

# More domestic abuse charities to benefit from government funding boost

- Further 25 domestic abuse charities will receive emergency funding
- Almost £10 million has now been allocated to 166 charities and service providers
- Funding to deliver over 1500 additional beds to support more victims and their children

Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing Kelly Tolhurst MP has today (16 September 2020) announced that a [further 25 charities will receive a share of £1 million boost](#) as part of the government's £10 million emergency fund to support domestic abuse victims and their families during the pandemic.

This emergency funding will support those providers facing the most difficulties during the pandemic and help to provide over 1,500 new beds and re-open 344 bed-spaces.

This is part of a wider £76 million package of government support for the most vulnerable in society during the pandemic.

The government remains steadfast in its commitment to tackling domestic abuse. The flagship Domestic Abuse Bill, currently before Parliament, places a new duty on councils to provide safe accommodation for victims and their children in England.

Projects receiving funding include:

- **The London Black Women's Project:** working since to protect, promote and develop the rights and resources of BAME women and children affected by domestic abuse from across London.
- **Salford Women's Aid:** providing temporary accommodation to women and children fleeing domestic violence across the Greater Manchester area.
- **Roshini Birmingham:** working to protect BAME communities affected by domestic abuse including forced marriage and honour based abuse, including through a 24 hour, multilingual help line.

Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing Kelly Tolhurst MP said:

Our £10 million COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund is providing the support needed so that services can meet additional pressures during the pandemic.

We will continue to engage with the sector to ensure victims and their children can access support including ensuring that councils provide safe accommodation for those that need it.

Beverly Williams, Chair of Amadudu said:

MHCLG funding has been vital during the pandemic. The funding has enabled women from black and minority ethnic communities to receive a quality service and support during this difficult time.

Our staff team has been able to continue to meet essential needs of women and children. We are very grateful for the funding we received.

Recognising this need from victims and in close engagement with the sector and the domestic abuse commissioner, MHCLG announced an emergency fund on 7 May to keep services up and running during the pandemic, as well as to open more beds to support more victims and their children.

When the bids were assessed, extra weight was given to applications from organisations providing specialist support, with over a third of those who were successful in their applications were specialist service providers, supporting diverse groups, such as BAME and LGBT victims.

BAME communities sometimes face cultural pressures such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation, language barriers and honour-based abuse. Specialist providers tailor support to women and children affected by these issues.

The [Domestic Abuse Bill](#) has entered the House of Lords and moves towards Royal Assent later this year. Subject to the successful passage of the Domestic Abuse Bill, from April 2021 a new duty will be placed on Tier 1 local authorities to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children within safe accommodation in England.

The new legal duty will provide clarity over governance and accountability and put in place a clear framework for needs assessment, commissioning and reporting on outcomes so that all victims of domestic abuse and their children have access to the right support when they need it.

We have already provided £3.7 billion of additional funding to local authorities to relieve pressures on local services and support the most vulnerable including domestic abuse victims.

We encourage services who have extended their provision to engage with their local authority to discuss the available support for the 6 months period between 1 November and 1 April 2021 when the new duty is expected to commence.

In the meantime, there is flexibility for providers into winter as successful bidders will have the option to spend their grant beyond the previous deadline of 31 October 2020, and up to 31 March 2021, provided they gain formal agreement from the Department.

On 2 May the government announced a £76 million package of support to ensure the most vulnerable in society get the support they need during the pandemic. This includes £28 million to help survivors of domestic abuse and their children, of which MHCLG announced a £10 million fund for safe accommodation

services.

Since 2014 we've invested £80 million in safe accommodation services to support victims of domestic abuse, including the £10 million COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund for charities providing refuge (which was part of a £28 million government package to help domestic abuse survivors during the pandemic).

Government recognises the need for victims from minority groups and those with complex needs to be able to access specialist support when they need it and as such we have given special consideration to applications for the £10 million fund from services that provide support to particular groups such as, but not limited to, BAME, LGBT and victims with disabilities.

A [public awareness campaign #YouAreNotAlone](#) was launched highlighting sources of support and that anyone is at risk of, or experiencing, domestic abuse, is still able to leave and seek refuge.

Based on Women's Aid Annual Audit (2020), in the year ending May 2019 there were 3,914 refuge bed spaces in the UK. That's a 12.5% increase since 2010.

If you are in danger and unable to talk on the phone, call 999 and then either press 55 on a mobile when prompted or wait on a landline and you will be connected to a police call handler who will be able to assist you without you having to speak.

We have published [guidance for those in danger of domestic abuse](#) during the pandemic.

## **Case Studies of charities that have benefited from funding**

### **1. OYA**

Founded in 2016, OYA is a membership consortium by and for Black and Minority Ethnic organisations. Its members are dedicated to ending Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and deliver frontline, capacity building and sustainability support services across London.

Several OYA members receive funding from MHCLG, including Latin American Women's Aid (LAWA) the only refuges for Latin American women surviving domestic violence and other forms of VAWG in London over the past 32 years, offering holistic and intersectional services, to BME woman and their and operates 3 refuges with 32 bed spaces.

Paola, a 40-year-old Colombian woman, arrived in one of LAWA's refuges soon after the lockdown started on April 2020 with her 2 children. She fled her home due to the domestic violence perpetrated by her husband who controlled most aspects of her life. Her husband violently prevented her from getting a National Insurance Number or pursuing any job, so she had little to no access to money. The abuse has been of a physical, emotional, sexual and financial nature and has also been directed towards her children.

Paola tried to leave her husband on 2 different occasions. However, she was

taken back to the family home by the police, as her husband reported her missing and stated that she had severe mental health issues. Paola's spoken English was limited, and she did not know the UK legal system, she did not have any family or friends in the UK, and she did not have any connection with the wider community.

Paola decided to seek support and leave her abuser when he became abusive to her children. Given the level of violence and the additional challenges to reach out for support due to COVID (the abuser was always at home and more controlling than ever), it was very hard for Paola to find the opportunity to reach out for support. She had been in touch previously with a support group from the community which is how she initiated contact with Latin American Women's Aid (LAWA).

**The London Black Women's Project (LBWP)** provides specialist refuge accommodation for BME women from across London; with refuges located in Newham and Haringey. The LBWP operates 4 refuges, with 29 bed spaces, in Newham. MHCLG's emergency funding has enabled LBWP to open 16 new spaces in Newham and one refuge in Haringey, which has 4 spaces. LBWP also provides counselling for adult and young women, a free legal service, including support for migrant women and advocacy and advice.

**The Ashiana Network** is a charitable company led by BME women, developing and delivering specialist services for BME women and girls who have experienced or are at risk of VAWG, including harmful practices. Ashiana has over 30 years' experience in delivering a holistic range of services to South Asian, Turkish and Middle Eastern women fleeing violence. Ashiana is based in Waltham Forest running 3 refuges with a total of 21 bed spaces. 2 refuges are specifically for women affected by forced marriage.

**Asha Projects** is a dedicated specialist BME women's organisation run for and managed by local South Asian women, based in Lambeth, receiving referrals from all over London. Asha plays a crucial role and provide much needed support based on an understanding of sociocultural norms, values and issues relating to forms of violence against women and girls that are specific to South Asian communities. Asha operates from four sites – a resource centre and three refuges (safe accommodation) consisting of 19 bed spaces.

## **2. Anah Project**

The Anah Project is a unique specialist accommodation, advice and crisis support provider for women and girls fleeing domestic abuse. They specialise in supporting women and girls from the BAME and refugee communities.

MHCLG emergency funding allowed Annah to bring on an additional staff member during the crisis. During lockdown, referrals and calls to their service had not only increased but had also become more complex. The extra member of staff allowed Annah to have more time to support current service users in the refuge.

MHCLG also funded IT equipment and mobile data which allowed for collaborative working and also ensured there was no disruption in support

provided to service users, as staff and service users could communicate via mobile phone, safely and as regularly as needed.

### **3. Amadudu Refuge**

MHCLG funding has enabled Amadudu Refuge to continue to provide key services, essential resources and support during the lockdown period. The pandemic has meant that additional staff hours were necessary as calls and enquiries for refuge space increased and particularly from women from BAME backgrounds.

Funding has allowed Amadudu to continue their work supporting women with complex issues including immigration, addiction, family court cases via electronic methods/preparation for resettlement and issues accessing benefits.

Amadudu have provided vital services to women and families during lockdown including providing culturally appropriate meals, food vouchers, hygiene packs, bedding, cleaning materials and educational resources for children with 11 children have and continue to be supported through the financial support of MHCLG's grant.

They've also been able to take on additional staff have enabled staff to focus on income generation from other sources to further support the needs of the families and equipment to enhance communication between staff and external stakeholders.