

A close-up photograph of a person's back being massaged. The person is lying face down, covered with a light pink towel. Several hands are visible, some in dark blue sleeves, applying pressure to the back. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people in a similar setting.

# Impact Report

2022 - 2023

SEPTEMBER 2022 - AUGUST 2023

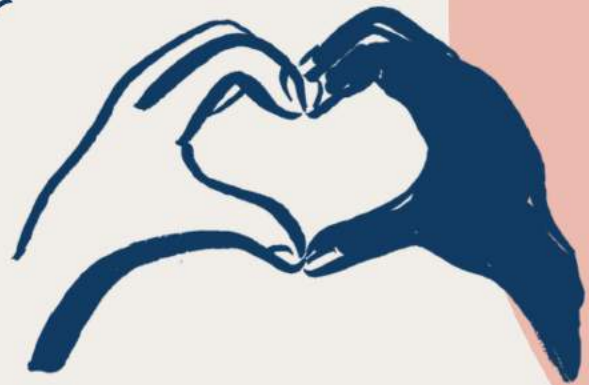
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# Opening words from Anna

*'Love is a story that continues to unfold, love teaches me that people should never be sold.'*



## WHAT IS LOVE?

Love will never take what doesn't belong.  
Love helps us find our inner song.  
Love will never leave when I retreat,  
Love gently helps me stand on my feet.

Love doesn't call me a burden to bear,  
Love says I'm a gift I can choose to share.  
Love enters the battle where shame  
tortured me.  
Love looks me in the eye and tells me  
I'm free.

Love touches the scars that I want to hide,  
Love reminds me they are the proof that I  
have survived.  
Love is a story that continues to unfold,  
Love teaches me that people should never  
be sold.

Love is a force that can change and heal,  
Love can be trusted, it will not steal.  
Love tells the truth with its warm embrace,  
Love calls my name when I try to hide  
my face.

Love are the hands of the people  
outstretched,  
Love are the voices who speak to protect.

Love says I am not the things that people  
have done.  
Love is a war that's already been won.  
Love is a life that is safe and free,  
Love is the person I am trying to be.

*Anna*

*Anna is a survivor of exploitation and trafficking who moved into our new safe house this summer. She wrote this poem to reflect on the journey of recovery that she's started.*

# A message from our directors



Photo of Minke (left) and Emily (right): Susannah Nicolaou/Ella's

**This last year saw us come to the end of our previous three-year strategy and set goals for the next five years. It was a time to take stock, celebrate and plan; and recommit to the core belief of Ella's as an organisation - that every individual matters and deserves to live a life that is safe and free.**

A massive highlight was the opening of our new safe house, providing six more bed spaces for survivors of trafficking and exploitation. We were grateful for the many groups of volunteers who helped us set up the house, from TRIBE, Peel Hunt, Lockton, Hyatt Hotels, Hewlett Packard Enterprise and more.

As well as our third safe house, we set up a new community building, a base for staff as well as survivor sessions run by Ella's and other women's organisations. This has already had a transformative impact on our team and wider community of survivors.

Another high was the recruitment and settling in of our trustee with lived experience, and our Survivor Advisory Board with funding from Rosa. These inspiring women are already adding invaluable insight and wisdom to our work. We are grateful and proud to have them with us, and committed to becoming more and more survivor-led.

As a team, it was great to come together to hold our first gala dinner. All the hard work paid off and a fabulous evening was had by all. It was incredible to have some of the survivors we work with speak on the night; everyone was blown away by their courage, tenacity and joy.

Along with the highs, the year presented its share of challenges. Recruitment was one of these, as for many charities right now. However, we managed to come out stronger in terms of both size and organisational excellence, against the odds.

This impact report serves as a testament to the dedication, collaboration and resilience of everyone involved in Ella's' work, as well as the generosity of our funders including TRIBE, Lloyds Bank Foundation, London Community Foundation and the National Lottery Community Fund, as well as our wonderful individual supporters. We are incredibly proud of what we have achieved together, and look forward to the continued growth and impact we will make in the years to come.

*Emily Chalke* 

**Emily Chalke and Minke van Til, Co-Directors**

# Introduction

**Our mission at Ella's is to do everything we can to ensure survivors of trafficking and exploitation have all they need to recover and build lives that are safe and free.**

To help us achieve our mission, we launched a three-year strategy in September 2020.

This strategy was focused on strengthening our organisation to provide a sustainable foundation for our work and to maximise the impact of our work among survivors.

Our strategic goals and plans fell into three pillars of work:

- 1. Provide expert care in London**
- 2. Grow influence**
- 3. Run an excellent organisation**

This Impact Report covers September 2022 to August 2023, and marks the end of this three-year strategy.

It contains stories, highlights and numbers from the year, and a summary of our direction for the next five years.

*'My dark past and my scars are shadows that will never be erased from my memory... But today I am a new person who has found the light and freedom of my dignity.'*

**ANA**

\*Where we use names, please assume these have been changed for the protection of the women we work with.



# Our year in numbers

SEPTEMBER 2022 – AUGUST 2023



56

women reached

41

women in education/  
training/work

23

women supported through court



46

children benefiting



357

individual givers



6

new bed spaces



1

new community building



100

% staff recommend working at Ella's

69

amazing volunteers

58

sessions including health, art and trips



246+

miles walked/  
run/cycled to raise funds

28k

£ worth of items/time donated



# Pillar 1: Provide expert care in London

## ABOUT THIS PILLAR

We are a proud and passionate frontline organisation, providing the high quality, tailored care that is crucial to the recovery and long-term safety of survivors of trafficking, exploitation and other forms of violence.

This pillar is focused on providing the best support for as many women as we can.

## THE HEADLINES

1. It was a joy to open our new, third safe house this year. This six-bed property in the Tower Hamlets borough of London increased our safe house capacity to 14 women at any one time.
2. A new outreach caseworker was recruited to support survivors affected by sexual violence and their children in neighbourhoods across London. This increased the capacity of our outreach team to 24 women at any one time.
3. Our new community space got up and running and has already been put to great use. We've been able to offer 58 sessions for survivors this year, run by Ella's as well as in collaboration with partners including Bettercups, The Beauty Crop and Talitha Arts. We also hosted specialist mental health workshops for survivors struggling to access adequate support elsewhere.
4. The number of people benefiting from our work rose again this year. Fifty-six women and 46 children benefited, a 34 per cent increase on last year.

## THE YEAR AHEAD

We were able to reach more people than ever last year, but the need for our work is growing and there is so much more we want and need to do. We will continue to develop our delivery model next year based on our learning as well as input from our Survivor Advisory Board. This will include further expansion of our safe house accommodation and outreach work, more emphasis and resources for survivor employability and resettlement, and a new children and families support worker to benefit the growing numbers of mums and children at Ella's.



# Nia's story

Nia, pictured below left, arrived at Ella's this summer. She'd been trafficked by her then partner and then kept as a slave, abused and exploited by his whole family.

## Welcomed with flowers

I will never forget the day I came to Ella's,' says Nia. 'I arrived at the bus station and Layla [Service Manager at Ella's] was waiting for me with flowers. I was so happy. I'd been living in danger, and now there was someone welcoming me with flowers!'

When she arrived at the Ella's house, Nia felt safe for the first time in a long time. 'In my room I had toiletries, towels... It's emotional when I remember that day, I couldn't believe I was in a safe place with people to help me. It's warm, I can take a shower when I want to.'

Sleep was a huge challenge for Nia when she arrived. Her trauma caused her to stop sleeping, she would go days with just a few hours sleep, and it was making her feel physically and mentally unwell.

This was the first challenge Nia's support worker at Ella's helped her with, supporting her to register with a new GP away from her old life, get the mental health care she needed, and settle into the safety of her new room. 'At last, I could sleep without thinking someone would kill me in the night,' says Nia.

*'At last, I could sleep without thinking someone would kill me in the night.'*





## New life foundations

We've also been helping Nia with accessing the benefits she's entitled to, immigration and employability skills. She's growing in confidence and hope all the time, and recently applied for and was offered a new job!

'It's because of Ella's I knew about that opportunity and have the confidence to do this,' says Nia. 'I have changed, I used to feel weak but now I feel more strong. I want to work, and I feel hopeful about the future. I am more independent, a different person to when I arrived.'

'Ella's is about my whole life. I even took part in a hill walk with TRIBE,' says Nia.

'I'm looking after my skin, my hair. I feel like a woman who deserves a good life. When you are at Ella's, you see life. What life is and can be. I love Ella's. I will always be thankful. I will tell the story of Ella's to my children... in 105 years, I will still be talking about Ella's.'

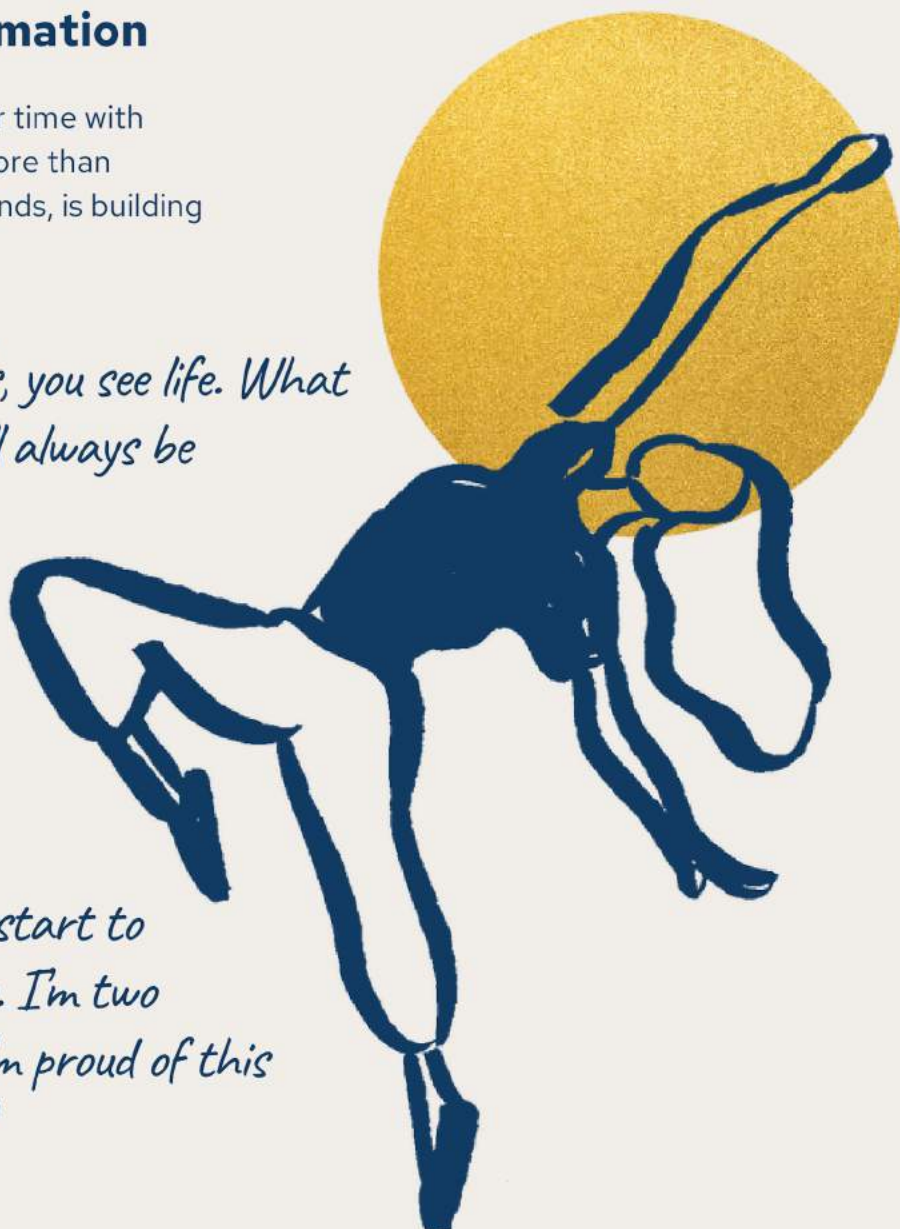
'I'm happy that I can start to look towards my future. I'm two different people, and I'm proud of this new person I am now!'

## Whole life transformation

Nia says that the impact of her time with Ella's so far has been about more than practical help. She's made friends, is building community, and exercising.

*'When you are at Ella's, you see life. What life is and can be. I will always be thankful. I will tell the story of Ella's to my children... in 105 years, I will still be talking about Ella's.'*

*'I'm happy that I can start to look towards my future. I'm two different people, and I'm proud of this new person I am now!'*



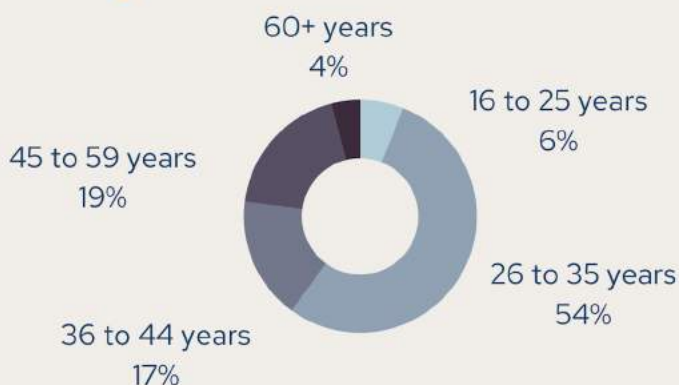
# Our community of survivors

## 2022/23

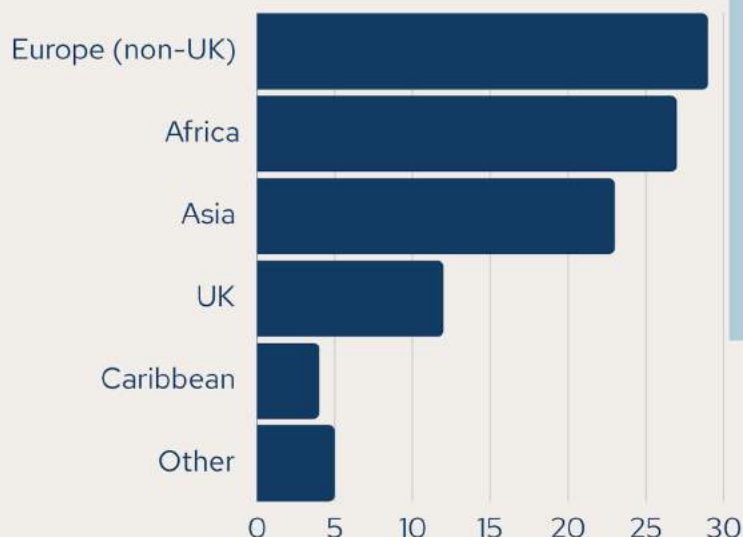
The women we work with are amazing. Here's some information on who they are and what they've been through.



### Age



### Place of birth (%)



### Trauma

Each of the women we work with have survived multiple kinds of trauma. Of the women at Ella's last year:

**73%**

have experienced sexual exploitation

**65%**

have experienced trafficking

**37%**

have experienced domestic servitude

**60%**

have experienced other forms of abuse including honour-based violence, FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) and domestic violence

In addition, 44 per cent were asylum seekers or had insecure immigration status and 77 per cent had a mental health condition. Six per cent were lesbian. Forty per cent were white, 31 per cent were of Black African and Caribbean descent, and 25 per cent were Asian or Asian British. Just over 44 per cent of women said they were Muslim, 36 per cent Christian and the rest were Buddhist, unknown or of no religion. One hundred per cent of the women at Ella's blew us away this year with their strength and determination to pursue freedom and joy, and we could not be more in awe of them.

# Pillar 2: Influencing Change

## ABOUT THIS PILLAR

This pillar is about raising awareness and making connections to influence change. Not only does this further and enhance our work with survivors, it helps stop trafficking and raise awareness of the issues facing the women we work with.

## THE HEADLINES

1. We continued to work with Stop the Traffik, the Free for Good and ERAW coalitions, and the Coalition to Stop Slavery to promote survivor needs, raise awareness of issues affecting them and work towards a fairer world.
2. Together with our partners and allies across the sector including ATLEU, Hope for Justice and WRC, we have supported campaigning and policy work on a number of issues including the Illegal Migration Act.
3. It's been a joy to continue to share about the amazing women we work with across our growing digital channels. To mark International Women's Day, we worked with poet Shaniqua Benjamin to create and film a spoken word poem written by the women at Ella's, called The World is a Woman.

*'Thank you for being there for my Mum when she was feeling sad, and turning her sadness into happiness.'*

## CHILD OF SURVIVOR

Photo: Tom Price/Ella's

## THE YEAR AHEAD

We will continue to build public awareness and engagement and will pursue new partnerships with ambassadors and corporate partners.

We will also continue to increase our engagement with campaigning and policy change, amplifying the views and experiences of survivors wherever and whenever we can. And we will invest more resource into the staff capacity needed to do more in these areas.



# Pillar 3: Running an excellent organisation

## ABOUT THIS PILLAR

A well run and resourced organisation, and a staff team that is supported and fulfilled, are crucial to our frontline work. Furthermore, we are person-centred and passionate about excellence, and so these things are important to us in their own right.

## THE HEADLINES

1. We held our first ever gala dinner (pictured) to raise funds and awareness, and expand our network of support. One hundred guests attended, nearly £18,000 was raised, existing connections were strengthened and new ones were built. Huge thanks to the Fir Tree Trust for their support with the event.
2. With funding from Rosa, we on-boarded a new trustee with lived experience of trafficking and exploitation. We also established a new Survivor Advisory Board to guide our decision making and strategic development.
3. Thanks to support from TRIBE, Quaker Housing Trust and Impact Alchemy we progressed plans to purchase our first Ella's-owned property to strengthen our asset base and provide more safe house accommodation, and expect this to complete early next year.



## THE YEAR AHEAD

We will finalise and act on an external review of our governance that we commissioned this year, which will include adding to our board. We will also continue to strengthen our Survivor Advisory Board and put them at the forefront of our development. We will complete the purchase of our first Ella's-owned property, and work towards building a portfolio. Our fundraising strategy will be refreshed to support our new Five-Year Strategy, with an emphasis on taking better care of our existing donors while increasing our supporter base.



## SOCIAL ENTERPRISE PILOT UPDATE

We were grateful for funding from Homeless Link, the National Lottery Awards for All and the Hiscox Foundation which enabled us to complete our social enterprise pilot last year. This was to test out ways to increase our financial sustainability while directly providing training and work opportunities for the survivors we work with.

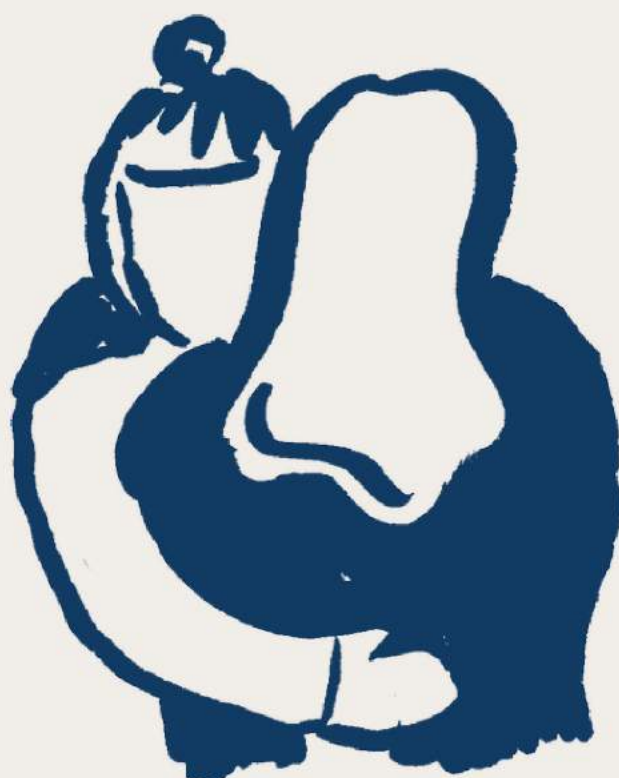
We scoped a number of ideas with staff and survivors, and settled on a women-led cleaning and maintenance company. Clean4Good came alongside us to support with industry expertise, and Lloyds Bank Foundation with business planning.

At the end of the pilot, we evaluated the challenges and successes and decided not to progress the social enterprise at this stage. Our learning showed that it would be more effective for us to develop our support model to ensure greater readiness for employment among the women we work with, as well as access to more specific programmes and opportunities. We've already started work to turn this learning into action, and are hugely grateful to all those who supported us with the pilot.

*'I would describe Ella's as a second heaven! The majority of us at Ella's have come from different countries and have been victims of some terrible things. Our worlds are different to that of other people who have not experienced these things...*

*But we know that, with Ella's, there are people who care about us.'*

**HAPPY**



# Ayesha's story

Ayesha (pictured) is a survivor of trafficking, violence and modern slavery. When she arrived at Ella's, she'd been living in another refuge, where she had suffered yet more violence.

'I was so scared when I came to Ella's, I didn't know what the people would be like or where I would be living next,' says Ayesha. 'But now, I feel like I don't ever want to leave, it is so good!'

## Rebuilding

Ayesha's biggest challenge is her mental health, which was left in pieces by what she has been through in the past. But she's been working through this, rebuilding her confidence and belief in life, and says she now feels stronger than ever.

'The support at Ella's has changed me,' says Ayesha. 'Help accessing mental health support was the most important thing for me, as well as emotional support and help at appointments. They've offered training opportunities too.'

'I had so many problems before, I can't imagine what my life would be like if this place at Ella's hadn't been available.'

'If I wasn't here I'd have been on the street, and I know it's the same for other women too. We really appreciate this place.'

*'I can't imagine what my life would have been like...'*



## Self-belief

When you have come new to the UK and have suffered violence and these other things, you need space to live safely, share problems and work through things with people. Without this, I have no idea how we'd survive.'

'Everything about the way they look after us here and care about us, it makes us feel safe. I say to Ella's, 'Don't change, be as you are, you are perfect!' They are like angels. They manage the houses so well and treat everyone as individuals, with a kind heart.'

'Today, I describe myself as a strong woman. Since I came to Ella's, I've become very strong. Before, I could not do anything, now I can do things on my own, I'm more independent. It feels very good. I'm hoping to get a good job and my own place, I would love to work with children.'

'A few years ago, I had no hope. Now, I think I can do anything! To any woman who is still without hope, I would say 'wait, and everything will be ok with time. Don't give up, just keep trying'.'



## Our support

Our support for survivors is tailored to every individual, including help with:

- Medical care/therapies
- Emotional support
- Education/skills training
- Employment opportunities
- Reuniting with family
- Finding and moving into new homes
- Immigration and legal support
- Bringing abusers to justice
- Emergency money and essentials
- Budgeting/managing money
- Confidence/life skills
- Community integration
- Attending appointments
- Moving countries if wanted

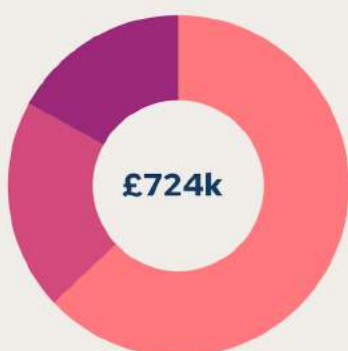
*'A few years ago, I had no hope. Now, I think I can do anything! To any woman who is still without hope, I would say 'wait, and everything will be ok with time. Don't give up, just keep trying.''*

# Financial summary:

SEPTEMBER 2022 – AUGUST 2023

We are so grateful to every individual, trust, foundation, network, school, faith group and many others who donated to make our work possible last year. Your generosity is helping to unlock freedom among some of the UK's most vulnerable women.

## WHAT WE RAISED

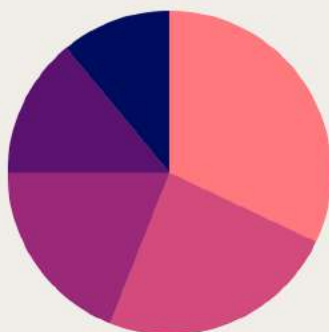


63% trusts and foundations

17% housing benefit

20% individual donations

## WHAT WE SPENT



32% safe house provision (frontline)

24% outreach (frontline)

19% fundraising and growth

14% governance

11% campaigning

## WHAT WE DO

For anyone new to Ella's, we are an organisation providing urgent and long-term support for women who have survived trafficking and exploitation.

Our mission is to ensure survivors of trafficking and exploitation have all they need to recover and build lives that are safe and free.

To achieve this, we offer safe house accommodation for women when they are most vulnerable, care to help them recover and move forward, and long-term community-based support to help survivors build safe, independent lives.

For more, visit [www.ellas.org.uk](http://www.ellas.org.uk)

## WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO



The London Community Foundation



MOPAC | PARTNER OF LONDON



CHARLES HAYWARD FOUNDATION





## THE WORLD IS A WOMAN

By the women at Ella's together with poet Shaniqua Benjamin

If we are all, I am  
No limits  
I am who I am  
Hear my voice and be silent

I am a blank canvas with no edges  
No paint by numbers here  
Set free because of what I was given  
To choose, to keep  
Like the first cup of coffee  
Are you ready for freedom?

I am the brightness of tomorrow's most poor  
Light for the next generation  
I know the need for singing, for love, for safety  
To bridge the gap from speaking  
I cook for my son, without me there is no home  
Are you ready for my joy?

I am the whole meal like the peace in my soul  
Without me there are no lavender smells  
Or patience to handle sadness  
Without me the world is not how it should be  
Get together with meeting of fingertips  
Are you ready to embrace peace?

I am resilience like a palm tree that withstands the storm  
Struggling but will strive until I reach my goal  
I will scream until I'm heard  
I will laugh until they listen  
I say no and you respect it  
Are you ready for our strength?

I am popping candy in honeycomb shards,  
Unshattered  
My power from my mothers  
She smiled politely so I can grin  
My power is mine  
My choice to take it

Power is me  
Power is you  
Power is us  
Are you ready for us?



# Our year in pictures

SEPTEMBER 2022 – AUGUST 2023

We do everything we can to ensure survivors of trafficking and exploitation have all they need to recover and build lives that are safe and free. And we are a community. Thank you for being part of it.



Left to right from top:

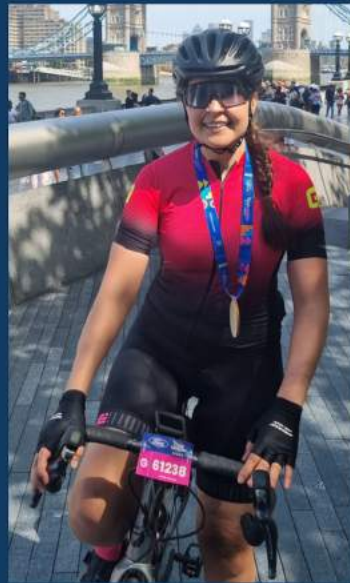
1. One of our 58 community sessions last year. This one was on menstrual health, led by Bettercups.
2. Legend James Billington ran the London Marathon for Ella's, raising more than £2k.
3. Volunteers from TRIBE, four of last year's 69 amazing volunteers.
4. Frontline partnerships like this one with Strength & Stem are crucial to our work.
5. Grateful to Derek Wax and John Strickland for donating a behind-the-scenes visit to The Rig set, for our gala auction.
6. Our staff were over the moon to be gifted tickets to Beyonce's tour, by the Beygood Foundation.
7. Survivors trekking the Brecon Beacons with TRIBE.





ILLEGAL MIGRATION BILL

# ENDS ~~SUPPORT~~ TO VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING AND MODERN SLAVERY



Left to right from top:

1. Christmas at Ella's is always a blast, with gift boxes donated by Balham Baptist Church.
2. Simba, Ellie and Minke, three more incredible Ella's runners.
3. We are passionate about joining forces with others, such as the Coalition to Stop Slavery, to make change.
4. Eid at Ella's!
5. Sara, one of the women we work with, reunited with her family after four years apart.
6. Marilyn took on RIDE-London for Ella's and raised nearly £600.
7. An amazing family fun day...
8. ...and special pamper session put on by The Beauty Crop as part of their support for Ella's.



# A summary of our new five-year strategy



Our strategy for September 2023 to 2028 is focused on enabling us to: a) provide even more comprehensive support, and for more women; and b) step up to fill more of the gaps in existing services for survivors.

Based on our research and experience within the sector, and our direct work and consultation with survivors, we have identified the following needs and gaps on which to focus our development:

- Lack of support for survivors who are mums, and their children.
- Insufficient support to help survivors find safe and sustainable employment, including building the skills and coping mechanisms needed for the workplace as well as finding appropriate job opportunities.
- Shortage of accommodation for those with no recourse to public funds, as well as women with children.
- Lack of appropriate 'move-on' accommodation for women exiting safe houses.
- Lack of awareness among survivors, from the UK as well as other countries, of the support available to them.

## **Developing our frontline**

Over the next five years, we intend to address these gaps by developing our frontline service. This will be informed by survivor input as well as ongoing monitoring and evaluation of our work, to maximise our impact. We will also promote our safe house and outreach provision more extensively among survivors, especially British survivors and others who are at risk of slipping through the net.

We will expand our safe house provision gradually over the next five years to include accommodation for families, women with no recourse to public funds, British survivors, and those for whom shared housing is not suitable.

In addition, we will continue to grow our frontline team to facilitate improved access to trauma-informed skills training and employment opportunities for survivors.

## **Strengthening our organisation**

To support the growth of our frontline work, we will also continue to strengthen Ella's as an organisation. This will include: becoming more survivor-led; increasing support and growing our influence; investing in staff; strengthen our diversity, equity and inclusion, and developing our processes and systems.

# Thank you

We are a growing organisation, but we'll never become too big to celebrate and truly appreciate every act of support and encouragement that powers our work.

Your generosity changes lives. In the words of Nia, 'I want to thank those who help Ella's and are behind the work of Ella's. They don't know how much they help us.'

We are committed to doing more and better. If you would like to support or partner with Ella's in any way, we would love to hear from you. Together, we can help unlock freedom among women who have survived trafficking and exploitation.

*'I love my room. I just love my room! The younger women are like children to me. One of them calls me Mummy! When it was my birthday, they surprised me with breakfast in bed and a gift. It was one of the best birthdays I've ever had. I am so blessed to be at Ella's. Thank God, things are so different now to before. Without this kind of support, I don't think women could survive after going through such difficult times. This organisation is good, I would recommend anyone to it. It couldn't be better unless it's in heaven.'*

**ANNETTE**





**ELLA'S**

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Ella's is a company limited charity (company number 12178531) with a registered office address (England and Wales). We are also a charity registered in England and Wales, charity registration number 1187529.

Photo: Tom Price/Ella's

