

**Name of Project: Ascent Ending Harmful Practices**  
**Lead partner: Asian Women's Resource Centre (AWRC)**  
**Delivery partner: IMECE Women's Centre**  
**Borough: Islington**

"I was forwarded for support to IMECE women's services after I had reported the abuse I had gone through for many years to the police. At the time I was not in a good place at all and there was a lot going on that I did not feel I could manage.

My family have always been very conservative. I have a mother and two older brothers who have always been very difficult to live with. When I was a teenager, I was much less confident. I felt the pressures of my family and I tried to behave in ways to please them and to avoid confrontation. It was then when I was still a teenager that my eldest brother sexually assaulted me. I could not tell anyone, I felt disgusted and scared of what would happen if I spoke out.

I'm in university now and have some more confidence and through the support I got from a close friend, I decided I would report my childhood abuse to the police. I was still living with my family at the time, however things at home were getting worse. Although I wasn't experiencing sexual abuse now my brothers would be controlling, demanding stuff and getting physically abusive if I didn't meet their expectations. One of my brother's has schizophrenia, the family always took his side when he became physically abusive towards me and insist it's because of his mental health. I always knew it wasn't, he wasn't in a poor condition when he would become abusive. He knew what he was doing. My mother was the same, she would blame me for everything and when arguments got very bad she would threaten to throw me out the house. She would know I didn't have anywhere to go.

Things at home got a lot worse after the police report. My mother and my younger brother both accused me lying and tarnishing the family name. They would verbally attack me every day. 3 weeks after reporting to the police, my brother became physically abusive towards me because of the police report. My mother was there but did not help me, I had no choice but to call the police for help. I thought I would die in their hands for finally speaking out.

When the police came, my mother told me that I was trying to take her sons off her and that I would be the one to go, not them. After that incident, I didn't trust that they wouldn't take things even further next time after what I had reported. I had dishonoured the family name. I felt so helpless".

The Client approached IMECE after police reports had been made and requested emotional support during her relocation as she was experiencing low self-confidence and finding it difficult to manage her safety and deteriorating mental health whilst living in a high-pressure environment. Extensive and consistent safety planning was covered due to concerns of over possible escalation of Honour Based Violence; client's family were not made aware of her intentions to move away.

Caseworker provided support and advice when client was requested to provide a witness statement to the police regarding her previous reports and so was offered information on what to expect and how to prepare to aid her anxieties about taking further steps to reporting her previous experiences of abuse. Caseworker was also able to support the client to access necessary support from university student services. As a result, client was able to move away from the family home into student accommodation halls swiftly. The university also supported the client with reporting her change of circumstances, to student loans services and agreed for rent payments to be on hold.

Whilst at the university halls, client was provided with continued emotional support as she reported feelings of severe isolation and anxiety. As a young adult, client was finding it difficult to manage these feelings having lost all communication and support from her family and having to now manage independent living for the first time. A supporting letter was provided to client and university for a request to change of student halls to halls where she would have a bigger support network of friends. Caseworker was also able to coordinate and update

mental health services regarding client's current condition as client was also beginning to experience increased panic attacks and was finding it difficult to manage. Caseworker provided assistance and information on how and where to reach out to in cases of emergencies due to mental health.

Currently the client is awaiting for the processing of her request and to relocate and is receiving regular support from her GP and mental health services; she has reported feeling more empowered to make informed choices for herself going forward and through the support provided from her caseworker and her university she has been able to gain skills necessary for living independently free from violence.