

The **KIRAN**
Project



Annual Report
2008/09

Empowering today's women and children for tomorrow.

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Patron



The past year has widened Kiran's horizon with its expansion into "The Kiran Project", beyond its core refuge-based work; but also presented particularly complex challenges, too. While charities including Amnesty International have tried to highlight the unfairness of the "no recourse to public funds" policy in its effect on vulnerable immigrant women seeking to escape domestic violence, the current ideological trend in national and local government for "non-discriminatory" practice, has hit funding arrangements for women-only refuge services, and especially those helping minority ethnic women. The tough reality is that forced marriage and domestic violence remain deep seated and enduring problems in the Asian/African/Muslim communities served by Kiran.

The staff at Kiran have had to deploy much energy in securing new funding sources, to replace those that have been withdrawn; trying to protect crucial work focussed on children and young people. What they've found reassuring is how quickly women, whose situation and future have been secured by Kiran's support, show new found confidence and assertiveness in negotiating their lives and those of their children. It's what Kiran is all about. Making a real difference to people's lives, despite the political and financial pressures in social care services.

There are plans to combine the AGM with a more social evening in December, to celebrate how much Kiran has achieved and to look forward to the future. As ever I am in awe of the honest, careful and important work that every staff member here does for the most vulnerable in our communities and am proud to be associated with it.

Samira Ahmed



Trustees Report

Kiran Asian Women's Aid has come a long way since its inception eighteen years ago, and we plan to go a whole lot further!

We continue to provide a unique and holistic service to Asian women and their children and to women and children from similar cultural backgrounds who are experiencing domestic violence/abuse. From our start as one refuge we now offer a resettlement support service, community outreach, childcare and play schemes for children, a parenting programme, training, advocacy and awareness raising of domestic violence.

Our mission statement is, "to provide a safe, nurturing space and resources, of high quality, where Asian women and their children overcoming domestic violence can identify options and develop skills that enable them to take control of their lives emotionally, financially and practically".

To make our mission a reality, we have a number of plans to consolidate our existing services, and plans for the expansion of our work in other areas. We have a large resource centre based at Community Place, in Leyton, but we want to expand into a larger, self contained resource centre, with disabled access, and rooms to offer more one-to-one services. So for the coming year we will be focussing on expanding areas of our service provision, particularly around children, elder abuse and mental health. These were the areas highlighted in our review that took place in 2007, and in the focus groups that we held at that time.

In the next few months we will be consolidating our current service provision, looking to review our business plan and preparing a five-year strategic and fundraising development plan. We plan to expand our community outreach services with older women, start working with teenage single parents, develop services for boys aged 11 plus and also plan to work with the probation services in work with women perpetrators of domestic violence from BME communities.



We have also recently seen a substantial increase in the numbers of women contacting us who have no recourse to public funds. Unfortunately, in common with most other specialist refuges, we have to turn away the majority of these women because of the lack of other sources of funding. It is very difficult to obtain financial support for these women from social services, and the debate about which local authority has responsibility for the family can sometimes take 3-6 months. In the meantime the family has to survive on little or no income.

We will be actively seeking to ensure that these women's voices are heard, and presenting their case to local authorities and central government so that sufficient funds are made available for those who find themselves in this situation. Without this finance being available, many more women will be forced back into violent relationships in order to survive.

Given our knowledge about just how difficult it is for a woman to uproot her children and to leave behind her family and suffer the feelings of guilt and shame that many Asian survivors of domestic violence feel, we know that this is not an easy decision for any woman to make. It is doubly difficult when they know that there is a chance that they will not be able to access any public funds to help them rebuild their lives, which is why we will be advocating on their behalf for funds to be made available.

Finally we would like to thank all of our funders: The Big Lottery, City Bridge Trust, BBC Children in Need and The London Borough of Waltham Forest Supporting People Team, for all their support throughout the year, without whom we could not continue to provide the service that our community have come to rely on from us. And last but not least, all the staff for their hard work throughout the year.



The Kiran project has helped 4,560 women, 924 children and 135 families in 2008/09

As always our concerns lie around the NRPF. In many cases abused women who are unable to access housing or financial support are left with no choice but to continue being exploited by their perpetrators as the following example illustrates:

Case Study

In 2009 the Kiran Project received a referral for a lady (hereafter referred to as X) who had recently left her abusive marriage.

Prior to their wedding, X had not previously met her husband, but was led to believe he was both decent and respectable. On arrival in the UK X took up residence in a house populated with five members of her husband's immediate family as well as three large dogs.

X discovered that her husband and his family abused marijuana, which often left her feeling drowsy and nauseous and she suspected that her food was regularly contaminated with the drug by various members of the family. When X raised these concerns with her husband the response she received was that she would no longer be fed by the family and that she would have to eat the left over dog food, directly from their bowls – a method of eating she was forced to adopt on several occasions.

Abuse of this nature continued until the arrival of a daughter in 2007, which only had the effect of increasing the level of abuse she was subjected to. This abuse was also administered to her daughter who at just six weeks old was placed in bed with the three dogs by a member of the family, and at two months of age was subjected to a dangerous level of physical treatment by the same family member. Again, her husband's response was that theirs was a marriage of convenience, designed only to satisfy the parents, and that he did not love her and was not interested in her concerns. In 2008 he raped and seriously assaulted her.



At this point X raised the alarm with an extended family member who in turn contacted the police. After gaining access to the family home, the police questioned X in the presence of her husband who 'advised' her that there would be unpleasant consequences should she choose to indict him in any wrongdoing. This led the police officer to leave the premises believing that

X was not in any serious danger, however the extended family member managed to persuade the officer to return, resulting in X's husband ultimately receiving a one year custodial sentence for making death threats.

X and her daughter took refuge with Social Services under the Children's Act, 1989 and was eventually granted leave to remain in the UK, making her eligible for benefits and housing. However, after leaving the refuge, she has since been re-housed twice in five weeks due to continued death threats from the family. This led her to attempt suicide in May, which fortunately she survived. She is now receiving counselling and is temporarily settled in a new home, but it is unclear how long this arrangement will last.

Source of referral of women admitted to the Kiran refuge





Children's Report

When domestic violence affects the family in most cases it's the women that suffer physically while children suffer mentally and emotionally, often in silence.

Children find it hard to express their feelings and they don't understand why they're no longer living at home with their family.

We are here for them to overcome these fears and to understand and care for them in many different ways through educational activities, outings and free play sessions. This gives the children a chance to stand up and freely express themselves because they know they don't have to suffer alone anymore. We provide them with daily sessions for the under fives and an after school club for the older children. During the summer we provide them with play schemes to keep them active and to help them have new experiences by taking them to different places. A children's worker deals with different kinds of situations when working with children who are fleeing domestic violence. In most cases when a woman and child come to the refuge the woman receives the majority of the attention and counselling. The children are usually overlooked and it is assumed they will deal with the situation by themselves.

Women and children leave behind their whole life and start again. Although some children find it easy to let go of their past and

start again, most simply can't handle leaving their old friends behind, their homes, their belongings and schools. We have had situations where children start a new school and don't fit in at all, are bullied and become isolated from their class. This is why a children's worker is here to help the children overcome this by providing them with one to one sessions, group sessions where they can talk about their problems and troubles. Often this can be done through play therapy and role-play. These children ultimately need stability in their lives, which a children's worker can help them achieve by helping them to understand why they have had to leave and what it means for them.

Children are affected by domestic violence in many ways. They become depressed, have difficulties in school, are emotionally confused, become secretive and silent and often blame themselves. By working in partnership with their mothers these effects can be minimised and help can be provided. We have had cases where children begin to have behavioural problems, refusing to do their schoolwork or listening to an adult or teacher.

A child worker's role is to help and encourage children to overcome their fears and to build up their self-esteem and confidence, which will help them later in life.

Childrens Team Statistics

Children & Young People

- Play therapy on a daily basis
- After school club (5+) provided 3 times per week for **28** children
- Crèche on a daily basis at the refuge (under 5's) for **50** children
- 1-1 children's support (in house) provided for **78** children (all ages)

Schools

- **335** Lunchtime Group Sessions within four local secondary schools (mixed, girls and boys)
- **31** 1-1 Sessions targeting BME pupils provided through referrals at the school.
- **362** Lunchtime PSHE sessions within 4 primary schools
- Mother and child/children assessments for **87** families

Mothers of Children

- Mother and child/children assessments for **29** women

The project has enabled disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people to access services that previously were hard to reach or not tailored to their individual needs. These include:

- A range of activities were developed to support training and learning thus improving attainment levels of children & young people who were at risk of underachieving, working with schools, parents and the pupils from Asian ethnic groups to ensure that despite their experiences, they grew and developed to their full potential
- Counselling was facilitated to support young people who have suffered trauma.
- Working relationships were established with local agencies working in the field of child abuse, e.g. Social Services Dept, the police, Family Service Unit, schools and all relevant agencies
- Work was conducted with health services in response to the rise in obesity in children & young people
- Group work discussions and action groups were established to bring young people together to discuss issues and provide peer support as well as arranging fun activities as a medium to gain others' involvement.

The nature of refuge work is such that levels of sensitivity and support are stretched and the unpredictability of each case is unknown, thus one case may take much longer to deal with than another. We tailor our work plan and attitude to suit the needs of the client, as some may need much more time and support than originally expected.

Although prevention is difficult to measure, the children's outreach services and the activities of the outreach project are having an impact in reducing the risk of domestic violence by educating, raising awareness and addressing issues which are still taboo within the BME communities, thus enabling women to make their own choices in life. The community outreach service continues to identify and develop much needed support to the BME women and children living in the community who are experiencing domestic violence and abuse.

Effective partnership and working with parents, children and adolescents and whole communities in order to break the "cycles of fear", were strong positive factors in the quality of service delivery. Building links with local agencies to provide a better service for the children living at the refuge, or those that have moved on, is an integral part of our job. Relevant local agencies such as Sure Start, Child & Family Consultation Unit, Parent Partnership Project, Social Services, Whipps Cross Hospital and schools within the vicinity are approached for arising matters.





The Hum Tum Project

The Hum Tum Project has successfully achieved many of the outcomes of the project for 2009. We have managed to establish and develop our work in many areas such as:

- Establishing various Parenting Support Groups in many of the Children's Centres in the neighbouring boroughs in order to assist parents in the exchange of ideas and coping mechanisms as well as improving their children's potential
- Successfully organised three parenting forums meetings comprising parents and professionals in order to promote positive parenting and to act as a voice for families in matters that concern them. The forum addressed issues relating to forced marriages, honour killing, knife crime, domestic violence, effects of the credit crunch, coping with stress etc. The meeting was conducted in appropriate languages in order to cater for the needs of parents
- Produced three parent-friendly newsletters containing a wide range of current issues, news and facts and information, which are of concern to parents
- Organised various training courses and awareness programmes promoting mental health, wellbeing and safety and social interaction
- Support parents with advice, guidance and welfare benefits
- Support parents with one-to-one sessions and sign post to counselling services
- Supported women resettling in new accommodation
- Delivered positive parenting skills training programmes.

Future Developments

- To work closely with children's centres in order to deliver parenting skills programmes in appropriate languages that address current issues and concerns affecting families to improve relationships and parenting
- To work with schools in order to deliver a programme of activities of preventative work around DV and other issues affecting young people
- To establish women's groups within the children's centres in order to deliver our parenting programme
- To work closely with PCT in order to develop activities around drama, art and therapy, anti-social behaviour awareness, counselling etc for parents
- To work closely with PCT's in order to support work with families and assist with identifying ways in which police services to women can be improved (particularly to women from the BAMER communities)
- To establish a counselling group for vulnerable parents.





Our Forgotten Asian Elders

A report on “Asian Elderly In Crisis, Care Lacking for Asian Elderly” in 2005 by the Policy Research Institute on Ageing and Ethnicity (PRIAE) and published by Channel 4 news, revealed that the Asian elderly in the UK are facing a care crisis. Research claimed that a breakdown in traditional family structures is leading to a crisis in care for the Asian elders.

The report highlighted that as first generations who settled in the UK in the 1960's and 1970's grow older, it is estimated that in the next five years the number of Asians aged over 65 will treble. The report also claims that local authorities are failing to respond to these rapid demographic changes.

The traditional image of an extended family i.e. four generations living together in one household, is facing a significant shift in trends. A three-year study has found that local authorities are still making assumptions about ethnic minority families “caring for their own” and as a result they are failing to respond to their needs. Naina Patel from PRIAE has called for action, “we have already seen some very tragic situations of abandonment. Some housing providers say they can't cope any longer” she said.

In addition, the study further revealed that pensioners from an ethnic background are amongst the very poorest with a disproportionate number relying upon benefits. Many professionals have found a number of Asian elders who have no place to go to and experience mental health problems as a result of being left on their own, while others become physically ill.

The report further predicts, by 2030 there will be over 1.7 million ethnic minorities over the age of 65 living in the UK. The problems faced by the Asian elderly are similar to those faced by all pensioners but they are compounded by language barriers, social exclusion and discrimination and Asian elder women face an even greater disadvantage.

Many scientists and behavioural experts believe that elderly Asian women in particular are less likely to approach a healthcare professional for help if they are suffering from depression. This is because these women are from the ‘old school’ of thought and in many Asian cultures conditions like depression and any other issues relating to mental health are not spoken of outside the walls of the home.

Many Asian elderly women are isolated and housebound particularly if they are not living with extended family. This has been evident from both personal experiences and extensive research that has previously taken place in this area. Further investigations reveal that many elderly Asian women have no-one to talk to, they do not speak English and they are dependant upon their family for everything, including the daily grocery shopping. Not having this support results in them becoming reclusive and depressed. They begin to feel like a burden upon their family and feel there is little point in living. Their entire social structure breaks down prompting many of the elderly Asian women to take drastic steps, including suicide.

Organisations like The Kiran Project are committed to developing services to meet the needs of Asian elderly women. The staff can speak several Asian languages and cater for cultural, religious and dietary needs. Above all it aims to provide a place for elderly Asian women to meet others and share company and experiences. We at the Kiran Project value our Asian elderly women who possess many wonderful skills and experiences and look upon them as wise people who can play a positive role in contributing towards helping and guiding the younger generation. The Kiran Project aims to build bridges between the young and old and will be a catalyst for this to happen. The Kiran Project aims to fill an important gap.

Balance Sheet

As at 31 March 2009	2009	2008
	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	2,541	6,315
Current assets		
Debtors and prepayments	8,965	18,944
Cash at bank and in hand	255,187	255,073
Total current assets	<u>264,152</u>	<u>274,017</u>
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	(21,449)	(7,396)
Net current assets	<u>242,703</u>	<u>266,621</u>
Net assets	<u>245,244</u>	<u>272,936</u>
Funds:		
Unrestricted funds		
• Designated funds	238,396	252,795
• General funds	—	—
	<u>238,396</u>	<u>252,795</u>
Restricted funds	6,848	20,141
Total funds	<u>£ 245,244</u>	<u>£ 272,936</u>

Approved by the Directors and Trustees on 21st July 2009 and signed on their behalf.
Full accounts available on request.



Ruksana Yaqoob

Management Committee Members

Ruksana Yaqoob – Chair
Asma Begum – Treasurer

Maliheh Sabouni
Harjinder Kandola

Bushra Ahmed

Staff

Zahir Fatima	Director	Parvinder Aujla	Children's Development worker (left Aug 2008)
Amtal Rana	Deputy Director	Zainab Khan	Family Development Worker (left July 2008)
Fiaz Akhtar	Coordinator, Hum Tum	Manjit Bansel	Family & Youth Work Trainer (left Feb 2009)
Colsum Akanjee	Children's Services Coordinator	Farhana Begum	Family Development Worker
Nighat Darr	Project Worker	Assia Rehman	Outreach & Resettlement Worker
Mariam Farooq	Project Worker (left Oct 2008)	Lailey Begum	Admin Worker
Sharmine Nahar	Children's Worker	Stuart Edwards	Finance Officer
Shazia Darr	Children's Worker		

ervices and Criteria

Services Offered by The Kiran Project

Refuge

- Kiran has seven furnished rooms, with the capacity to offer safe temporary accommodation to seven women and their children at any one time
- The accommodation is offered for up to six months
- Staff provide emotional, practical and advocacy support
- English language classes are provided on site with crèche facilities
- Well equipped playroom for children
- Advice and information services in:
 - Welfare Benefits
 - Housing
 - Legal Issues
 - Children's services
 - Parenting issues
- The Kiran Project works closely with other service providers at a local and national level to raise awareness of domestic violence issues.

Resource Centre

Other services offered from the Resource Centre include:
Community outreach & resettlement
Drop-in sessions and one-to-one support
Training courses and ESOL classes.

Services for Children

The Kiran Project provides services for children, recognising the impact that domestic abuse can have on children.

These services include:

- Childcare support, crèche, after-school club
- Summer & Easter holiday projects (dependent on funding)
- Sessions with the mother to assess the needs of the child and to refer children to specialist agencies where appropriate
- Help with school & nursery places
- Social and educational events for children
- Youth services, including specialist services for Muslim girls
- Working with schools, social services, courts and a number of other statutory agencies working with children.

Other Services

- Raising awareness of domestic violence in the community and to professionals working in the domestic violence field
- Facilitating training and participating in workshops on issues relevant to Kiran's client group
- Working in partnership with local and national agencies.

Community Outreach & Resettlement

A full-time Community Outreach & Resettlement Worker provides services to women in their local community and neighbouring boroughs.

The services offered are:

- Drop-in advice sessions
- Educational and training courses
- Self development, confidence building & assertiveness courses
- Support groups
- Seminars (various topics)
- Casework (housing, welfare benefits, legal issues)
- Advocacy
- Social & educational events
- One-to-one support.

Referrals

Referral criteria:

All women and their children from the Indian sub-continent who suffer from physical, sexual, emotional, mental and financial abuse and exploitation

Women and children from other communities will be supported where similarities can be identified in culture, religion or language that will enable us to offer a culturally sensitive service (Algerian, Iranian, Iraqi, Turkish etc).

Unfortunately the following **cannot** be accepted:

- Women who require a high level of mental or physical support
- Women who have a history of, or are currently dependent on, drugs or alcohol
- Women with high support needs

The Kiran Project aims to provide a service which is accessible to all women and children regardless of disability, class, sexual orientation or age. However, Kiran will only accept boys up to the age of 12.



Making a referral

Referrals are taken Monday to Friday. You can make a self-referral on the telephone, or be referred by another agency. A short form will be completed over the telephone to assess the eligibility criteria and if appropriate you will be given an appointment to come to the office for a more detailed risk assessment. In the event that we are unable to make an offer of accommodation we will signpost you to the appropriate agency.

Please contact The Kiran Project on 020 8558 1986, 020 8556 5264, 020 8558 2274 or one of the agencies listed under 'useful numbers'.

For further information and advice please write to:

The Kiran Project PO Box 899,
Leytonstone London, E11 1AA

Call **020 8558 1986**, **020 8556 5264**
or **020 8558 2274**

Email us at
kiran.admin@kiranproject.org.uk
or visit **www.thekiranproject.org.uk**

Useful Numbers

The Kiran Project
020 8558 1986

National Domestic Violence Helpline
(freephone) 0808 2000 247

Muslim Women's Helpline
020 8904 8193 / 020 8908 6715

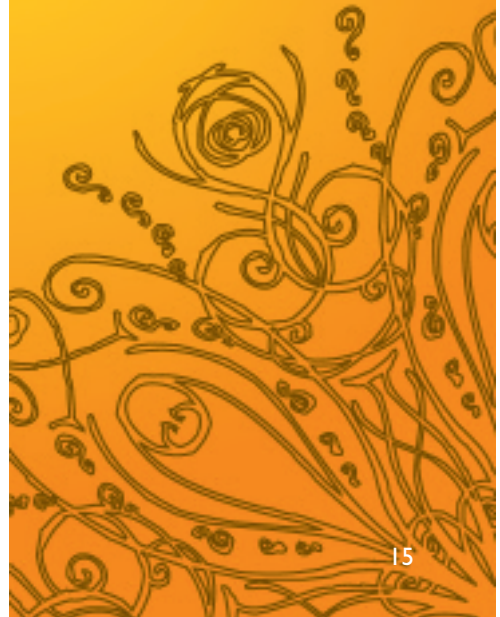
Muslim Youth Helpline
(freephone) 0808 808 2008

NSPCC Asian Helpline
0800 096 7719

Forced Marriage Helpline
0800 5999 247

Childline
0800 1111

Emergency
999



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BBC Children in Need, Bridge House Trust, Glasspool, Greater London Domestic Violence Project, Help a London Child, LBWF – Supporting People Team, London Councils, Nationwide Foundation, The Big Lottery, Team Leyton, Wakeham Trust.

We would also like to thank everyone who has supported us throughout the year; especially The Department for Work and Pensions, London Borough of Waltham Forest Housing Benefits Sections and Supporting People Team, Springboard Housing Association, John Green, and our patron Samira Ahmed.

