

Name of Project: Ascent Advice and Counselling Project

Lead Partner: Women and Girls Network (WGN)

Delivery Partner: Southall Black Sisters

Borough: Kingston

I came to the UK in September 2022 after meeting my husband on a matrimonial site. We married in Pakistan in October 2021, afterwards he returned to the UK, My husband secured a spousal visa and I was forced to leave my job and come to the UK.

Soon after I arrived in the UK, I was physically and sexually abused by my husband; My husband controlled me and I did not have any privacy or independence. He took my biometrics, did not let me have a passcode on my phone, I caught him going through my phone, and when I went to check my bank accounts he had transferred all of my money to himself. My husband got upset when I spoke to family friends and did not let me get a job. When I would apply for jobs he would argue with me and ask who would look after the house, as he had brought me to the UK to provide him these services.

I contacted a solicitor in December and they told me I was a victim of domestic violence, and when my husband found out he called the police and made false allegations to remove me from the house. The police did not feel it was safe for me to stay there, and booked me hotel for the night and my husband booked a single-journey flight for me and my son to Pakistan. He cancelled my spousal visa.

In January, my husband contacted my sister, and told her that he was sorry for the way he treated me and that he would change.... I gave him another chance and returned to the UK later that month.

I went to the doctor in March, and I was able to disclose the abuse to a doctor after they called me back and my husband was arrested.

The most challenging thing at the moment is trying to find accommodation for me and my son. I rent privately, and finding something within my budget and close to my family has been hard.

I have been offered counselling and have felt well supported by SBS. I was having difficulties with my son's school, and they have helped me to work with the school so that he has the support he needs. SBS contacted social services to discuss the welfare on my son, and have spoken to the police, advised me on how to apply for a non-molestation order and provided a supporting letter for my Indefinite Leave to Remain Application. I speak to my caseworker regularly, and she keeps me updated on my case, she has been extremely helpful.