

# Shakti Women's Aid - Housing Support Service

## Housing Support Service

Edinburgh

**Type of inspection:**

Unannounced

**Completed on:**

26 November 2018

**Service provided by:**

Shakti Women's Aid

**Service provider number:**

SP2004006510

**Service no:**

CS2004068972

## About the service

Shakti Women's Aid Service has been registered since 9.8.2004 and provides a housing support service. There is a Shakti Children's support service which is registered separately. Shakti is a registered charity, managed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Shakti was established in 1986 to provide a service to black minority ethnic (BME) women and their children, who are fleeing or experiencing domestic abuse. The service is provided to women and children living in either the wider community or in refuges. Refuge accommodation is made up of 4 separate flats including a flat which is fully accessible. Shakti works towards empowering BME women to make informed choices about their lives and to move from dependence to independence. Shakti's aims include: '... a philosophy of empowerment as we recognise that a major aspect of abuse results from loss of control. That is why we will give you support for what your wishes are to allow you to regain autonomy of your life.'

The objectives of Shakti are:

To provide support to black minority ethnic women, their children and young people to access temporary accommodation

To support BME women, their children (if any) and young people in determining their own futures.

To provide support to women, their children and young people to resettle into permanent accommodation.

To organise, help and support the learning and emotional needs of women and their children.

To promote the interests of BME women and their children accessing services in other voluntary and statutory organisations.

To develop information/education programmes around the issues of domestic abuse, forced marriages and other honour based violence.

## What people told us

We visited the service on 30.10.2018 when we spoke 1:1 with a woman being supported by the service. We then visited the service on 7.11.2018 when we met with a group of eight women being supported by the service. We sent thirty Care Standards Questionnaires (CSQs) to women being supported by the service. Seven of these CSQs were completed and returned to us.

Women we met with spoke highly of the quality of support received and of the staff working within the service. Women living in refuge accommodation told us that they felt safe and secure in the refuge accommodation and that the accommodation was well maintained and comfortable. Women also liked the location of the refuge accommodation.

A number of women commented however, that the staff were very busy and that this limited the amount of time they had available to spend with them. Most of the women we spoke with told us that they were often socially isolated and were highly reliant on their contact with staff at Shakti Women's Aid. We discussed this feedback with the manager who was aware of this situation and told us the service was striving to meet the level of demand for support. One woman commented that given the sensitive nature of her discussions with her support worker she would feel more reassured if there was better soundproofing within the office premises. The manager advised that the service is currently considering changes to their premises which would address this

concern. Women we spoke with told us they would like to have a wi-fi connection at the refuge. This was discussed with the service manager who was aware of this request and was exploring the possibility of installing wi-fi within the refuge accommodation.

Women also spoke with made the following comments:

'The support has been helpful. Shakti referred me to the police and to social work and helped me to go to the council. Now I have got a council house. My support worker speaks the same language as me. Whenever I need help I can speak with the staff. They give me advice and help me not to go back to my abuser. My support worker is a very good listener. I always find it helpful, she shares my cultural background so she understands me. I have no social circle, I was ostracised by my culture. I manage on my own with the right support ... I am in turmoil, I have no support from anywhere else. I need their support ... I find Shakti very helpful ... They are a pleasant distraction from my worries.'

'It is difficult that you can't invite people to the refuge although we understand why.'

'Staff are really good, they help us a lot.'

'The manager is very wise, she keeps me engaged.'

'The staff gave me practical assistance as I had no money. The trips are very good and I got lovely Christmas presents.'

'Sometimes I give up and get depressed. Then I would like the service to be more proactive when I disengage.'

'Shakti responded quickly to my need for help.'

'When Shakti staff contact the police or other professionals on our behalf they respond quickly and well compared to when we make contact without their support.'

'The support from Shakti has made a positive difference to my life.'

'I feel Shakti are protective and help to take care of problems. They listen to problems and make suggestions.'

'They help as far as they can, within legal constraints.'

'Sometimes I feel isolated, with Shakti support I feel I have someone behind me.'

'Shakti have knowledge about other services that can help, they can refer us on.'

'Shakti are a very positive thing. There should be more outreach.'

'Shakti are very good but I went to a lot of different places before I found out about them.'

'When women are coming into this country should be given information, to let them know that services like this exist.'

In relation to the group sessions specifically woman commented:

'We love this group - the comfort and the company, its part of the healing process.'

'I made a friend through this group - they have helped to improve my quality of life.'

## Self assessment

A self assessment was not requested prior to this inspection.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	5 - Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	not assessed

## What the service does well

Shakti Women's Aid provided a very good quality of flexible care and support, and where required, refuge accommodation, to both BME (black minority ethnic) women and their children who had experienced domestic abuse. The service also provided support to women who were still living with their abuser. The staff group spoke a variety of languages which allowed women the opportunity to speak with a support worker who spoke the same language and shared the same cultural background.

Support was provided both 1:1 and in groups. The service supported women and children to identify and work towards their personal goals. Women were supported by the service on both a practical and an emotional level. People being supported by the service were able to access the services of a counsellor.

We found that there were detailed support planning records held for individuals using the service. The service recorded individual needs and areas of risk in relation to the women being supported. Action/management plans were recorded which detailed how needs and risks would be addressed. These detailed records ensured that if an individual support worker was absent or unavailable another worker was able to access up to date information to inform the support provided. We looked at child/adult protection procedures and practices and were satisfied that these procedures and practices contributed to the protection of individuals.

Women, who were often very isolated due to their circumstances, were given opportunities to overcome their social isolation. This included the opportunity to participate in the service's group programme and to attend events organised by the service. There was a drama group ongoing at the time we visited the service.

The service co-ordinated outreach service in different rural areas in Scotland to allow women in need of the service's support, to access the service they require without having to travel to meet with a support worker.

Staff told us they had good access to training and to professional development opportunities. Staff training opportunities were displayed on the service's calendar and staff received training information individually, via email. We found that staff were very knowledgeable about the specific support needs of the women and children they supported.

We found the staff worked hard and were in demand from the people being supported by the service. The staff told us that they felt supported by the organisation and by their team. We found there was a system of regular formal supervision in place for staff. Staff told us that they enjoyed their work and gained satisfaction from observing women regain control of their lives and make progress towards their goals. If necessary, staff were able to access counselling through a confidential counselling service.

Since the last inspection the service had undergone a review. This review had created more supervisory roles which increased the support available to staff which in turn assisted staff to sustain the delivery of quality care and support.

Shakti's drama group had given performances to different audiences. Women had also contributed pieces of writing to a book which had recently been published to raise awareness of the issues experienced by the women being supported by Shakti Women's Aid. The service had worked in partnership with Violence against Women and the Racial Equality Council as well as with another Women's Aid service to raise awareness of risks associated with use of electronic communication and relationships.

The staff team worked hard with other organisations and professionals (including the Social Work Department, Police Scotland, the Domestic Abuse Unit, the Department of Work and Pensions and the Housing Department) to raise awareness and understanding of the specific needs of BME women who have experienced domestic abuse. This helped to ensure that supports delivered to women and their children are tailored in response to their specific needs.

## What the service could do better

The service should create a system to formally oversee and monitor the staff training schedule.

The service should ensure that all staff are familiar with the Care Inspectorate's notification guidance to ensure that we receive notifications timeously.

Progress with these identified areas for development will be followed up at the next inspection. Otherwise the service should continue to maintain their very good standard of service provision.

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
18 Jul 2016	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership Not assessed
27 May 2014	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment Not assessed Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 5 - Very good
20 Sep 2013	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 5 - Very good
1 Nov 2011	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership 5 - Very good
19 Mar 2009	Announced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 4 - Good

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