

10 SHAKTI WOMEN'S AID OUTREACH SERVICE - DIJB52-2023

It is reported that Shakti Women's Aid is a national organisation specialising in supporting Black and minority ethnic women and children experiencing domestic abuse and honour-based violence. They have provided an outreach service in Dundee for a number of years, supported by two successive allocations from National Lottery funding followed by allocations from Scottish Government and Imkaan (a UK-based organisation dedicated to addressing violence against Black and minoritized women and girls). Funding from these sources came to an end in March 2023; on a short-term basis Shakti are utilising reserves to continue the service in Dundee.

During 2022/23 Shakti Women's Aid Dundee Outreach Service supported 60 women survivors of gender-based violence; during the year 34 women successfully exited from the service, with 31 women receiving ongoing specialist service support. An evaluation of the service carried out prior to the pandemic found that key benefits of the service included: specialist support to complement work of local service providers and additional expertise regarding immigration rights. Quotes from the evaluation illustrate the impact of the service on women:

'Not many agencies understand the cultural issues and the bottlenecks. I was married to my second cousin and there was so much pressure on me. I thought I would lose my child. So, by understanding these sorts of pressures, they were able to help me take it a step at a time.'

'I had nothing. I had no family here. I had no money. I had no friends because of my husband. My language was not good. I had no nappies for my child. I don't know what I would have done. But I have hope now.'

In light of the contribution the project makes to the safety and wellbeing of Black and minority ethnic women in Dundee the Chief Officers (Protecting People) Strategic Group are seeking support from public sector bodies to provide funding to Shakti Women's Aid to sustain the Outreach Service for a further 1-year period. This is to allow them to continue to seek alternative funding sources for the project and to plan for a sustainable exit from the service if long-term funding cannot be secured. The total annual cost of the project is £45k. Dundee City Council has confirmed a contribution of £15k and NHS Tayside are actively considering the request.

The IJB is asked to approve a non-recurring allocation of £15k from reserves to support the Outreach Service during 2023/24.