



THE REAL CRIMES
OF DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE

Celebrating 45 Years

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Foreword

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we approach our 45th anniversary in 2025, I am filled with gratitude and pride reflecting on AWRC's incredible journey in reaching this momentous milestone.

Every day, thousands of women and children live with domestic abuse and harmful practices. As many as one in four women will experience domestic abuse during their lifetime and at least two women a week die as a result. Although many may seek support from AWRC and other women's domestic abuse organisations, there are women who still suffer in silence, unaware of whom to turn to for help.

For nearly half a century, the AWRC has supported women experiencing domestic abuse and harmful practice, through facilitating access to safe accommodation, providing one to one advocacy working across a spectrum of risks, supporting women to recognise abuse, minimising risks through safety planning, building women's confidence through group work services and providing support to women who have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF).

Black, Minority & Ethnic (BME) women facing domestic abuse often experience multiple forms of discrimination, rooted in both gendered violence and racial inequality. Intersecting factors such as the mistrust of institutions, cultural stigma, language barriers, restrictive immigration policies like NRPF, and systemic racism—create significant barriers to support, leaving many isolated and unprotected. Through AWRC's dedicated specialist advocacy, we have ensured that women are not only supported in times of crisis but also empowered to rebuild their lives with dignity and autonomy.

This year, we celebrate not only herstory but also the incredible people who have been part of our story. The work of the AWRC would not be possible without the enormous efforts of our dedicated and committed trustees, staff, senior management team, volunteers, partners and stakeholders and above all, the women who access our services. We would sincerely like to thank everyone who has been involved in efforts in making a positive impact on the lives of some of the most marginalised women in our society.

Join us in celebrating this significant milestone and let us honour the legacy of those who came before us while inspiring the next generation of changemakers.

Thank you for being an integral part of our journey; your support truly makes a difference.

With heartfelt appreciation,


Sarbjit Ganger
Director, AWRC Charity



Women's Activism Through The Decades

1 in 4 women in England and Wales will experience domestic abuse in her lifetime.

It takes, on average, 7 attempts before a woman is able to leave for good.

On average, one woman is killed by an abusive partner or ex every five days in England and Wales.

Domestic abuse costs the UK an estimated £23 billion a year.

What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic Abuse is an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.

The statistics do not truly representative of the number of women experiencing abuse, as many, especially BME women, face significant barriers to seeking support. Language and cultural barriers, mistrust of the police, and fears linked to precarious immigration status—often restricting access to public funds—can prevent them from reaching out for help.

Types of Violence Against Women and Girls:

Harassment and Stalking
Coercion
Sexual Exploitation
'Honour'-based Abuse
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
Sexual Harassment
Forced Marriage

Prostitution
Faith-based Abuse
Corrective Rape
Forced Pregnancy
Rape
Sexual Abuse

Trafficking/Modern Slavery
Acid Attacks
Breast ironing
Caste-based Abuse
Forcing sex selective termination

Our Mission

NEED Black, Minority and Ethnic (BME) women are more likely to die from domestic abuse and harmful practices because structural inequalities prevent them from accessing the timely specialised help they need to escape abuse and live safely [especially women with No Recourse to Public Funds]



VISION No Black, Minority and Ethnic woman lives in fear of domestic abuse or harmful practices.

PURPOSE Lifting barriers caused by structural inequalities so that Black, Minority and Ethnic women are enabled to access specialist help to escape domestic abuse and harmful practices and build thriving lives free from fear and harm.

OUR AIMS



Work towards Ending Violence Against Women and Girls.



Ensuring safety, security and dignity – offering prompt targeted responses and reducing risks.



Ensure that the needs of BME women are addressed in line with the ethos of led 'by and for'.



Independence and autonomy for BME women.



Securing equality for women across all walks of life.



Involve service users at all levels to ensure that the services provided meet the needs of women.



Commitment to equality and diversity.

AWRC HERstory

The Asian Women's Resource Centre and Refuge was set up in the 1980's through an Urban Aid Grant, at the time was managed jointly by one management committee, however both projects became independent in 1980 (Refuge) and 1981 (AWRC). The Refuge and Resource Centre was based on the principle that Black women organise autonomously in their own right without control being exercised from the outside whether the local authority, caste or religious leader or other organizations. It was based on the understanding that it is black women that understands our particular position in society and are therefore better able to tackle issues that affect us. The project was run by and for women.

From its early days AWRC operated from 134 Minet Avenue, Harlesden. In 1997, AWRC moved to its current premises 108 Craven Park.

Today, AWRC provides:

- Provide one to one advocacy and casework support on domestic abuse /harmful practices working across a spectrum of risks, supporting women to recognise abuse, minimising risks, through safety planning
- Deliver community engagement workshops with women within the community to recognise domestic abuse and provide information where women can go to for support.
- Provide workshops and classes for women : Arts and Crafts, examples of how to set up your own business, Zumba and Yoga classes, volunteering, CV writing workshops and pampering days such as massage and reflexology.
- Deliver training to professionals on VAWG issues as they affect BME women and early identification and information about support agencies who can support them.
- Support groups for women- building
- Service user consultations groups so we can identify needs of women and ensure activities provided are meeting women's needs
- Counselling services in mother tongue
- Outreach advice services, such as one stop shops so that we are taking services to women



Timeline

KEY EVENTS IN AWRC'S STORY SO FAR



1970S

AWRC and the AASRA refuge project were created to address domestic abuse faced by Asian women due to cultural and systemic inequalities.

They also supported the Grunwick strike (1976-78), where 137 South Asian workers advocated for improved working conditions.



1980S

In September 1981, the AWRC Centre opened on Minet Avenue, offering support for immigration, nationality, housing, and education, and received a grant from the Greater London Council (GLC).

1990S

AWRC expanded its services for women facing domestic abuse and relocated to 108 Craven Park, Harlesden, in 1997.

Together with the Newham Asian Women's Project, they secured a Lottery Grant to create a National Asian Women and Networking Coordinator to develop Asian Women's Refuges and Women's Centres across the country.



2000S

2000S

In 2009, a Children's Party took place at No. 11 Downing Street.

The AWRC celebrated its 21st Anniversary at Bridgepark in Stonebridge.

They focus on building collaborations across London with 'by and for' organizations supporting women facing domestic abuse.



2010S

AWRC celebrates its 30th Anniversary at the House of Commons, honouring women survivors' achievements.

It partners with Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse to create the Coaction Hub, aimed at enhancing coordinated community responses for Black and minoritized survivors of domestic abuse and harmful practices.



2020s

AWRC develops the Harmful Practice Programme and, through the GLA Project, enhances choices for Women with No Recourse To Public Funds (NRPF). They also commence the IRIS project to train GPs.

By 2025, AWRC has delivered 11 successful projects with a team of 35 staff.

Her Majesty The Queen visits AWRC to celebrate its 45th Anniversary and inaugurate its Healing Garden.

Dear Sisters,

June 1986

Welcome to the Asian Women's Resource Centre newsletter. Sorry for the delay but this was due to the uncertainty of funding which prevented us not only from producing regular newsletters but also planning future projects and activities.

We are now happy to let our readers know that the London Borough Grant Scheme—the Richmond Scheme—have agreed to finance us till March of next year. We would like to thank the Grant Scheme for enabling us to continue the work at the Centre as well as to thank them on behalf of all the groups and women who use the centre.

We would appreciate any contributions, ideas, criticisms (constructive ones only!) and we hope you enjoy reading the newsletter.

Hope to hear from you soon.

Asian Women's Resource Centre

Asian Children In Care

As the Child worker at the Centre, I have responsibilities over a wide area. Dealing with the issues that affect children from the time they are born to the time they leave school. The areas which need specific attention being the provisions of the Health service in their maternity care, the provisions for mothers and their children in the form of mother and toddler clubs, nursery places, as well as the need for anti-racist and anti-sexism teaching in our schools.

Some of the areas of work overlap with each other and also with the areas of work of my colleagues, e.g. Meena is the health worker and is currently working on the Asian Mother and Baby Campaign which should be concentrating on ineffective services provided by the health service to Asian mothers and their new born babies. Meanwhile Perminder, the education and youth worker is working on the issues of Race and Gender with the education development units.

Currently at the Centre we are preparing to undertake a research project in the area of child care, a specific study of Asian children in Care. The subject matter being chosen because situations have arisen whereby women who use the Centre have had their

children taken into Care. Also interest was aroused due to speaking to young Asian women who have now left care.

Very little information is available or has been specifically written about Asian children in Care. In fact, the most common response of a majority of people on being told the research area is that they never knew that there were Asian children in Care.

The research is intended to be a study of three boroughs in England, the aims of the study being to see the effects of being in Care on the Asian children and to discover what needs the children perceive as having themselves. Thirdly to compare and contrast any similarities and differences which exist between the boroughs, in relation to the policies and practices with regard to Asian children in Care. It is intended that the study will highlight the experiences of Asian children in Care, and if need be recommendations will be made to improve areas of current social services practice.

At the present time negotiations are proceeding with three chosen boroughs in order for permission to be granted to interview the children presently in care.

Manjit Kaur Gill
Appointed Child Worker, September 1985.

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Black Autonomy Hijacked

When we fought for Black autonomy as black women, and indeed as black people, it was not with the purpose that even this concept would be hijacked to give credibility to white racist structures. Black autonomy basically means that as black women, and as black people, we best know how to organise against the oppression which society has inflicted on us. Black autonomy means defining and controlling our struggles. It is not a means by which white people can opt out of their responsibilities towards challenging the structure of racism which they have initiated and are perpetrating.

We now have a swing from one end of the pendulum to the other. From one standpoint of saying that they were not racist because they treat everyone (black and white) alike, white professionals with their doses of 'racism awareness' are saying that they are racist and therefore cannot deal with black people. When before we saw our cultural norms and values as being responsible for the racism which we experienced, they now see the same as something which they as white people cannot handle because of their racism. So no social services can refuse to deal with an Asian woman because as a white woman I am incapable of appreciating the problems she faces'. There is talk of 'community consultation' only when a black woman teacher is seconded to work on the issue of gender as now the issue of gender has to include the dimension of race. Previously when white women teachers were working on this issue, there was no talk of community consultation to include the effects of racism. This line of reasoning has made a mockery of black autonomy and entrenched white racism even further.

By no means is this reasoning confined to individuals. Even 'progressive' councils and other organisational policies follow the same reasoning. Local councils have undertaken to co-opt black people on various committees knowing full well that token representation cannot effect swift and lasting changes. In a nutshell, it is all to do with replacing white faces with black faces without as much as tinkering with the structures. It makes the position of the black people co-opted in this way very difficult making them a buffer between the perpetrators of racism and recipients on the other hand. They act as the sponges which absorb the white individuals guilt. In this manner, black people's commitment of challenging racism is being used by white people and structures to justify their own inaction. In this manner, racism therefore very much remains the sole problem of black people.

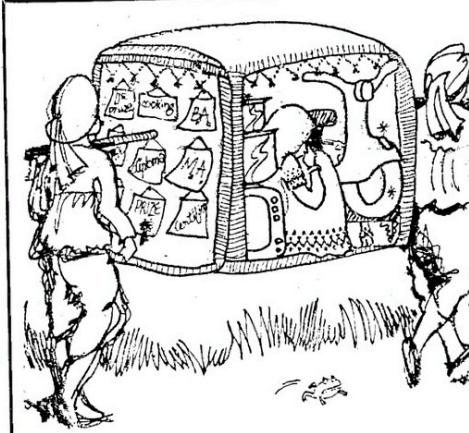
For example, white teachers, youth workers and social workers are constantly bombarding black workers with what they see as their dilemmas. Should the teacher intervene when an Asian girl says she is experiencing incest? Or would they be seen as white racist outsiders interfering?

Enveloping the facts in liberal, non-committal, 'progressive' tones does not take the focus away from racism. Using an Asian psychiatrist to take an Asian young woman (a survivor of suicide) 'into his care because he has more knowledge about her culture and language' does not mean that he is not being used as an interpreter and that the young woman is not ending up with a psychiatric label.

A good guide for 'progressive' white workers who see themselves as challen-

vers various forms of oppressions within their own fields is to ask themselves 'How will we deal with this situation if it was a white girl/woman in place of this Asian girl? given the fact that as a white person I am going to be racist? It is also for them to how and when they are challenging the structures of racism. To put the onus on black people itself is racist.

If we are to work towards a situation racism and other forms of oppression exist then we have to stop guilt tripping other and to look towards our own action in combatting the forces which have oppressed and controlled us in se-



WANTED!

Beautiful, honest, fair, virgin bride, convent educated, simple and godfearing smart and modern bairi pardanashin.

Minimum M. A. B. Ed., pass, well-versed in household duties. Knowing English, French, and other foreign languages but never opening her mouth.

Knowing Chinese and Continental cooking but having no appetite of her own.

Knowing not only household decoration but also self-decoration.

Must guarantee to produce sons only.

Very decent marriage required with perpetual flow of dowry one big instalment of marriage, other regular instalments on every conceivable occasion, at every marriage in family, and on every national and regional festi-

45 Years of Challenging Misogyny

All of them are ready with recipes for deliberate destruction of a girl child. Joy Deshmukh has succinctly described the dreadful scenario in these words:

"In the desire hall
bonnie baby boys
were being gift wrapped,
no one know
who left the unwanted baggage.
Along the inspection line,
past the quality control tests,
deceiving the sex detector
it made its way into
the waiting room
Unclaimed, identified
to be ignored.
lest the ticking from within
explode in their faces.

After all its only a matter of some years
Then someone will find her useful
Then someone will claim her".

Ideology of subordination of women create a social condition that considers a "girl" as a liability. Religion sanctions 'son preference'. We have a number of prayers that state "Grant birth of a girl elsewhere, here grant a son". Blessing given to a bride invariably has a line. "May you be the mother of a hundred sons". This value system makes the technologies like amniocentesis, Chorion Villi Biopsy (CVB) for sex-determination (SD) and sex preselection (SP) 'useful'.



HER Voice

“

Soon after I was married, my husband started to become abusive. After two years of psychological, emotional and physical abuse I decided to leave him. It was not easy. I could not sleep and I felt like a failure. I questioned my culture, my religion for allowing men to women treat women as second class citizens. To make matters worse some members of my community in London were on his side. I felt too embarrassed to tell anyone what happened to me. I thought they would laugh at me, I have always been an ambitious girl with dreams, and always bubbly and I have worked so hard and respected everyone.

After confiding in a friend, she told me to contact a Somali Community Centre to see what support they could offer. I spoke to a man there who said they did not specialise in domestic violence issues but he knew of the Asian Women's Resource Centre (AWRC), furthermore they were located in the borough where I lived. I went to the AWRC with a friend and met the domestic violence worker. The worker listened to my case, she was patient and lovely, she made me feel welcome. She assured me that I have a lot of life to celebrate and that I was not a failure. AWRC also referred me to a very good solicitor who helped me get an injunction against my husband. I have now qualified as a lawyer.

AWRC are the best people that I have met. I always say that I was blessed to meet them, because now I know that I am not alone and whenever I am down I always have someone to talk to and a shoulder to cry on. I cannot thank the AWRC enough.

”

OUR SERVICES

THE 'ONE CHANCE RULE': FEELING CONFIDENT USING PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL COURTESY TO INFORMATION

Welcome to your first session

Aims of today

• Tech and housekeeping
• Get to know each other (icebreaker)
• Set up agreements
• Set up aims and objectives
• Signature - 12 lesson programme
• Shared learning
• Expectations
• Safety assessments and reading (including pre-course reading)

Bibi & Zainab Afza

AWRC
CHANGING WOMEN'S LIVES



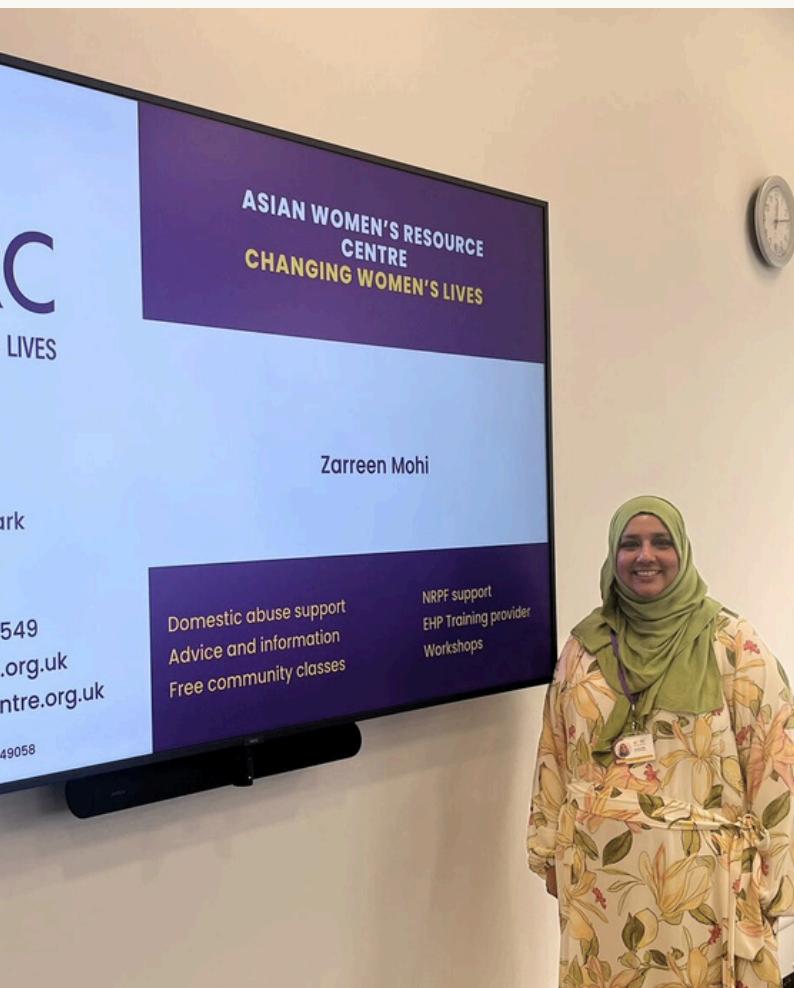
Prevention and Action Through Community Engagement and Training (P&ACT)

Through the P&ACT partnership project, funded by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), AWRC provides vital support to survivors in combatting harmful practice. This is the largest 'by and for' led partnership with 12 other 'by and for' led organisations in the UK addressing harmful practices. P&ACT provides one to one advocacy, counselling, community engagement workshops and training to frontline staff on harmful practice, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), so called 'Honour'-based abuse, faith-based abuse, corrective rape and widow rituals.



Educating and preventing Violence Against Women and Girls

AWRC continues to lead and deliver on the London Councils funded project, **Ascent Ending Harmful Practice** project. The project aims to improve service provision for those affected by sexual and domestic abuse, specifically Female Genital Mutilation, 'so called' honour-based abuse, forced marriage and other harmful practice.



Data from 2024-2025*

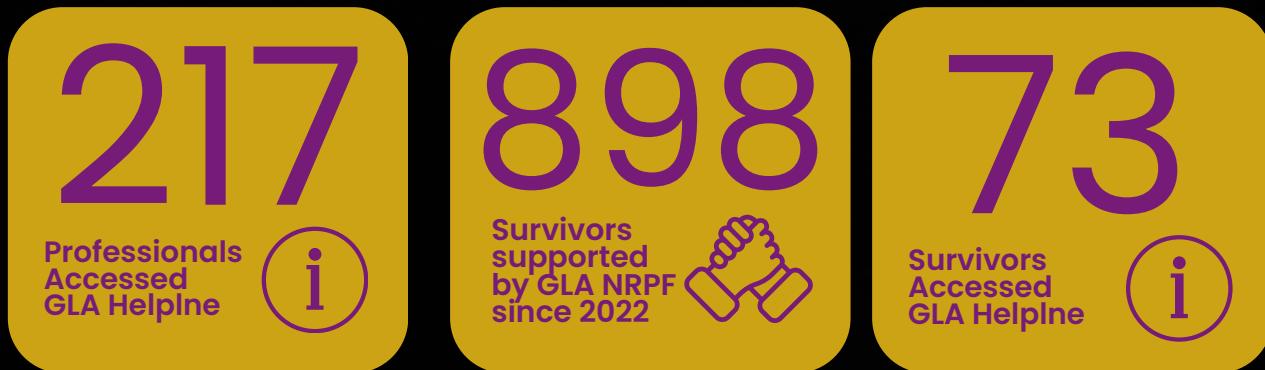
Combatting Homelessness

Leading the **Greater London Authority (GLA) Safe Accommodation NRPF Project**, AWRC provides floating support services to improve access to safe accommodation to survivors with No Recourse to Public Funds

AWRC is also part of the partnership project, **London Whole Housing Service Partnership** (LWHSP) led by ADVANCE Charity and **Pan-London Floating Support** led by Refuge, which work to address and enhance the pathways of housing support for women experiencing domestic abuse. The partnership works to remove immediate harm, provide safe, sustainable and borough specific support around housing needs and aid recovery and resettlement of women.

Supporting women experiencing No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)

AWRC is a delivery partner on the **London Holistic Advocacy Wrap Around Service** (LHAWAS) which supports women with NRPF. The project aims to meet the needs of women with NRPF, who are survivors of domestic and sexual abuse and other forms of gendered abuse, including prostitution, trafficking, and harmful practices, and who have insecure immigration status.



Data from 2024-2025*

Education and Training

Harmful Practice Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate (HPIDVA) Programme ~ AWRC launched its HPIDVA Programme in March 2024. This program is designed to equip practitioners with specialised knowledge and skills essential for navigating the intricate challenges associated with harmful practices. It aims to go beyond the surface, facilitating a comprehensive understanding and practical application in identifying and addressing all forms of Harmful Practices. In doing so, AWRC's HPA programme emerges as a transformative force, reshaping the narrative and empowering advocates to effect meaningful change within the realm of VAWG. Course covers "Hidden Harm", Institutional Racism and inequality and Professional curiosity

IRIS Project ~ AWRC collaborates with Advance for the IRIS Project, a programme that offers training, support, and referrals for GP practices. The aim of the project is to provide health professionals with a deeper insight into domestic abuse and its impact on health, enhance their ability to inquire about and address domestic abuse appropriately, guide them on contacting and referring to domestic abuse specialists, and stress the significance of safeguarding in cases of domestic abuse.

Producing Impactful Research and Influencing Policy Framework

Coaction Hub ~ The Coaction Project is a unique partnership between AWRC, a frontline Black and minoritised specialist agency, and STADA, a mainstream second-tier domestic abuse organisation. It is built on a framework of equitable partnership, where both agencies complement each other and work collaboratively to address systemic barriers and gaps within the ending VAWG sector that fail to meet the needs of Black and minoritised women.

The project works to improve sector-wide responses to domestic abuse and harmful practices by centring the experiences and needs of Black and minoritised survivors, which have been largely overlooked within the CCR (Coordinated Community Response).



116

MARAC Coordinators trained across England and Wales on MARAC and Harmful Practices by Coaction Hub



98%

MARAC Coordinators felt better equipped to recognise Harmful Practices after training

Art Exhibition Created by Survivors: AWRC in partnership With Brent Council

The hand is associated with Fatima and it represents qualities such as strength, patience and faith.



Workshops and Activities

AWRC offers intensive advocacy and support to women and girls previously affected by domestic abuse through the Surviving Abuse and Thriving Project. This initiative assesses women's requirements to establish safe spaces for social interaction and guidance, hosts employability workshops, and offers volunteering opportunities to women.



187

Women
supported
by SAAT
Project



Data from 2024-2025*

AWRC Building & Healing Garden

Extensive renovation work to the Centre was completed in December 2023, enabled by a Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) grant received from Brent Council.

We are delighted to have a bright and exciting safe space for our service users, staff and the whole community. A new room has been built overlooking the newly designed "Healing Garden" which officially opened in February 2025.



Case Studies

Ms. F, a 38-year-old woman, endured 18 years of abuse from her partner, which impacted her mental health and housing. Ms. F experienced PTSD, chronic fatigue, anxiety, and depression and found herself unable to work and was in debt due to her partner's control.

AWRC responded by creating a risk assessment and safety plan, providing individual support including referrals to various services for safeguarding, debt management, domestic abuse trauma counselling, and housing advocacy.

After four weeks of intensive support, Ms. F secured permanent social housing. Her case underscores the significance of trauma-informed support and effective advocacy for survivors of domestic abuse.

The collaboration between services was crucial in achieving this positive outcome, illustrating the deep impact domestic abuse has on mental health and the importance of comprehensive support for survivors.

Ms. S, an experienced beauty and aesthetics professional, faced a challenging personal life due to a coercive relationship with her long-term partner. Once loving, the relationship became controlling, undermining her identity and independence.

After ten years of control, Ms. S attempted to discuss selling their house to escape. This conversation escalated into a confrontation that led the police to intervene. They recognized signs of coercive control and connected her with AWRC, an organisation dedicated to helping women facing domestic abuse.

AWRC provided Ms. S with vital support, including counselling and information about legal aid, which aided her in the separation process. With her lawyer's assistance, she prepared a Trust Deed to sell the house, taking back control over her finances. With the ongoing support from AWRC, Ms. S was able to rebuild her life and re-entered the beauty industry with renewed enthusiasm as Founder and Director of her skincare and beauty company.

"It was AWRC's support that really drove me when I came out of that awful controlling 'toxic-ship.' The support I received from AWRC helped to renew my confidence and self-belief, which I needed to be able to return to and deliver the work I love. I am so proud to have been able to do that and to hopefully empower other women."

Ms. S' story underscores the damaging effects of coercive control and highlights the vital need of specialist services to support women to reclaim back their lives

Case Studies

Ms. DS came to the UK from Eritrea on a spouse visa through an arranged marriage, unaware of her husband's history of domestic abuse. After enduring emotional, physical, and financial abuse, she escaped with her eight-month-old daughter while pregnant with her second child.

Seeking help at the AWRC, Ms. DS connected with other women with similar experiences. AWRC provided vital support, including emotional assistance, a safety plan, safe accommodation, and information about her rights as a woman on a spousal visa.

With the support of AWRC, Ms. DS felt validated for the first time, leading to significant improvements in her living situation. After the birth of her second child, she returned to the centre expressing gratitude and hope for her future.

AWRC's comprehensive approach not only ensured her immediate safety but also set the foundation for her long-term wellbeing.



We have an open-door policy for all women and children in need.

For free, confidential
non-judgmental support and
advice on domestic violence
contact:

020 828 00611 00612
020 828 00613 00614
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**Asian Women's
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Survivors' Testimonies

“I will always remember my caseworker’s kindness and generosity and I hope one day to have the opportunity to pay it forward and make a difference in someone else’s life, just as they have done for me.”

“I am so grateful to AWRC for helping me to rebuild my life as a free woman and to move forward with my life. I went through so many traumatic experiences. I felt like I had lost everything and no one speak to.

AWRC has given me the support I needed the most and made me feel valued and part of a community. AWRC were like a family to me and have really transformed my life.”

“Thank you for all the help you’ve given me. Your weekly calls have made such a positive difference in my life. It feels great to know that someone genuinely cares. Your support has helped me believe in myself more. I can see things more clearly now. I feel hopeful about the future.

Your kindness and encouragement have boosted my confidence. Because of you, I’m starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel. You’ve helped me believe that I can overcome my challenges. Thank you again for everything.”

How can you support us?

Supporting women experiencing domestic abuse requires a collective effort. Your support—whether through donations, volunteering, or raising awareness—helps organizations like AWRC provide essential services. By advocating for survivors and challenging harmful attitudes, you can play a role in creating a safer, more supportive community for those in need. Every action, no matter how small, makes a difference.

Volunteer at AWRC!

Empower women by volunteering with AWRC. Whether you have time to give or skills to share, your support can help women rebuild their lives with confidence and independence.

If you share our vision, contact us at info@awrc.org.uk.

*This opportunity is open to female applicants only, as permitted under Schedule 9, Paragraph 1 of the Equality Act 2010.

DONATE

AWRC continues to fundraise and welcomes all donations big or small.

Any support that we receive helps us to continue our work against domestic abuse and support women. **Scan the QR code to donate!**



Acknowledgements

Respect and acknowledgement beyond words go to the women and children who use our services, the AWRC staff team, volunteers and AWRC board members. The collective energy and commitment is what inspires our work and gives us the strength to develop more responsive and tailor-made services in line with the needs of BME women and children across London. In addition, we are grateful to all of the individuals and organisations and funders who have supported us to deliver our services. Without this help, we would have been unable to grow as we have.

We thank our Funders



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