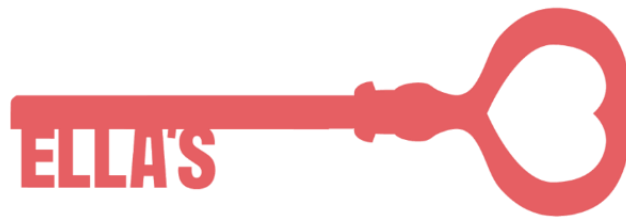


Ella's

2019 Impact Report



Here for the one

Ella's is a project of Kahaila

Charity Registration Number: 1138653

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I. Introduction

The vision of Ella's is, 'To see a world where all people are living life in freedom'.

According to the Global Slavery Index, 40.3 million people are currently trapped in slavery (Findings: Highlights, 2018). In the UK, 5,145 potential victims were identified in 2018 (Country Data: United Kingdom, 2019).

In 2019, the National Referral Mechanism was set up to support victims exiting trafficking. This provides survivors with safe accommodation and support, but for a limited time. Ella's exists because many women are in desperate need for long-term support and aftercare beyond the existing governmental support. Research within the sector has shown that:

'The current situation leaves survivors with little realistic opportunity to rebuild their lives, with some ending up destitute, vulnerable to further harm or even being re-exploited.' (Human Trafficking Foundation, 2017)

Our mission is to see women break through these cycles of exploitation and abuse and step into lasting freedom. We do this by providing expert aftercare for survivors which includes safe accommodation, casework management and building a supportive community of belonging for everyone involved with Ella's. We also use our frontline data and stories to grow influence among policymakers and increase awareness among the general public.

Our approach is holistic and individually tailored to the service user. We align with, and closely follow, guidelines as set out by The Human Trafficking Foundation in The Slavery and Trafficking Survivor Care Standards (2018):

'For every survivor there should be an appropriate pathway for provision which considers, and is tailored to, their specific individual risks and needs. This includes all survivors who have a high level of need and require specialist provision.

'Integrated, appropriate support should be provided in collaboration with each individual person and must consider all aspects of their psychological, physical, spiritual, financial, legal and social wellbeing. Survivors must be placed at the centre of any decision-making process and support must be prioritised in accordance with their individual needs.'

We aim to empower our service users as much as possible. As highlighted by The Slavery and Trafficking Survivor Care Standards, 'Supporting survivors to regain

trust in their own ability to control their lives is a crucial step towards reducing their vulnerability and preventing revictimisation.’

The aim of our work is for women to not be reliant on Ella’s’ services on an ongoing basis, but to become fully independent. We therefore seek to work in partnership with other organisations and groups, so we can encourage women to build a local and long-lasting support network.

Our holistic, person-centred approach means we often have to make difficult decisions to keep our casework numbers low, in order to provide the support necessary for women to live in lasting freedom.

II. Inputs

1. Grants & Funding

As Ella’s is an independent project, it does not receive any governmental funding. Ella’s relies on grants and funding for the provision of its work. Below is an outline of the grants and funding Ella’s received during 2019:

Table 1: Outline of Grants & Funding received during 2019

Source	Details
Grants and Corporate Sponsorship	<p>Stewarts Law: for the salary of a caseworker</p> <p>Her Stories: general fund to support the work of Ella’s</p> <p>TRIBE Freedom Foundation: for the salary of an Operations Manager and a part-time caseworker</p> <p>The Cottman Foundation: for the refurbishment of Ella’s’ second accommodation</p> <p>Recognised: general fund to support the work of Ella’s</p>

Housing Benefit	Housing benefit income from residents (who have access to state benefits) living in Ella's' accommodations
Regular Supporters	Individuals who financially support the work of Ella's; monthly or annually Churches and other groups who donate regularly as part of their giving
One-off Donations	From individuals through appeals (i.e. the Diocese of London Lent Appeal in 2019) Through events or fundraisers Specific gifts for outings for the service users
Pro Bono Support	Caplor Horizons: Strategy and consultancy support 3Space: Office space Bates Wells: Legal advice Oakwood Security & Risk Ltd: Security advice Liberty Shared: Case Management System 12X3 Gym: Regular free community sessions for service users
Donations in Kind	Food and hampers for women Welcome baskets for new residents (provided by Their Voice) Christmas gift boxes for women and children (Balham Baptist Church) Supermarket and coffee shop gift cards Clothes, shoes, bags and similar Furniture and other items for the accommodations
Accommodation Partners	Green Pastures Frampton Park Church

2. Referral Partners

Ella's received 43 accommodation referrals and 14 outreach referrals in 2019. The number of our referral partners grew significantly over the course of 2019. In 2018, Ella's received nine referrals in total (four for accommodation and five for outreach support). Eight were from NRM contracted partners (Medaille Trust and Hestia). There was one referral from an Ella's service user. We offer two hypotheses for this increase:

- 1) Ella's opened its second accommodation in 2019. There is a huge demand for safe accommodation in London, and referrers have made contact with Ella's so their service users could access this new accommodation. There has been a positive response within the sector at the news of Ella's being able to offer more supported accommodation.
- 2) Ella's has built a reputation within the sector of providing excellent aftercare for survivors. Referrers wish for their service users to access our services.

Table 2: Overview of referrals made to Ella's for accommodation services

Referring Agency	Type of Agency	Number of Referrals
Hestia	NRM contracted partner	22
Medaille Trust	NRM contracted partner	2
Women's Crisis Centre	Independent housing charity	1
Oxford Social Services	Local Authority	1
Luminary Bakery	Social Enterprise – VAWG specialists	1
Women's West Services	NRM contracted partner	2
Member of the public		1
British Red Cross	Independent NGO	3
ECPAT	Independent anti-trafficking NGO	1
Jesuit Refugee Service	Independent refugee charity	1
The Havens	Specialist Sexual Assault Centre (NHS)	2
Bakhita House	Independent safehouse	1
Kensington and Chelsea Social Services	Local Authority	1
City Hearts	NRM contracted partner	2
South Wales Police Service	Police	1

Migrants Organise	Independent refugee charity	1
Total number of accommodation referrals		43
Number of successful accommodation referrals		5

Reasons for unsuccessful accommodation referrals:

- no vacancies at Ella's' accommodation services;
- survivor does not have access to public funds (in order to claim Housing Benefit).

Table 3: Overview of referrals made to Ella's for outreach services

Referring Agency	Type of Agency	Number of Referrals
Hestia	NRM contracted partner	5
Oxford Social Services	Local Authority	1
The Havens	Specialist Sexual Assault Centre (NHS)	2
Ella's' Service User		4
New Pathways	Independent sexual assault service	2
Total number of outreach referrals		14
Number of successful outreach referrals		6

Reasons for unsuccessful outreach referrals:

- survivor is unable to meet caseworker within the catchment area of Ella's' service;
- caseworkers do not have the capacity to increase their caseload in order to provide the intensive support necessary for women to enter into lasting freedom.

3. Employees & Volunteers

a. Employees

During the first half of 2019, Ella's' employees included:

- 2 part-time caseworkers
- 1 full-time Operations Manager

- 1 full-time Founder & Project Director

During the second half of 2019, Ella's' employees included:

- 1 part-time caseworker
- 1 full-time Service Manager (previously employed as a part-time caseworker)
- 1 full-time Operations Manager
- 1 full-time Founder & Project Director

The need for our services is continually evidenced through: conversations with our referral partners; the number of referrals we receive (without the capacity to accept all, leading to many unsuccessful referrals); and current reports/literature within the sector. Some key reports:

- The Duncan Lewis case challenges the gap in support for victims of trafficking following a grant of refugee status (2020).
- A joint civil society report on trafficking and modern slavery in the UK to the UN Human Rights Committee (Anti-Slavery International, Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group, et al., 2020) highlights gaps in the UK's response to trafficking and modern slavery.

The Global Slavery Index examines what follows for survivors once they exit the government-funded 'recovery and reflection' period (Beddoe, Bundock & Jordan, 2015). Their report highlights:

'Whilst conducting this research the Foundation heard many distressing stories about the difficulties faced by vulnerable adults in obtaining access to even the most rudimentary support after they had exited government-funded accommodation.'

For Ella's to grow and develop sustainably to meet this need, it was decided that it required a core management team (Director, Operations Manager, Service Manager) to focus on the oversight of the organisation, with less of their time spent on the day-to-day support needs of the survivors.

As such, in the final quarter of the year, Ella's conducted a recruitment drive to on-board three full-time caseworkers. By the end of 2019, two full-time caseworkers had been appointed.

b. Volunteers

Ella's has always benefited from the time offered by skilled volunteers. During 2019, Ella's had a total of 11 regular, active volunteers in various roles (not including student internships and placements). The below table outlines the various roles in which Ella's' volunteers have supported its work.

Ella's offers various student internships and placements throughout the year to students from reputable universities. These provide invaluable support to our caseworkers, who often hold conflicting casework management responsibilities.

Table 4: Overview of Student Internships and Placements

No	Type	University	Course	Role	Time offered	Started	Finished
1	Internship	Royal Holloway	MSc Clinical Psychology	Support Assistant	2 days/week	January	May
2	Internship	Royal Holloway	MSc Clinical Psychology	Support Assistant	2 days/week	January	May
3	Internship	Royal Holloway	MSc Clinical Psychology	Support Assistant	2 days/week	January	May
4	Internship	Glasgow	BA Social Work	Live in Support Assistant	Full time	May	July
5	Social Work Placement	Oxford Brookes	MA Social Work	Support Assistant	Full time	June	October
6	Internship	Birmingham	BA Government & International Relations	Communications and Policy Intern	3 days/week	July	September

Table 5: Overview of Ella's' Regular Volunteer Roles

Role	Time Offered	Number of Volunteers	Description of Role
Administrator	1 day per week	1	Assist in the process of recruiting volunteers. Calculating VAT and categorising spending to allow for analysis and reporting. Answer queries relating to payments into and out of the bank account and ensure all expenditure is accounted for. Update the supporter database and communicate with donors. Organise community activities for service users.

Pastoral Care	2 days per week	1	Pastoral care provides holistic emotional, social and spiritual support. Caseworkers need to hold strict boundaries to provide a safe service. Our pastoral volunteer can hold softer boundaries, offering a richer service.
Befrienders	1-2 hours per week/fortnight	6	Befrienders are paired with a service user and help develop the Ella's community. Our befrienders can hold softer boundaries, offering a richer service.
English Support	2-3 hours per fortnight	2	Limited English proficiency prevents our service users from becoming independent. Our English support volunteers meet with some of our service users to practice speaking English and support with college homework.
Cleaner	2-3 hours per fortnight	1	Cleaning of the safehouse. Many of Ella's' service users experience depression; resulting in low motivation. Our cleaning volunteer support helps to reduce the tensions in the home.

4. Premises

a. East London Accommodation

Ella's opened its first safe accommodation in 2016, offering four long-term spaces and one emergency space for short-term crisis support. This accommodation housed six service users throughout 2019; with the emergency space being used twice. Ella's took the decision in 2019 to transition into only offering rooms to survivors with recourse (able to claim housing benefit) for the sustainability of the project. The emergency space has remained accessible to survivors with or without recourse.

The building comprises of:

- 4 bedrooms

- 1 bathroom
- 1 additional W/C
- 1 kitchen/diner
- 2 small storage rooms/spaces
- 1 office
- 1 living room/emergency bed space

b. South London Accommodation

Ella's opened its second safe accommodation in October 2019, offering three long-term spaces for survivors with recourse. This accommodation housed three service users in 2019.

The building comprises of:

- 3 bedrooms
- 1 bathroom
- 1 kitchen

c. Bermondsey Office

Ella's was gifted a free office space by 3SPACE in March 2019. This included six desks in a co-working office shared with four other charities and free room bookings to hold both internal and external private meetings.

5. Service Users

Ella's supported 27 service users throughout 2019, from 12 different countries*. Ella's indirectly supported 25 children/dependents of Ella's' service users.

*These include the United Kingdom, Albania, Yemen, Eritrea, Vietnam, Nigeria, Brazil, Lithuania, Ghana, St Lucia, India and Greece.

a. Service User Demographics

Table 6: Overview of Service User Demographics

Service User Demographics	Number of Service Users
White Other	9
Black African	6
Asian	4
Middle Eastern	2
South American	2
White British	2
Black Other	1
Aged 18-24 years	3
Aged 25-39 years	10
Aged 40-59 years	14
Aged 60+ years	0
Mental Health Diagnosis*	25

*These include anxiety disorders, mood disorders, eating disorders, psychotic disorders; dissociative disorders, personality disorders and substance use disorders.

6. Types of Exploitation Experienced

The Crown Prosecution Service in the UK recognises Violence against Women and Girls as incorporating:

- domestic abuse
- controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship
- stalking and harassment
- rape and serious sexual offences
- so-called honour-based abuse and forced marriage
- female genital mutilation prosecution guidance
- child sexual abuse: guidelines on prosecuting cases of child sexual abuse
- human trafficking, smuggling and slavery.

These crimes disproportionately affect women and girls (Crown Prosecution Service, 2017). All of our service users have experienced at least two of these crimes before entering Ella's' support services.

Table 7: Overview of Types of Exploitation Experienced by Ella's' Service Users

Type of Exploitation	Number of Service Users
Sexual Exploitation	20
Sexual Assault	20
Domestic Violence	13
Labour Exploitation	9
Honour-Based Abuse	5
Child Sexual Exploitation	3

III. Activities

1. Overview of Ella's' Services

Our services consist of accommodation support, outreach support and *Friends of Ella's* support.

a. Accommodation Support

- Own bedroom with shared living space
- All maintenance issues and health and safety managed by staff
- Daily check-ins
- Weekly house meetings
- Regular house activities such as gardening, baking cakes, cooking sessions, jewellery making and clothes swaps
- Access to the Ella's 24/7 emergency phone service
- Invitation to Ella's' community activities
- Access to an Ella's befriender/pastoral worker
- Casework management which includes weekly keywork sessions, advocacy to external organisations, referrals to appropriate additional support services and accompaniment to important appointments

b. Outreach Support

- Access to the Ella's 24/7 emergency phone service
- Invitation to Ella's' community activities
- Access to an Ella's befriender/pastoral worker

- Casework management: as above, though with fortnightly keywork sessions

c. Friends of Ella's Support

- Access to the Ella's 24/7 emergency phone service
- Invitation to Ella's' community activities
- Access to an Ella's befriender/pastoral worker
- Ability to re-access casework management support if ever required

2. Casework Management

Full cases (service users accessing accommodation or outreach support) receive casework management through their allocated caseworker.

a. Needs Assessments and Support Plans

Regular needs assessments are completed in collaboration with their caseworker. Areas which are reviewed:

➤ Medical

Support with ongoing medical needs; registering with and accessing the right medical services; making and attending medical appointments, and monitoring medication.

➤ Mental Health

General counselling; support accessing the right mental health services and therapeutic workshops, and regular welfare checks.

➤ Housing

Support with understanding license and tenancy agreements; life skills training in managing an accommodation; support to find appropriate accommodation, including advocating to local authorities, finding housing solicitors and advocating to landlords.

➤ Immigration

Writing supporting letters to the Home Office; support finding and accessing appropriate immigration representation, and support to attend solicitor or Home Office appointments.

➤ Financial

Support with accessing and understanding benefit applications; accessing debt management agencies, and personal budgeting.

➤ Education, Employment and Training (EET)

Support accessing college programmes, e.g., English classes, as well as specialised social enterprise and employability training programmes.

➤ Community

Support to find community, sports, cultural and religious groups, and start hobbies. Support with managing conflict. Invitations to regular Ella's' community days and activities.

➤ Family

Support to access parenting courses, and advocacy to local authority and statutory services. Helping ensure children are enrolled at school. Researching extra-curricular activities for children and accessing grants to fund access to these.

➤ Safety and Security

Ensuring service users know how to use emergency alarm and call systems, e.g., the Ella's 24/7 phone service and 999. Ensuring service users know how to respond in emergency situations.

➤ Breaking Cycles of Abuse

Support recognising warning signs within relationships (unhealthy patterns/dynamics within social relationships); the modelling of healthy boundaries and relationships by Ella's' staff.

➤ Criminal Proceedings

Criminal/family law/civil law proceedings: support reporting to the police, making statements, attending court and keeping up to date with any further developments in proceedings.

➤ General

Translation support, advocacy to all required agencies, other support required for independent living.

Support plans are then created, together with the caseworker. Specific steps are identified within this process:

- realistic goals
- resources needed to meet goals
- other people needed to meet goals (caseworker, other agencies and so on)
- realistic dates set.

These support plans are reviewed quarterly and progress recorded.

b. Risk Assessments

Service user risk assessments are completed in collaboration with their caseworkers. Areas of risk explored and identified:

- personal safety/ability to keep self-safe
- physical health
- mental health
- risks from others
- risk of violence from service user (to keep other service users, staff and volunteers safe)
- additional risks (financial, immigration, legal and so on)

Risks are given a risk rating score:

Table 8: Risk Rating Scores used on Service User Risk Assessments

Score	Assessment
Low	Isolated or occasional instances of non-significant incidents
Medium	More frequent/regular incidents and/or of a more significant nature
High	Likely, severe or significant
Unknown	The risks are unknown

Actions and realistic time frames are then set for the Ella's Team and service user to complete, to minimise/mitigate any risks identified.

Fire safety risk assessments are completed with each of the service users who live within Ella's' supported accommodation to ensure their safety in relation to fire risks.

3. Signposting and Referrals

Signposting and referrals are essential to the work of Ella's. This allows us to expand service users' networks, and our own, and in doing so promote our aim for survivors to become able to live independently within a wider community.

Signposting and referrals enables service users to grow their support systems in whatever areas are important to them. It also ensures that they can access the help they need if it is something which Ella's is unable to provide directly (for example, medical care or education tuition). We might also need to signpost at times when a referral to Ella's has been received, and we do not have the capacity to provide support.

a. Referrals

One key element of Ella's' casework is writing referrals to engage service users with other organisations and service providers. This requires actively keeping up to date with what is available. We are consistently working on building relationships with other organisations to promote collaboration in a number of different areas.

b. Signposting

Ella's strives to help people to help themselves; signposting is a fundamental part of this, when a survivor grows in independence.

Examples of referrals and/or signposting include: local mental health professionals; GPs; local authorities; homelessness teams; solicitors; job centres; food banks and so on. Signposting is tailored to the needs of the individual service user.

4. Community Activities

In addition to safe accommodation and casework management, Ella's seeks to build a safe, supportive community of belonging for its survivors. It is also vital to the recovery of women to feel a sense of belonging. According to The Loneliness

Lab, 9 million Londoners are lonely (loneliness, n.d.). Here are some of the ways we combatted this during 2019:

- Staff at Ella's organised over 13 parties to celebrate birthdays and other significant milestones including graduations, immigration status developments and welcome events.
- Throughout the year, we celebrated the work of our volunteers with parties and outings. These gave service users an opportunity to thank volunteers for the relationships and community they share (or to say goodbye).
- Our caseworkers organised regular house activities to build relationships and community within the homes. These included sessions on gardening, baking, cooking, jewellery making as well as clothes swaps.
- We developed a partnership with a boxing gym, which provides free weekly community boxing sessions for Ella's' service users.
- In the summer, we ran the Ella's annual day trip. We were donated £1,000 by OakTree Nursery towards the costs of the event. We went to Colne Valley County Park where the women enjoyed walks, a picnic, scones and jam, and a lot of laughter. We hired a coach for the 32 attendees: 12 adult service users, 11 children and 7 staff/volunteers.
- Recognised Store is a corporate supporter of Ella's who visited one of our safehouses in September 2019 and gave each resident a gift of one of their bangles.
- In October, we took some of the women to Frinton for a weekend. The costs of the trip were donated by Tabeel. The outing was a real treat for the women and created lasting positive memories for those who attended.
- Many of the women attended a Christmas party run in partnership with Luminary Bakery. Each woman and their family received a gift box donated by Balham Baptist Church. Our staff hand-delivered boxes to any of the women who could not make it; a very special delivery just before Christmas.

In addition to the community activities arranged through Ella's, each service user is given the choice to pair up with an Ella's befriender and/or receive pastoral support.

Caseworkers need to hold strict boundaries to provide a safe service. Our pastoral and befriending volunteers can hold softer boundaries, offering a richer service and helping to develop the Ella's community.

5. Quantitative Outcomes

a. Support Plan Outcomes

As discussed above, Ella's' support plans are based on the survivor's needs, as identified through their needs assessments. These support plans are tailored to the individual, so the support offered is bespoke to wherever they are on their journey to recovery. Not all service users require or wish to access support in every area of support offered by Ella's, at any given time. Below is an overview of the number of service users who accessed our support services during 2019.

Table 9: Number of Service Users who Accessed Each Area of Support Offered

Area of Support	Number of Service Users
Medical	18
Mental health	17
Housing	20
Immigration	12
Financial	17
Education, employment and training	14
Community	20
Family	11
Safety and security	13
Breaking cycles of abuse	11
Criminal proceeding	4
General	27

As outlined above, within each area of support, caseworkers can offer a range of actions to help the women reach their goals as identified in their support plans. Below is an overview of some of the specific areas of support which service users successfully accessed/achieved due to the advocacy of their caseworker.

Table 10: Number of Service Users who Accessed Each Specific Area of Support Offered

Specific Area of Support	Number of Service Users
Received either refugee status/leave to remain	6
Accessed appropriate legal representation	4

Accessed suitable accommodation (Ella's' safehouses, other safehouses or other suitable accommodation)	11
Supported to make successful benefit applications	10
Supported to sustain successful benefit applications	16
Accessed college/university courses (ESOL or other)	11
Accessed specialist employability training programmes	1
Accessed work experience	1
Children/dependents accessed school/nursery	5
Children/dependents accessed extra-curricular activities	3
Supported with advocacy to the police regarding a criminal case (new or ongoing)	4

The medical and mental health needs of the service users often take up the majority of the team's focus and time, in order to provide sufficient support. Due to the abuse and exploitation that our service users have experienced, all have health conditions which need managing. As noted above, 22 have a diagnosed Axis I disorder and three have a diagnosed Axis II disorder. The various medical conditions which our service users experience and/or live with include (not limited to):

- chronic pain
- fibromyalgia
- asthma
- cancer
- allergies
- arthritis
- menstrual and sexual health conditions
- ENT conditions.

Caseworkers offer a range of actions to provide support, which include: registering with and accessing the right health services; making and attending health appointments; monitoring and accessing medication; general counselling; accessing therapeutic workshops; regular welfare checks and so on.

Table 11: Number of Actions Undertaken by Caseworkers to Support Service Users with Healthcare throughout 2019

Type of Health	Number of Actions Undertaken by Caseworkers
Medical	74
Mental Health	154

b. Safety and Security and Risk Assessment Management

Due to the service users' histories and health conditions, their safety and security remain paramount. Quarterly, formal risk assessments, and more frequent risk assessment reviews, are undertaken for each service user. Their safety and security needs are at the forefront of Ella's holistic support package. Throughout 2019, the Ella's Team took 44 actions across the service to minimise and mitigate the risks identified in these assessments.

Ella's received pro bono consultancy from a specialist anti-trafficking security advisor in 2019. Specific areas which were reviewed and developed included:

- CCTV and panic alarm systems
- secure networks/technology
- use of data
- social media usage and communications
- Ella's' 24/7 emergency phone service.

c. Progression of Service Users through the Ella's Service

Regular reviews of the level of support required for each of our service users are undertaken by our caseworkers. This is done by reviewing both their needs assessments and risk assessments. Should a service user score low on all/most areas of the service user risk assessment *and* report very few support needs which they are unable to resolve independently, we will consider transferring their case from a 'full case' to *Friends of Ella's*.

This is to ensure that there is progression into independence and to prevent reliance on Ella's. We want to support our service users to no longer need our service, while staying connected as *Friends of Ella's* within a supportive community. Two main reasons for this are:

- to enable Ella's to provide support to as many survivors as possible;
- to see our service users living free and independently within their communities, rather than staying reliant on support service.

Table 12: Overview of Service User’s progression through Ella’s’ Service throughout 2019

Progression Route	Number of Service Users
Successful referral for accommodation support	5
Remained in accommodation support	3
Progressed from accommodation support to <i>Friends of Ella’s</i>	1
Successful referral for outreach support	6
Remained in outreach support	6
Progressed from outreach support to <i>Friends of Ella’s</i>	5
Closed outreach support	5

A service user may exit the Ella’s programme for a number of reasons. Ella’s closed five cases in 2019. The reasons for these closures are:

- The service user moved out of Ella’s’ catchment area for support services (e.g., women that have moved out of London).
- The service user found a support service better suited to their needs. For example, one service user exited Ella’s’ accommodation service. She moved to a different safe accommodation within London, better suited to manage her particular support needs.

6. Qualitative Outcomes

a. Case Studies (names and other identifying details have been changed to protect anonymity)

Zilha’s Story

Zilha was referred to Ella’s in June 2019. She had stage 4 cancer and no recourse (she was unable to claim benefits and had no rights to work). We did not have a vacancy at the time, but Zilha had nowhere else to stay. The hospital needed to discharge her after a recent admittance. The British Red Cross was on the case but the only place they had was in a night shelter, which the hospital said was not a viable option for her. Initially, she stayed in our emergency space (a sofa bed in the

living room/staff office). Thankfully, a room became vacant the following month for her to move into. She was extremely frail and spoke no English.

Zilha needed to attend the hospital on a weekly basis, some weeks she needed to attend up to three times per week for various treatment appointments. Throughout Zilha's stay, she was supported by three interns and social work students, three caseworkers, our pastoral care volunteer and both of Ella's' directors. There were weeks when she needed round-the-clock support, particularly after she was discharged following major surgery in September 2019. Ella's' team worked most evenings and over the weekends to ensure the house was clean, she had food and all her medical needs were met. Her care included: making sure medication/medical supplies were available; accompaniment to all her medical appointments, and advocacy to ensure she received the appropriate medical care. It was not unusual for Zilha to be receiving more than 40 hours of time from the team.

As Zilha was unable to claim benefits initially, Ella's gifted her with a weekly stipend to meet her basic needs. Ella's also paid for numerous taxis, as she was unable to travel via public transport to her appointments at a central London hospital (due to her frailty). Additionally, Ella's paid for a cleaning company to deep clean the property and attend on a fortnightly basis for upkeep. One of Ella's' volunteers also attended the property on a fortnightly basis and ensured the house was kept clean for Zilha. We also sourced a small fridge for her room and provided a set up that ensured she was as comfortable as possible.

Zilha received fantastic news in September 2019. She was granted leave to remain with access to benefits and the right to work. She no longer had the stress of the uncertainty over whether she was going to be deported back to the Middle East (where she had been exploited both sexually and for labour). She would be allowed to stay in the UK. Earlier this month, Zilha received more great news: her cancer is in remission.

We are so thankful to have been able to support Zilha when she needed it most. Zilha is now not only a survivor of human trafficking; she is also a survivor of cancer. She smiles every day, beaming around the house and joining in activities like baking cakes. She can't wait to start therapy and to attend college to learn English so that she can one day work. We're so excited to see how she continues to heal and move forward into a new chapter of her life, free from exploitation and free from cancer.

Mary's story

Mary was referred to Ella's in July 2019, in need of accommodation, while still in Namibia. She was referred by an international organisation which supports survivors with repatriation. If Mary were not able to access safe accommodation, she would not be able to leave Namibia, and would remain at high risk of further exploitation. Ella's did not have a vacancy at the time, so we took the decision to offer Mary an emergency space, the living room in one of our properties.

Mary had been sexually exploited from a very young age, and in January 2019 was re-trafficked. The people involved in Mary's trafficking were her close family members. When Mary first arrived at the Ella's safe house, her mental health and emotional wellbeing were severely impaired. Before coming to Ella's she had been hospitalised twice, due to her mental health.

Since being with Ella's, Mary has been referred to therapists and specialist mental health teams. These have greatly supported her to start processing her trauma and working towards her life goals.

Ella's supported her to enrol at university to study fashion and textiles. Since starting, Mary has revealed her incredible talent in design and has even taken the initiative on her own to sell t-shirts that she created. She has been paired with an Ella's befriender who owns a jewellery business, in the hope that this will enable Mary to develop her business skills and ideas.

Mary has remained in Ella's' emergency space, due to the lack of governmental financial support for students living in supported accommodation. And though Mary does not have her own private bedroom, like the other residents, she is so happy to be with Ella's. On many occasions she has said that she 'never wants to leave' and wishes she could 'stay here for ten years'.

As Mary was exploited from such a young age, her development was interrupted. She missed the opportunity to learn basic life skills, such as emotional regulation and hygiene. We tailored her support plan around her specific needs, including mental health, general health, life skills and emotional development. Mary participated in a baking session and stated that she did not realise 'how easy it is to bake', and that she 'cannot wait to make some cakes alone.'

Mary has developed a good understanding of her mental health and prioritises self-care. It has been several months since Mary has experienced low moods or psychotic episodes. She believes this is due to the joint work which Ella's and her Mental Health Team have done to support her to understand her triggers and warning signs.

Mary enjoys daily contact with the Ella's staff and can often be found chatting away to us about her latest hairstyle and future endeavours. Mary disclosed to her caseworker that she used to be very frightened of the future, and while she sometimes still feels anxious about it, she now looks forward to the opportunities ahead of her.

Abi's story

Almost all women we help in the community face the challenges of emergency accommodation. Abi and her two-year-old received their refugee status in February 2019, meaning all their National Asylum Seeker Support (NASS) came to an end: including their Home Office accommodation.

Despite presenting at the housing office well in advance, Abi only found out where her emergency accommodation would be the day before she had to move. That morning, one of our caseworkers arranged transport and supported her to move into her emergency accommodation. Without this, she would have been left to her own devices to pack up and find the money to move all her lifelong belongings to an unknown place, unable to speak English and all alone. Thankfully, she and her two-year-old are now comfortable, safe and settled.

Li's story

In April 2019, Li, one of the women we support in the community, moved on from our help into independence. During the months of supporting her, the biggest challenge was her ability to manage money and break the poverty mentality. Ella's supported her to access a bank account, apply for all relevant benefits, and create a manageable budget and sustainable financial plan. Through doing this, Li has been empowered to take control of her life and make not only her own financial decisions but wise everyday choices too. This has, in turn, settled her mental health and stabilised her family.

Li is now financially and emotionally stable, integrated into her church community, has seen her children settled in school and is ready for and applying for employment with the support of the job centre.

Ella's also supported Li in completing a health and safety cooking course, got her DBS, and applied for a driving license. Her house is lovely and well-kept and her children are settled and thriving.

After exiting Ella's' service, she cried tears of joy when her support worker at the time congratulated her on how far she had come and how brave she had been for her children. Li said that she had never thought she would be independent ever again. She stated that we were the first service that encouraged her to stop dwelling on the past and think about the future.

Kiera's story

We opened a new safehouse in November 2019. Before Kiera moved into the new flat, she was sleeping in a hostel with strangers in the room every night. She could only stay until 7.00am but then had nowhere to keep warm during the day. As a result, she moved in unwell. Having not had anywhere to have a shower or any privacy, Kiera was so happy to move into the new home. She was most excited to have a new bathroom, and that no one was going to make her leave her room first thing in the morning.

Kiera is now enjoying life again, going to college and volunteering in a charity shop. With the help of her support worker, she has also been attending a weekly training and confidence-building workshop.

b. Exit Interviews

As part of the exit from services process, we invite our service users to complete an exit questionnaire to get a better understanding of how we can develop to meet the needs of survivors. The exit questionnaire invites service users to rate the below statements using: strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree.

- 1) I received the support I expected from Ella's.
- 2) Ella's ensured I understood each stage of the process of my support.
- 3) Ella's ensured I was in charge of making my own decisions in relation to the support I received.
- 4) I have felt completely supported by Ella's at all times.
- 5) I enjoyed receiving support from Ella's.
- 6) I enjoyed working with my support worker.
- 7) I feel that I am now independent upon leaving the support from Ella's.
- 8) I feel like I have a community upon leaving Ella's' support service.

All three service users who completed the exit questionnaire in 2019 answered

‘strongly agree’ to each of the eight statements.

The exit questionnaire also invites the women to expand on what it was like to receive support from Ella’s, their favourite/least favourite things and suggestions regarding what Ella’s could do differently. Below are a couple of their responses:

‘You have created in me the woman I am today. I am now independent and I have a mind of my own. If I see anyone in my situation I want to refer them to Ella’s.’

‘You have done something (for) me that no one else has done. You don’t look back on my past and keep me there, (and) you have encouraged me to think about my future which (has) made me independent. You gave me an independent mind.’

c. Other Service User Feedback

Below is other feedback gathered from our service users during 2019:

On accommodation services

One of the residents said that, after living at Ella’s for four months, she felt the happiest she has ever been.

Another resident described her sense of being free and relaxed in the home:

‘I’m home now’.

On community activities

One of our service users described the birthday party which Ella’s threw for her:

‘This is the best birthday ever’.

Another of our service users said this, talking about the boxing sessions offered through partnership with 12x3 gym:

‘I love it, it’s the only thing I look forward to each week. I get an hour off from thinking about other stuff and just get lost in that instead, which, for me, is brilliant’.

On the Ella’s Team

One service user describes the support she has received through the Ella’s Team:

‘(They) have helped give me confidence and boundaries that have changed my life. I am so grateful’.

Another service user says of the team:

'They're friendly, caring and inspiring'.

Another says:

'I am amazed there is still kindness like this in the world Thank you for the way you make us feel respected'.

On surviving

A service user describes her recovery while supported by Ella's:

'I didn't think my life could get back to normal again, but I'm so happy'.

One service user's words after she participated in her third organised run (supported by Ella's' staff):

'I do not know how to explain my emotion, and thank you for everything you have done for me ... it never matters that I was a victim, I will always fight against human trafficking ...'.

Another service user on gaining the confidence to start rebuilding and living her life independently upon accessing Ella's' service:

'I went to the cinema by myself and I am so proud of myself'.

Finally, a message from one of our service users to the Ella's Team:

'Thank you for opening your hearts to me and all that I am. I feel very blessed to have had this time with each of you. I will be forever grateful for the love, compassion, joy and excitement you have brought to my journey. I hope you continue to do wonderful things and bring hope and possibility to many more people'.



d. Wider Impact

Ella's has developed a partnership with Stop the Traffik. Their aims are: *'To build a global picture of human trafficking hotspots and trends; to empower individuals, organisations and agencies to make more informed and better choices; to signpost them to safe places to get help and support and to encourage appropriate response and reporting.'* (STOP THE TRAFFIK: About Us, n.d.). The data, captured through our Victim Case Management System (VCMS), will help with the research and prevention work of Stop the Traffik.

Over the year, we have raised awareness through our social media channels (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) by sharing case studies anonymously and as well as statistics about the issue.

We have shared our work with the press through a number of articles in magazines and were featured on BBC Woman's Hour in December 2019.

Ella's receives regular requests to give talks to share our knowledge on the issue of modern slavery and stories from survivors at events, churches, corporate meetings and so on. Our team also regularly attends and inputs at sector meetings to support the anti-trafficking movement in the UK and beyond.

IV. Conclusion

2019 has been by far the most transformational year for Ella's since its inception in 2016. We progressed from running one safe home and supporting a small caseload in the community by two part-time caseworkers, to having a fully staffed project with two homes and a growing outreach service. We also took our operations to a higher level in terms of data capturing, strategy development and using our frontline knowledge to grow influence.

Over the year, we have had the privilege of working with incredible women who inspire us every day with their strength and resilience. Some of the stories we hear are heart-breaking. For most of the women, the after-effects of past trauma are a daily reality. During this very vulnerable stage in their journey to freedom, basic support with housing and casework is vital.

As well as the heartbreak, we also witness a huge amount of joy, a privilege that comes with working directly with survivors of trafficking. This stimulates us to continue providing expert long-term aftercare. With the growing need for Ella's' service, and the countless referrals we must turn away due lack of capacity, our aim is to continue opening homes and growing our outreach service.

Your support has allowed us to invest in developing the project's foundation in order to grow in a sustainable way, and we would not have been where we are now without it. For that, we want to say a HUGE thank you from all of us at Ella's and on behalf of our service users.

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