

**Name of Project: Ascent Advice and Counselling**

**Lead partner: Solace**

**Delivery partner: Jewish Women's Aid**

**Borough: Camden**

*I lived with my abusive husband for 25 years and he was always controlling but the abuse worsened after my children left home. He stopped working 3 years ago and was always in the house. He wouldn't let me watch TV until he had gone to bed and I couldn't use the kitchen when he was in there. He was so rude to my friends that they stopped calling me and I felt very isolated. He also started hitting me and threatening to kill me once we went into lockdown. I was no longer able to work out of the home and felt trapped.*

*I became ill with COVID-19 and was hospitalised and put on oxygen. I was in hospital for 4 weeks and was very weak when I returned home. My husband cooked me meals and brought me drinks and snacks. I thought that maybe our relationship would improve.*

*One morning I felt stronger so I went downstairs. I overheard my husband on the phone to someone telling them that it wouldn't be long until he'd have the money and that I had signed the paperwork. It became clear that he was fraudulently siphoning money from my account and investing it elsewhere.*

*Jewish Women's Aid helped me to escape from the house and found me emergency accommodation. I fled one day when he went to the shops. That first week was incredible. I felt safe and slept for hours. I couldn't really function for the first week but I felt happy. My support worker arranged counselling, supported me to access Universal Credit and set up legal appointments. I changed all my banking details so my husband couldn't access my money anymore. I started the divorce process and received support from a network of professionals that my support worker arranged.*

*I moved into a studio flat. Even though I was told that I could have a police escort to return home to collect my belongings I was too scared to go. I thought my husband might follow me back to my new flat. My support worker arranged a grant to enable me to furnish and decorate the flat.*

*I don't know where I would be without JWA. I am so grateful to them as I am now able to live the life I should have been able to do for the last 25 years free from fear.*