

# Muslim Women's Supported Accommodation Service



*'changing lives, creating opportunities'*

## **Sahara Muslim Women's Supported Accommodation Service**

Sahara is an Asian word meaning sanctuary, support and respite. The project logo is of a phoenix rising from the ashes. The logo and name combined denote, breaking from the shackles of the past and having the freedom to make a new start with support, advice and guidance.

Sahara offers safe supported accommodation in shared housing for Muslim women. The service is open to all Muslim women who are no longer able to safely continue to live in their home due to domestic violence or fear for their wellbeing and safety.

We also provide support, advice, guidance and training to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to live independently in your own accommodation and pursue your ambitions.

### **Project Aims**

- To provide good quality accommodation for Muslim women with varying and multiple needs, in a culturally sensitive, supportive, and safe environment.
- To offer women the opportunity to develop the skills and confidence necessary to live successfully in their own independent accommodation.

### **We will provide:**

- Comfortable and secure accommodation with support services to enable clients to resettle into an independent tenancy or other appropriate housing.
- Settlement support to assist clients register with local GP, JSA, opening bank account, enrol children into school, along with showing where shops, banks, public transport, and other facilities are located and accessed.
- Support individuals to develop a sustainable structure and pattern to their lives.
- Enable and encourage women to maximise and develop their skills and coping strategies so as to maximise their skills and develop confidence to lead more independent lives.
- Advice and signposting to other agencies in order to obtain more permanent independent accommodation.
- Work with the client to develop comprehensive support plan packages that meet their housing and support needs.
- Give advice on practical issues such as benefits, life skills, managing money, settling into accommodation and the area, informal counselling, linking to other agencies for training, employment or education, advocacy, and other issues of concern to them.
- Assist clients to obtain independent accommodation from a variety of sources and to prepare and plan their move.

### **Accommodation**

We provide hostel accommodation for individuals and women with children. Clients have their own furnished private bedroom, with communal reception, fitness room, and garden and shared washing and cooking facility.

All clients are supported to access more permanent accommodation from the Sahara Women's Support service from either private or social landlords.

### **Staff and Management**

The Hostel has a number of dedicated staff, which includes Co-ordinator, Key Worker, Children's & Young People's Support Worker who are on hand to provide advice and guidance for mothers with children. Staff are available 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. An emergency phone service is available outside of these hours.

### **Referrals**

Referrals for accommodation are accepted from any voluntary, statutory or private referring agencies. Referral information can be submitted on our referral form either electronically, or by fax . We aim to inform the potential client and referrer within 48 hours whether the referral has been accepted. If accepted and a room is available, an offer will be made and arrangements made to view, otherwise the client will go onto a waiting list. In some cases where further information is needed, an interview will be arranged. All referrals, assessment and risk assessments are monitored by the Project Coordinator and reviewed by the Chief Executive on a regular basis .

### **Support Services**

Clients are supported by a key worker who works on a regular basis with them and other professionals who are involved with the client. The key worker co-ordinates the mutually agreed needs and risk assessments and support packages with both the client and other involved workers. The key worker will aim to work with the service user as often as is needed in order to ensure that move on accommodation is obtained as soon as possible as well as developing a package of individually planned care and support to assist the client in sustaining their accommodation. It is acknowledged that initially there may need to be more frequent contact that will decrease in time as the housing and support issues are addressed.

Periodic meetings are planned for each client throughout their stay to ascertain individual housing and support needs so as to ascertain the most appropriate type of move on accommodation and to ensure that women can access essential services such as benefits and healthcare as soon as possible.

### **The support services offered, include:**

- Advising on benefit entitlement and access to public funds, including Housing Benefit (rent), Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support and Universal Credit.
- Offering advice on matters relating to training and employment and education including job search skills, CV writing and interview techniques.

- Providing training in life skills to ensure all residents have the ability upon leaving the scheme to live independently.
- Using the support/care planning approach with an emphasis on multi agency working.
- Providing advice on matters relating to pregnancy, parenting, sexual health and well being.
- Giving guidance and advice on how to obtain where required additional counselling and support from specialist organisations in matters relating to mental health, drug and alcohol addiction.
- Being available to discuss problems on a day-to-day basis, such as problems in relation to client's future housing requirements, including payment of rent and benefits advice
- Dedicated staff teams with a range of language skills and who have a variety of experience and knowledge so as to facilitate a woman's positive move on from the service.
- Support package tailored to the individual needs of the women and their children.
- Help with finding permanent accommodation, providing practical support or assistance to tenants who are ready to move on and support to those who have moved on into their own tenancy to enable them to live and maintain their tenancy successfully.
- Assisting with move-on and resettlement. This includes giving advice on practical issues such as benefits, life skills, managing money, settling into accommodation and the area, informal counselling, linking to other agencies for training, employment or education, advocacy, and other issues of concern to them.
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### Contact Details

The Sahara Muslim Women's Supported Accommodation Service, is a project of Community Foundation. Our Mission is to improve the quality of life of marginalised communities living in areas of multiple deprivation. We do this by setting up initiatives and programmes to develop communities to help themselves.

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