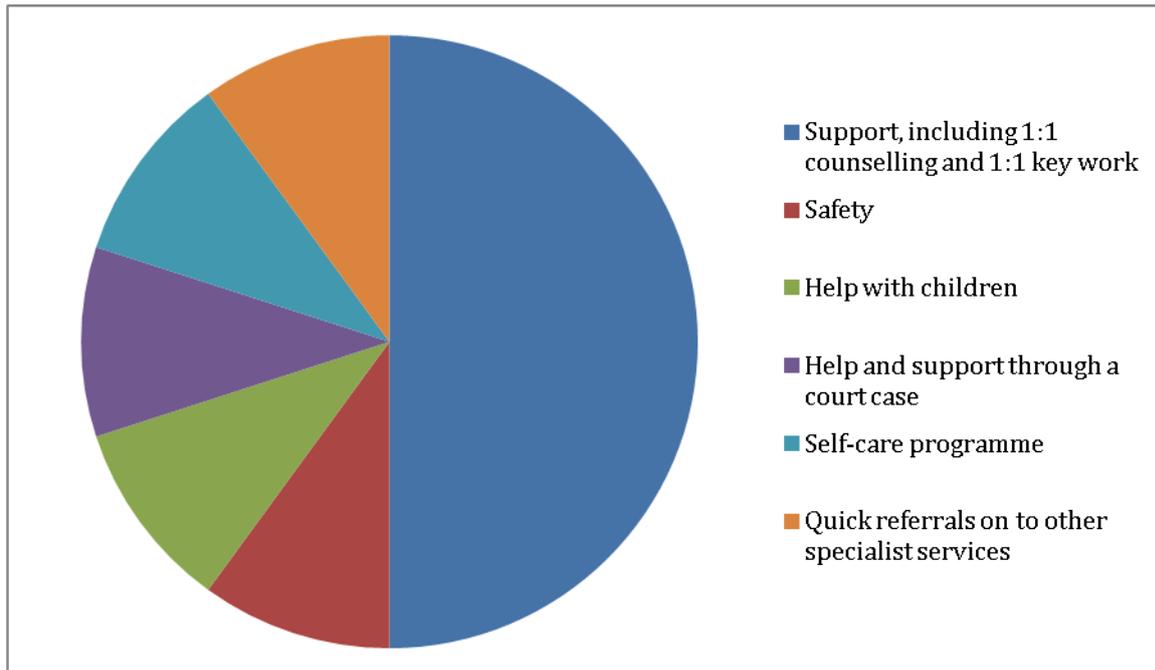
[Before I came to nia] my future looked miserable and I didn't really know how to deal with leaving home [now it looks] more positive.

Things are better because of the tolerance of staff in the project which has led to a change in my own perception of myself and my own worth.

Most useful

For young people, the most useful aspects of the support they received at nia were being able to work in groups and that “everyone gets to talk”. They also valued the confidentiality of the groups they were part of and that they were able to have fun and still learn at the same time. All of the young people who completed a survey questionnaire had accessed the Safe Choices programme, showing the importance and value of working with young people in a safe, confidential group space.

For adult women, the most useful aspects of nia were:



The vast majority of respondents did not identify any area of their work with nia as ‘least useful’. The two issues identified were that one of the counselling locations does not feel completely private and one woman would like the counselling sessions to be longer than the standard 50 minutes.

Staff

In describing the staff at nia, women were extremely positive. Of the women who took part in the survey, only two had negative comments about the staff, which in both instances were connected to individual staff members. Descriptions of the staff at nia include:

They make me feel:	They are:
<i>Secure</i>	<i>Easy to talk to</i>
<i>Comfortable</i>	<i>Friendly, always friendly</i>
<i>I can talk to them</i>	
<i>Safe</i>	
<i>Happy</i>	
<i>Able to express how I feel</i>	
<i>Understood</i>	
<i>Better about my situation</i>	

Meaning of nia to women's lives

Women were asked about their overall feelings about nia and whether they would recommend it to other women in a similar situation.

My heart is at peace, I don't worry about my ex coming in. I feel confident and my children are happy ... my children don't see me angry with anyone anymore

My counselling has proved invaluable to me. It has helped me enormously to understand my experiences and move forward in a more positive way. I couldn't recommend nia more

A calm environment which offers support, understanding, acceptance, intelligent appraisal as well as practical solutions ... This is a remarkable service and should be maintained at its present level at all costs

Excellent counselling ... specialised service not provided elsewhere in primary or secondary healthcare

I am extremely grateful for this service – I contacted initially when I was in a very bad state and the initial contact was very good and response to referral very fast ... Quality of counsellors I have seen has been excellent. I feel it has been a very difficult journey but I have been helped to get through it by this service ... I think access to such specialised services are very limited and would hope that the service can continue and expand even further

I think this service has helped me generally and made me discover myself again

Tolerance – I can't think of a better way to put it but it encompasses thought towards [refuge] residents and as far as my own keyworker, patience and guidance.

[I would recommend nia because] You need to know you are not alone. To know that it's about 'power' – to understand the perpetrator is completely at fault and to not self-blame at all. I find that the service immediately shows you it knows you are not responsible for his abuse ... I feel I am on a journey and I will overcome this terrible ordeal. nia is essential and has been helping me through this process

nia gave me strength to call the police and press charges. I wouldn't have done it without nia ... I'm happier, more open. I can speak to people, I never used to speak to people

nia has done so much, they have taken me to places I never dreamed of. I feel lucky to have received support from an organisation like nia

In all honesty, until I started to engage, I was overly defensive. Until I engaged I kept support workers at a distance. How wrong could I have been?

Really supports you mentally and physically to deal with everything

What would you change?

One of the most common aspects of the service women wanted to change related to how long individual sessions were, or the format in which they received the service. That is, group-based, telephone support and support between counselling sessions.

Changes women would like to see:

- Group therapy
- Telephone support to be made available by a counsellor or support worker for women to contact between counselling sessions
- Counselling sessions to be available at different times of the day, as it can be hard to go on to work after a morning session
- More time to talk through emotions with support workers
- Improvement in the waiting area, especially new toys for children
- Change the location
- The telephone service is sometimes hard to get through to
- Change one of the Rape Crisis counselling locations, as it does not feel private
- Provide a 'listening only' one-to-one service for women awaiting court cases that does not compromise the case
- Non engagement with other boroughs. Not the fault of nia, more so political and financial constraints put upon by ridiculous fiscal legislation.

Recommendations

These recommendations have either been made directly by service users within this survey, or have come out of their experiences and desired changes.

The recommendations do not relate to the standard of service received, but are mainly developmental in nature, illustrating the high levels of satisfaction with current services.

Service users' levels of satisfaction with nia were very high, with the majority of women able to clearly identify the impact of nia on their lives and the specific services that had most helped them.

Recommendations

Work with service users to raise their awareness about the importance of safeguarding their privacy and staying safe from perpetrators on the internet, including practical advice on how to do this

Ensure all complaints are dealt with in required time

Review counselling sites for privacy

Ensure waiting area is welcoming and comfortable, including for children

Explore extending/developing telephone support