

Name of Project: SignHealth Domestic Abuse Project

Lead Partner: Signhealth

Borough: Tower Hamlets

“I lived with my family in Tower Hamlets. My family is strictly religious. I got pregnant and tried to keep it a secret from my family. Two months before giving birth in May 2020, I started to get abuse from my family. They stopped me from leaving the house, because I’m not married. My family were worried about the shame it would bring on the family and rumours that would spread among the extended family. I wasn’t allowed to buy things, like a pram or baby clothes and my brother was sent to the shop to buy baby things to prevent the public from seeing me buying them.

I was still living in the family home. My family were still controlling my movements, when my baby was 10 months old. I was not allowed outdoors with my baby. They were trying to encourage me to get married. I felt I was at risk of being forced to marry. None of my extended family were allowed to visit the house in case they heard my baby crying. If I wanted to see any family or friends I’d have to leave my baby at home.

I was referred to Signhealth by DeafPlus, who were trying to help me with my housing. Signhealth managed to find me emergency accommodation. Me and my baby were moved into a bed and breakfast, where I’m still staying. I feel safe in the B&B with my baby. I have the freedom to walk around outside with my baby, for the first time since giving birth. I’m very pleased and impressed by the support that I’ve received.”