

Name of Project: Ascent Advice and Counselling

Lead partner: Solace

Borough: Southwark

I called Solace after my cousin gave me their number. My partner had just threatened to cut my belly open with a knife and had thrown me out on the street. I was 7 months pregnant.

We had been living together for about a year. He had dragged me out of the house once before. I had no clothes on that time. He also broke my finger and phone before locking me outside in the cold for 6 hours. I was terrified of him but couldn't leave as I had nowhere to go. I thought about calling the police many times, but he would tell me they would deport me.

When I called Solace I was desperate, I was out on the street, everything was closed because of COVID-19 and it was very cold. I had no money and nowhere to go. I wasn't sure I could get help because of my immigration status.

The lady I spoke to told me to call the NRPF Team in Southwark, and that they had a duty to help me and my baby. I tried calling them but was on hold for a long time, so I started panicking. I called back and Solace told me they were going to book me a hotel and a taxi so that I had somewhere safe to stay. I told Solace I had not eaten anything all day and was hungry. They sent me a Tesco voucher so that I could buy some food. I told them I was worried about my baby as she was not moving - they told me to go to the hospital to get checked and gave me the directions to get there.

The following morning Solace called me again. They had booked me an appointment with the No Recourse Team for that day and a taxi so that I wouldn't have to walk as my belly was quite big. When I got there they gave me the keys for my emergency accommodation.

My Solace worker also referred me to Social Services so that my baby and I could have some support. She also referred me to the advocacy team in my borough so that someone could continue supporting me with my safety.

I am so grateful for all the support we received – I felt listened to, supported and believed in. I am finally safe and can start over.