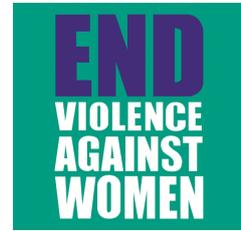


Women Living in a Hostile

Personal stories



KB came to the UK from Bolivia on a 6-months student visa. She met her partner and lived with him and their daughters for 2 years, during which time he subjected her to emotional and psychological abuse. KB didn't report to social services and the police because her ex-partner threatened that her daughters would be taken away and she would be deported. She was denied space in a refuge because of her immigration status and, because she has no other option, has continued to live with perpetrator in the same house. (Latin American Women's Rights Service LAWRS)

V who is epileptic and visual and mobility impairments has 5 children and was dependent on her abusive husband's asylum claim. Her husband was taken into detention, and she asked Social Services for support. Their response was to take her children into care, rather than to provide her with the support, as they felt she couldn't care for them. Eventually her husband was released and the children were returned to her. V now feels it is better to live with an abusive partner than risk asking for support again. (Safety for Sisters)

AE came to the UK with her husband and their children. She left her husband when he became abusive. She was a victim of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and was scared to go back to Nigeria because her two daughters were at risk of being cut. The perpetrator told her that he had been managing the paperwork regarding their immigration status but she found out this was a lie, and in fact she was a visa 'overstayer'. She sought immigration advice but was wrongly advised and had a real fear detention and deportation. She is left in a state of limbo, uncertainty and at very high risk of abuse. (London Black Women's Project)

C was forced to marry a British national in Somalia when she was 16. She was unable to get a spouse visa because her husband didn't earn enough to support her, but she was granted leave to enter the UK 'outside the immigration rules' under Article 8 of the ECHR. In the UK, C's husband was extremely abusive and eventually she contacted the police, who failed to help her. C had no means of financially supporting herself and her children and was refused the DDV concession on the basis that she had not entered the UK on a spousal visa. It took a legal challenge for the High Court to rule that C should get financial support. (Southall Black Sisters)