

Specialist Support Provider for BME people affected by Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women.

Background

Established in 1995, Bawso is an all-Wales specialist support provider for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) people affected by domestic abuse (DA) and violence against women (VAW). Bawso provides culturally sensitive support and advocacy to vulnerable people experiencing domestic abuse, forced marriage (FM), honor based violence (HBV), or who are victims of trafficking and female genital mutilation (FGM). The advocacy and support enables service users to transcend the barriers they face and gain access to the services, entitlements and information they need and to which they have a right.

Support is provided to more than 6,000 service users annually through 12 projects including: - purpose built refuges which are specially adapted to meet the cultural and religious needs of service users; outreach; information and advice; floating support and FGM health and safeguarding community based project. Bawso has 'Investors in People' award and the Quality Mark at General Advice Level by the Legal Services Commission. Both sustain and maintain the quality of services.

Bawso is committed to challenging all forms of violence against women, and works in partnership with national, regional and local governments, statutory bodies and voluntary organisations to devise and deliver appropriate strategies and support services. All services are planned, developed and delivered in partnership with beneficiaries and partner organisations.

Bawso is the only all-Wales BME VAW specialist support provider. Our expertise spans over 20 years and is developed through the cultural competence of a highly diverse and committed workforce, which responds flexibly to the needs of the service users. We have built strong links with multiple BME communities which enable us to access the so called 'hard to reach' that are largely affected by FGM and FM. We are entirely focused on addressing violence against women and our workers are trained in supporting women with multiple complex needs.

Training

Bawso has developed accredited training packages on Domestic Abuse from a BME perspective, Human Trafficking, Forced Marriage/Honour Based Violence and Female Genital Mutilation. Other training packages include No Recourse to public funds, Toxic Trio, Equality and Diversity and Working with Interpreters. Bawso training courses are always current with real case studies, testimonials and co delivered with survivors of VAWDASV. Survivors are involved in the planning, development and implementation of the training.

Bawso trainers are qualified in train the trainer's course. They have years of experience of working in the VAWDASV field. Many are from affected communities and have personal experience of abuse.

Key Achievements

- Maintained delivery of high quality specialist support to BME people across Wales in spite of diminishing funding resources and mainstreaming of most support provision.
- In 2015 we received the Reducing Harm Award from North Wales PCC as part of the annual Community Awards.

- Chairing the Wales Violence Against Women Action Group (VAWAG) which has successfully campaigned for policy and legislative change across all levels of government, public bodies, the private sector and the public sphere.
- Lead partner in the Welsh Government FGM and FM/HBV Strategic Leadership Group.
- Co-chair human trafficking forums across Wales (Gwent, Dyfed Powys and North Wales)
- Representation on the Welsh Government Content Development Group set up to consider the proposed National Training Framework on VAW, DA and Sexual Violence and make recommendations on the required content of the framework.
- Delivery of two conferences on FGM (2014 and 2015) in partnership with the Welsh Government, focused on the *training needs of practitioners* and *Working with the community*.
- Development of an FGM Educational Booklet for practitioners and families which has been distributed to more than 5000 people in England and Wales.
- Lead organiser of the annual Light a Candle Ecumenical service to commemorate the International White Ribbon Day in Cardiff which is attended by more than 250 people.
- Convening the only FGM forum in Wales bringing together 7 stakeholder organisation and representatives from the community.

Resources

- Bawso has faced serious difficulties in recent years with reductions in funding and increased costs. Since the Supporting People Programme Grant has been moved from Welsh Government to the Local Authorities, the funding has been reducing. Support for BME victims of abuse does not seem to be all authority's priority.
- Funding for Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation and Human Trafficking are not devolved. So there is no funding from Wales. The Ministry of Justice has funded the Human Trafficking Project. There is no funding for Forced Marriage or FGM. We rely on short term funding from grant makers
- There is lack of funding for counselling service. The victims of abuse are traumatized and yet counselling is not funding by anyone
- Lack of child care provision is the largest barrier to women accessing learning and education. This in turn contributes to inequality of women and leaves them vulnerable.
- Support for female offenders to rehabilitate without going through the criminal justice route
- Provision for specialist services for BME victims is getting diluted. National providers are coming in demonstrating value for money yet there is lack of quality and specialism in the support itself. We have already lost some contracts as a result of this.