

Criticism day rate funding

Rapid and unbureaucratic admission to a women's refuge is most made difficult by what is known as day rate funding, where the costs of a stay in the women's refuge are passed on to the women and their children: women with sufficient income must meet the costs of their own stay in a refuge, while women without sufficient income have to apply for social benefits (usually "Hartz IV") – even if they would not need any social benefits to support themselves.

This type of funding has been proven to act as an insuperable barrier for many women affected by violence and their children, and it threatens their prompt and unbureaucratic protection to a considerable extent.

Day rate funding concepts based on the individual case identify the women affected by violence as the problem, overlook the societal and systemic causes of violence and thereby ignore the need for fundamental change in society. They always send the same message:

*Each women is responsible for the violence she suffers, and she herself must change – not society.
Each woman is responsible for funding her own protection – not society.*

Furthermore, a considerable number of women are not guaranteed access to a women's refuge due to a lack of secure funding. For instance, apprentices, students, adult learners, women without assured residence status and women with limited residence options/obligations cannot normally be admitted to refuges funded on a day rate basis because they are not entitled to benefits under the provisions of SGB II/SGB XII and their stay will not be funded. High day rates in women's refuges compel women who earn their own income to apply for social benefits that they would not otherwise need. This dissuades women with their own income from seeking admission to such refuges.

Although staff in women's refuges are working with extraordinary dedication and improvisational talent to develop creative solutions so that women not entitled to benefits according to SGB II can still be admitted to refuges funded on a day rate basis, often these fail simply due to a lack of financial resources, particularly in the case of women with children.

One of the most fundamental problems with day rate funding is that the provisions of SGB II which underpin the day rates of most women's refuges funded on a day rate basis (local authority integration services pursuant to section 16a no. 1 and 3) were never intended for the funding of refuges. They were instead designed to enable or facilitate the commencement of employment. This has resulted in constant disputes between individual local authorities on the reimbursement of case-specific refuge costs, frequently ending up in court. These disputes take up a great deal of time and effort for staff in the women's refuges and for job centres in the local authorities.

Experience has shown that the pressure on costs is passed on to the occupants of the refuges. The funding agencies are forcing these refuge occupants to keep their stay in the refuge as short as possible, or even denying it altogether, regardless of their need for protection and support, and ignoring their right of self-determination.

Women's refuge staff are being forced to provide comprehensive social reports – ignoring their duty

of confidentiality – on the women they accommodate and their need for support. The decision on the need for or termination of a stay in a women's refuge has thus ended up in the hands of the social benefit agencies and is being determined less and less by the needs of the women affected by violence.

The only possible solution to this problem is for the funding of protection and help in the women's refuge to be guaranteed regardless of the individual case.