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Independent Review of Caritas Bakhita House

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1.0 Introduction

This report presents the findings of an independent review of Caritas Bakhita House conducted by researchers from the Centre for the Study of Modern Slavery, St Mary's University in London. Caritas Bakhita House (CBH or the House) is a safe house that provides emergency and longer-term support and accommodation for women who have been victims of human trafficking, slavery and exploitation. CBH is owned by the Diocese of Westminster and managed by Caritas Westminster. It exists as part of a working relationship between the Catholic Church, the Metropolitan Police, the Santa Marta Group and law enforcement agencies across the UK.

The review was conducted between March and June 2018 and drew on a range of existing data and new perspectives to assess the extent to which CBH was meeting the outcomes it set itself in its development and inception phase, which were to:

- Provide immediate pastoral care and support to women who have been trafficked to cope with the impact of their victimisation and the effects of trauma.
- Provide long-term pastoral care and support to women who have been trafficked to assist them to develop the practical and emotional skills necessary for recovery and to rebuild their lives.
- Aid the criminal investigation(s) of those suspected of human trafficking offences by supporting women who have been trafficked to report and disclose information and intelligence to the Metropolitan Police Service that might prevent further crimes and uncover other victims.
- Support the Metropolitan Police Service and other partners in the development of information and intelligence on human trafficking to prevent crime and criminal victimisation.

1.1 Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery: Context

It is estimated that in 2016, 24.9 million people around the world were victims of modern slavery for forced labour, either within the sex industry or sectors such as agriculture, domestic work, construction and fishing (ILO and Walk Free Foundation 2017). Women and girls make up a disproportionate number of those affected by modern slavery (ILO and Walk Free Foundation 2017).

Since the UN General Assembly's adoption of the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, countries worldwide have increased their focus and resources on the disruption and prevention of modern slavery and human trafficking, and on the protection and rehabilitation of victims.

The UK, in the most part, has historically been a destination country for victims of trafficking, although this has changed over the last two years with the highest number of referrals to the NRM recorded as UK country of origin, followed by Albania and Vietnam (NCA, 2017; 2018). The most recent statistics show 42% of victims of trafficking were female and 58% male. Of these, females, both adult and minors, were more likely to be subjected to sexual exploitation, and males both adult and minor, were exploited for labour.

The UK Modern Slavery Act, which became law in 2015, defines Modern Slavery as “slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking”, where victims are deceived, coerced and forced into a life where they may be physically abused, sexually exploited, work for no pay or compelled to commit criminal acts (Home Office, 2014, p.15). Key provisions introduced in this act included the creation the role of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner and the strengthening of protections for victims of modern slavery (Modern Slavery Act 2015 (c.30)).

When looking at reported figures of modern slavery victims by country of origin, there are links with poverty in which individuals seeking a better life are at increased vulnerability to exploitation (Lehti and Aromaa, 2006). Victims report responding to false promises of work in more affluent countries, only to discover subsequently that they have been trapped into prostitution and other forms of exploitation and control, including confiscated documents, debt bondage, or threats of violence against family members (Lehti and Aromaa, 2006; Hales and Gelsthorpe, 2012; Lee, 2011).

The support needs of women who have been trafficked for purposes of sexual exploitation are complex and varied. Alongside the significant mental health problems that are present amongst victims, including high rates of depression, post-traumatic stress, suicidal ideation and somatic symptoms (Gajic-Veljanoski and Stewart, 2007; Ashwroth and Franklin, 2014), all trafficked victims were reported to meet the USA medical diagnostic criteria for some form of mental health problem, and it is also evident that there is significant drug and alcohol use amongst women trafficked for purposes of sexual exploitation (Farley and Barkan, 1998; Farley, Franzblau and Kennedy, 2013). Women experience many physical health problems, including injuries resulting from their experiences of physical assault and rape at the hands of traffickers and buyers, sexually transmitted diseases and infections, gynaecological problems, unwanted pregnancies and forced abortions (Farley and Barkan, 1998; Farley, Franzblau and Kennedy, 2013). The impact of significant coercion, the threat and enactment of physical and sexual violence is extensive on an individual’s long-term mental health and overall wellbeing.

The experiences women have of the systems of support in their country of origin may not align with those expected in the UK. Women who are trafficked into the UK are often foreign nationals, frequently without appropriate documentation as traffickers may take this from them in a bid to maintain control (Home Office, 2016). As policy changes have responded to public

opinion around issues relating to migration, the impact of these concerns has had a significant bearing on the increased vulnerability of those women who have already been trafficked. A complicated immigration status, fear of law enforcement and a lack of understanding of the complexity of needs on the part of the authorities, can lead victims of trafficking to experience further challenges when trying to exit prostitution, or escape an exploitative situation. For example, Hales and Gelsthorpe report on the criminalisation of migrant women, and in particular the complexities women experienced in accessing good quality and reliable translation. During their research they found that women in a detention centre that had been trafficked had not yet been asked questions that would help them understand that what they had experienced is in legal terms called 'trafficking' (Hales and Gelsthorpe, 2012). A lack of awareness by statutory and voluntary sector providers on what constitutes trafficking was also reported by Bindel et al (2012, p.50), where respondents failed to understand "the very subtle forms of deception, coercion or the abuse of a person's vulnerability". Figures from a report for the Association of Chief Police Officers in 2010 provided similar evidence (Jackson, Jeffery and Adamson, 2010). This failure to enable women to understand how their experience may be defined in law has had significant consequences, preventing women from accessing the safety and support they require and exposing them to potential re-trafficking if and when they are deported back to their countries of origin.

In England and Wales, the National Referral Mechanism facilitates assistance to victims of modern slavery and human trafficking. However, to be identified as a victim, individuals must give their consent to be involved in the process (House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee, 2017). Issues of access to support already therefore begin at this stage, where a fear of authorities may prevent someone entering into the system.

2.0 About Caritas Bakhita House

CBH opened its doors on the 30th of June 2015 and has been in operation for three years. The House provides support for victims of trafficking and modern slavery and accepts emergency referrals from the police twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. At the time of the review, the House has eight full-time and six part-time members of staff and fifty-eight volunteers, of which thirty-one are active.

CBH operates primarily out of a large and very comfortable house in a quiet neighbourhood. It is decorated and maintained to the highest standard and has a welcoming and calm atmosphere. Each guest has their own room (there is one room that can accommodate two guests) and access to shared bathrooms,

a laundry room, a fully equipped guest kitchen and living room where guests can watch television or films together. In addition, the House has:

- A large bright reception room with sofas and a dining table where art therapy, one-to-one English lessons and other activities take place.
- A large and fully-equipped kitchen that is used by guests to cook the communal evening meal.
- A separate dining room large enough to seat all guests and staff where breakfast and the communal evening meal is shared.
- A room used for yoga, prayer and other holistic therapies that volunteers offer to guests.
- A large landscaped garden used by guests and staff.
- An office for the staff team.
- A police interview room used by detectives from the Metropolitan Police Service and others to interview guests for police investigations. There is also another interview suite in a nearby, off-site location.
- A self-contained flat on the top floor where the House Manager lives full-time. This floor also has a small room with a balcony that looks over the garden, which is where most of the interviews for this review were conducted. Staff also use the top floor for the weekly staff meeting.

In addition to the main house the project operates a 'move-on flat' in another part of the city used by guests who need a supported transition back into the community.

Despite its size the house operates like a family home, with guests, staff and volunteers using the space freely and confidently.

2.1 Referral process

To access the support of CBH individuals must be:

- Female and over 18 years old
- A victim (or suspected victim) of modern slavery or human trafficking into, or within the UK

Guests enter CBH in three ways.

- Police take women from brothels or other situations of exploitation directly to the house;
- Women are referred from other Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), NHS, social services, solicitors or the Home Office;

- Women who have been hidden come forward for support through Catholic organisations, parishes or priests.

Referrals from the police can happen at any time, day or night. CBH staff and detectives in the Modern Slavery and Kidnap Unit in the Metropolitan Police Service have a close working relationship. If the police need to place a woman at CBH in an emergency they contact staff, who then make the necessary arrangements to receive a guest who is likely to be in a very distressed and disorientated state and have urgent and immediate needs. At this point, the police may undertake an interview in the fully equipped interview room at CBH with the guest to gather what evidence they can. The guest is then supported and decisions about the immediate future of the woman are made the following day.

If a woman is referred to CBH from an NGO or has come forward for support themselves, a referral form is completed and then assessed and evaluated by the CBH staff team. In addition to the main project criteria highlighted above the House is unable to support women with serious and enduring mental health issues and those in the early stages of pregnancy. If it is decided that a woman can be offered a place at CBH they are invited to meet with two staff members who explain how the project operates and answer any questions. This process is important because it enables a woman to make an informed choice about whether CBH is right for her (some women, for example, do not want to live in a community setting), as well as giving staff the opportunity to learn more about the woman's background and particular support needs. After this a final decision is made.

2.2 Support

According to the policy of the House, once a referral has been accepted, guests can access CBH for three months and are then offered move-on support for six months. In practice, the time-frame is more flexible and the length of stay and time allocated for follow-on support is determined by the individual circumstances and needs of the guest.

Each support worker is responsible for up to six guests at a time and works as part of a pair so that support can be accessed by a guest at any time from a staff member who has full knowledge of their individual circumstances and needs.

Support workers, with the assistance of the service manager and other staff, develop individually tailored support plan with guests when they arrive at the House. The plans address all areas of need: emotional and psychological; physical health; legal; housing; income and benefits; education and

employment and training. The plans are aimed at supporting women to move-on from CBH. Support workers co-ordinate and manage the actions in the support plan to help guests begin to recover from their experiences and rebuild themselves and their lives.

Examples of ways in which support is provided by the support workers include:

- Listening to guests and providing emotional support and encouragement to them throughout the duration of their stay.
- Encouraging guests to engage in the house activities and to make the most of the in-house support.
- Supporting guests to sign up for the National Referral Mechanism, which can then make them eligible for public funding once they move-on from the House¹.
- Arranging access to pro-bono legal professionals and supporting them through the asylum process.
- Arranging access to primary, secondary and community-based health services to meet any physical or mental health needs.
- Identifying education, work or training needs and providing a coordinated response to this.
- Ensuring guests receive all the support they are eligible for by identifying entitlements and making applications for welfare benefits, housing and claims for criminal injuries compensation, where applicable.
- Applying for all documentation (National Insurance numbers, for example) necessary for guests to live independent lives.
- Addressing any concerns about the behaviour of guests with them directly and supporting guests to resolve conflict.

All activity and interactions between staff, guests and volunteers are logged and tracked and each guest is reviewed, with their progress discussed at weekly staff meetings.

CBH support workers and staff also encourage guests, where appropriate, to tell their story and provide intelligence to detectives in the Metropolitan and other police forces. Preventing trafficking by aiding the criminal investigation of this crime is integral to what CBH does. Support workers and staff, therefore, talk to guests about what giving evidence involves, answer any questions they might have about the criminal investigation of the offence committed against them, introduce guests to detectives if they are not already known to them, and give emotional support to guests throughout the criminal justice process.

2.3 Activities at CBH

¹ This depends on asylum status and other factors and is a complicated process.

There is a weekly programme of activities at CBH and all guests are encouraged to take part. The range of activities offered is extensive, with some focused on helping women develop new skills that will help them be independent and others aimed at assisting guests to recover from the emotional and physical trauma they have experienced. All of the activities are run by CBH volunteers. Some take place in group sessions, for example art therapy and gardening, while others are run one-to-one, such as English lessons. If a guest expresses an interest in an activity that is not offered at the House, staff will try and find a volunteer willing to offer it.

Table.1 Activities offered at Caritas Bakhita House 2015-2018

English	Drama	Art therapy
Maths	Cooking	Yoga
English computer course	Baking	Head massage
Being British course	Dancing	Therapeutic massage
Group games	Gardening	Reflexology
Prayer group	Energising exercise	Dog walking
Knitting and Crochet lessons	Music lessons	Computer lessons
Badminton		

Alongside the activities, guests are actively encouraged to go outside into the local neighbourhood to build their confidence and regain their independence. This is a challenge for many guests and so volunteers can and do accompany them as they undertake routine everyday tasks, such as go to the supermarket or a café. To build the social and cultural capital of guests the House offers guests regular trips to the theatre, museums, cinema, gardens or one of the many other London attractions. Staff and volunteers also hold Interfaith celebrations at the House where guests can observe their own religious and cultural rituals, whilst explaining their importance and sharing them with other guests. This is designed to help guests develop an understanding of different faiths and cultures, promote tolerance and build connections.

2.4 Other support

Guests are provided with a weekly allowance of £40. With this, guests are expected to buy food (they are responsible for providing their own lunch) and take care of their other personal needs. CBH also helps guests to meet other basic costs such as travel to health and legal appointments.

It is normal for guests to arrive at CBH with nothing more than what they are wearing when they are found by the police or other agencies. The House helps

women by providing basic items such as clothes and toiletries, which are donated to the project.

2.5 Guests responsibilities

Either during the referral process or shortly after arrival guests are informed that they have responsibilities during their stay at CBH and that these are central to both the running of the communal house and their own individual recovery process.

Guests are asked to:

- Engage positively with the support and activities on offer at the house;
- Respect other guests and behave towards others in ways that maximises their chances to recover from trauma;
- Not bring alcohol or other illegal substances into the house;
- Eat with the other guests and staff every evening and prepare an evening meal (with help and support if needed) at regular intervals throughout their stay;
- Make a weekly contribution of £5 towards the house costs;
- Purchase food and prepare their own lunch daily;
- Clean the house with staff every Friday;
- Return to the house by the required time if they go out in the evenings.

2.6 Volunteers

Volunteers play a central role in the life of CBH and there were thirty-one active volunteers at the time of this review. Many, though not all, of the volunteers are Sisters who belong to eighteen different congregations. Many of the volunteers have long histories of working with marginalised or deprived communities around the globe and some have worked in the field of anti-trafficking and so bring a very good understanding of the challenges faced by the guests at CBH. Other guests offer a specific skill, such as yoga or interpretation, to the project. Volunteers deliver the weekly core activities on offer to all guests at the house, accompany guests to appointments and on organised trips.

Volunteers also:

- Accompany guests to various appointments;

- Help guests who are afraid to go out alone by supporting them in their regular day-to-day activities, such as a visit to the local supermarket or coffee shop;
- Act as interpreters for guests in medical, legal and other appointments;
- Provide training opportunities for guests.

Volunteers are not required to engage with a training programme before they start to volunteer at CBH but are vetted. Reflection evenings are run regularly at CBH and these are an opportunity for volunteers to meet and support one another and to learn more on the subject of human trafficking and modern slavery, and the needs of survivors through talks and training delivered by specialists in the field.

3.0 Methodology

The review took a multi-method approach. Between March and June 2018 thirty-one qualitative interviews were conducted with project staff (n=6), current and former guests (n=11), volunteers (n=13) and partners (n=2). Existing project data was shared and analysed and used to build the case studies presented in this report.

Interviews were semi-structured, and this ensured that key questions were asked in each interview but that the researcher had space to probe and follow topical trajectories as they emerged. All the interviews were conducted individually by members of the research team. Interpreters were used in the guest interviews when needed. Most interviews took place in a private room at Bakhita House. Others were held on the telephone and face-to-face at other locations across London. Interviews with the former and current guests explored their experiences of the support they received at CBH and the impact the project had had on them. Guests were also asked what they thought the strengths of the project were and how it might be developed in the future. Staff members were asked about their roles and responsibilities and for their views on the support provided to survivors at CBH. Staff were also given the opportunity to reflect on what they considered to be the most important elements of the project and what, if anything, could be done to improve it. Volunteers were asked about their volunteering experience and what they thought could be done in future to support volunteering at CBH. Volunteers were also asked their view on the impact the house had on the guests and what they felt were the strengths of the project and areas of future development.

All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. The guests who took part in interviews were recruited by project staff. Information about the review,

including a project information sheet, and an invitation to take part was sent to all volunteers, and interviews were either arranged by staff at CBH or directly with members of the research team. Before the start of the review, a researcher visited CBH to talk to staff about the review process. They were assured that the review was not being conducted to inspect their performance but was an opportunity to independently explore how the project was progressing and the extent to which it was meeting the objectives that were set at its inception. Staff were given the opportunity to ask and have answered any questions they had about the process and how the findings would be used.

3.1 Research Ethics

The review was granted ethical approval by the St Mary's University's Research Ethics Committee in February 2018. In practice this meant that all interviewees knew about the purpose of the research and what the findings would be used for before the interview took place. All participants were asked to give consent on the day of the interview, this was written and verbal depending on the level of English. Care was taken to ensure that interviewees were not harmed during the interview. Questions were focused on guests' experiences of CBH and they were not asked to give details of their previous experiences. Nevertheless, it was anticipated that some interviewees could become upset and so support was available during and after the interviews if needed by members of the research team and support workers. The confidentiality of participants was protected, and all data anonymised before reporting. All data was shared and stored securely.

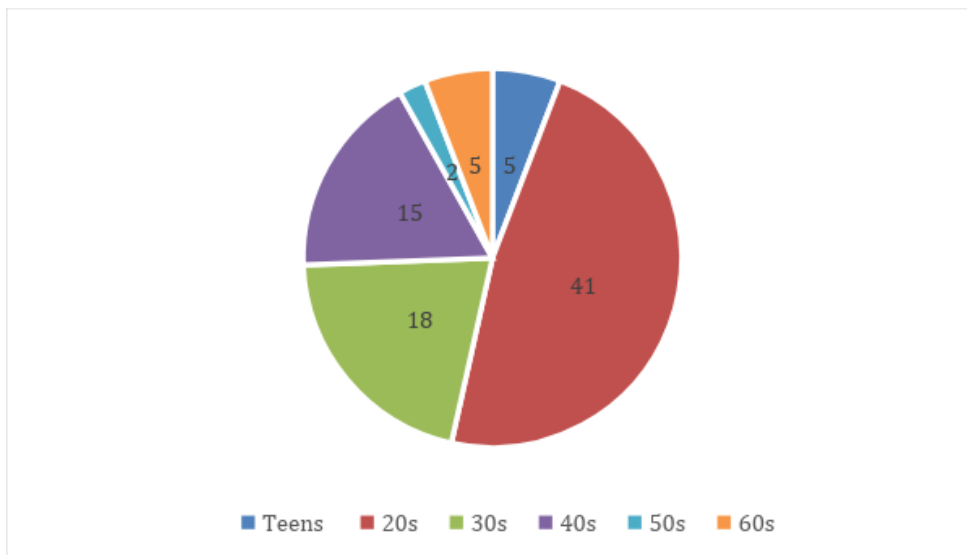
3.2 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the interviews. Thematic analysis is a pragmatically and theoretically flexible analytic paradigm (Braun and Clarke, 2006) that allows researchers to identify, analyse and report patterns within qualitative data.

4.0 Who does Caritas Bakhita House support?

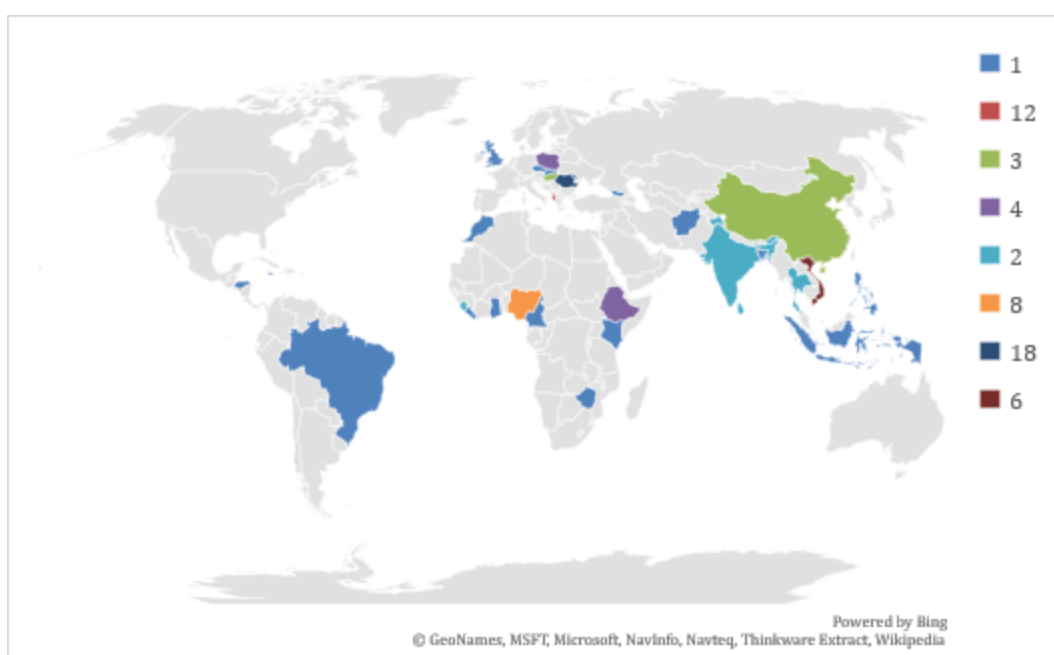
Between June 2015 and May 2018 CBH supported 86 female survivors of trafficking and modern slavery. The youngest woman supported by CBH was 17 and the oldest was 68. As Figure 1 shows, 74% of guests (n64) were aged between 17-39 years and 26% (n=22) were between 40 and 68 at the time of their stay.

Figure 1. CBH guests: age



4.1 Country of origin

Figure 2. CBH guests: country of origin



As Figure 2 shows, women came from thirty-two countries, including the UK. The top five countries were Romania (n=18), Albania (n=12), Nigeria (n=8), Vietnam (n=6) and Ethiopia (n=4). 46% of the guests (n=40) were from Eastern European countries.

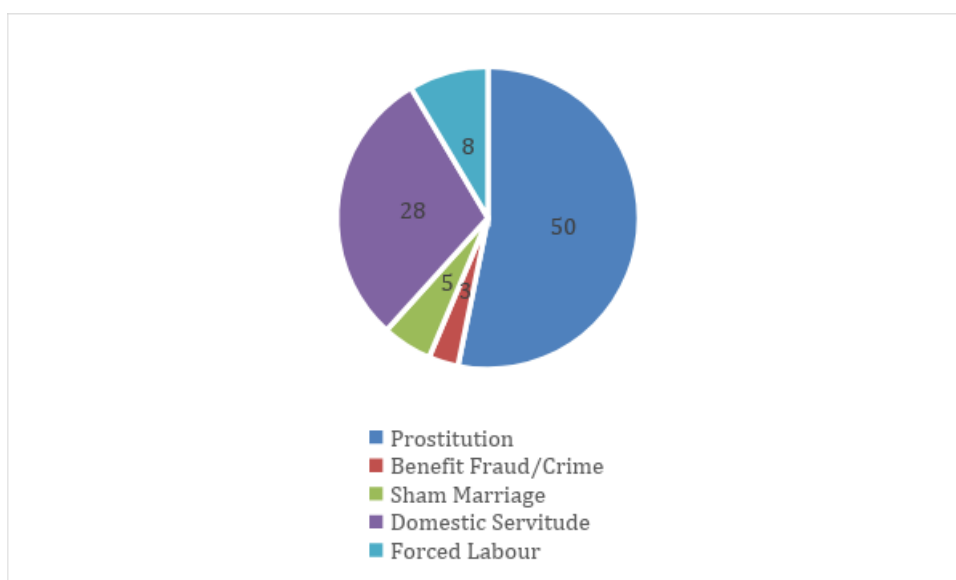
4.2 Referral pathways

Guests were referred from 28 separate organisations. The largest referring organisation over this three-year period was the Metropolitan Police Service, who referred 36 women to CBH which constituted 42% of all guests.

4.3 Types of trafficking

As Figure 3 shows 58% (n=50) of the women supported by CBH were trafficked into the UK for prostitution and sexual exploitation. 32% (n=28) were forced into domestic servitude. 9% (n=8) were in forced labour, 6% (n=5) were trafficked for sham marriage and 5% (n=3) for benefit fraud or crime.

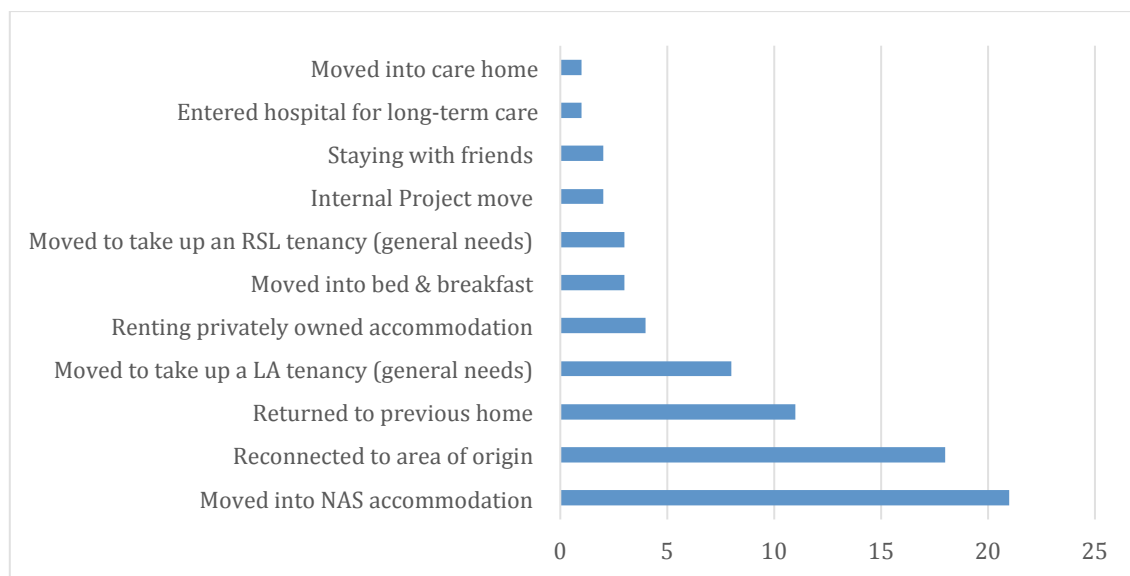
Figure 3. CBH guests: type of trafficking



4.4 Moving on from CBH

Between 2015 and 2018 74 women moved on from CBH. As Figure 4 shows, 28% (n=21) moved into NASS accommodation, 21% (n=18) reconnected with their area of origin, 20% (n=15) took up a social or private housing tenancy and 6% (n=5) entered temporary housing situations such as bed and breakfast or staying with friends. 15% (n=11) returned to their previous home. A small number of guests moved internally (n=2) or were placed in hospital (n=1) or a care home (n=1).

Figure 4. CBH guests: move-on data



5.0 Review Findings

This section of the report presents the findings from the research conducted for this review. It begins by examining the four key project outcomes and develops into a discussion of the strengths of CBH. Lastly, opportunities for improvement or development of the project are discussed.

5.1 Supporting women to report and disclose intelligence

Outcome: Supporting women who have been trafficked to report and disclose information and intelligence

Supporting guests to cooperate with the police and disclose information about what has happened to them to prevent further offences and reduce the number of victims of trafficking and modern slavery is firmly embedded in the policies and practice of CBH. Project data shows that 50 out of the 86 (58%) women supported by CBH were interviewed or gave intelligence to the police during their stay. All of the guests who were interviewed for this review had been spoken to by House staff about giving evidence or disclosing information to the police. The data shows that this was done in a sensitive and supportive manner by CBH staff and that guests did not feel under pressure to co-operate with the police.

'Yeah they supported me, you know they supported and they didn't push me to do it, they never pushed me to do it, you know they said that if you feel...unsure to talk or you feel bad to talk don't do it you know...they just are supporting me like you know, but in a very, very good way but they never push me to do something. Everything I done interviews or stuff I've done by...you know because I wanted to do that but not because they pushed me to do that.' (Former guest 04)

The House has some distinctive and unique features that makes it easier for victims of slavery and trafficking to help the police in their investigations. Staff are ready for the police to refer or accompany a woman who has been trafficked to the House at any time.

'We were at dinner and the police called and said "Oh. Is it possible to...for us to bring a girl in, we just raided a place and she needs help and what do you think?" and I said, "Why not" and they came, and the woman is here now so these things happen and unexpected and we just need to be ready for it really' (Staff interview)

Staff are responsive to such requests and are ready to provide the immediate support that a woman may need to disclose information to the police, when she is likely to be distressed or traumatised in the process.

CBH staff understand that because of their experiences guests are in a unique position to disclose and report information that might prevent further crimes and uncover other victims.

'In the case of one or two people where you just really you know ...they've just got...the font of knowledge that they've got...all the information that they've got...the experiences that they've had and...and that for the Police that can be invaluable, and it could...it could unlock doors potentially to other people....' (Staff interview).

In addition, staff understand that supporting women to report and disclose information can impact on their right to remain in the UK and access to criminal compensation.

'You can potentially get compensation but it's very difficult and it takes a long time...but that's a bit of a carrot ... "Look...you don't want to engage with the Police, ok there is the potential you could get some criminal...you know some financial compensation," "How much?" Who knows how much that will be...how much it could be but if you work with the police the potential for that is greater...you know. (Staff interview)

The desire to prevent others being trafficked and to maximise the opportunities for guests to have their rights respected and upheld amongst staff meant they were very supportive of this element of the work of CBH. Giving evidence and

intelligence remains a challenge for many victims because of their experiences with the police in their country of origin and during their exploitation. This was something staff were aware of and so this was handled with great sensitivity and care. Furthermore, the data showed staff played an active role in allaying guests concerns about police, particularly for those women who have experience of corrupt police and lack trust in the system.

'Sometimes the ones who have been brought by the police...have immediately noticed that...oh these police...they're police, they're really nice...because they've come from countries where actually the police are so corrupt, and they can't believe that these people are actually trying to help them. So the ones that have been brought in and actually had a nice conversation with the police...when we do let's say our first support one we say right you remember those people who brought you here...how would you feel about them coming back and just having a chat with you and they might want to ask you some questions and do it very gently like that...and as I said because obviously it depends on the police who have brought them but if they have been able to...even in the short time they've been with them...just create like a little bond to show them that they actually care.' (Staff interview)

Staff have positive working and trusting relationships with the police officers who work closely with the House; officers were considered professional and caring. The data showed that staff felt there is a real sense of partnership and support in the relationship.

'There's about sort of four and five of the police officers from the MET trafficking and kidnap unit who come here regularly so their faces are very familiar in this house...as I said those ones who come here, the girls will not know who they are necessarily if they haven't spoken to them but they'll pass them and they'll be...oh that's just a normal person there...they're wearing jeans and they're wearing a jumper and they're just normal people and...then if they do end up talking to them actually they're so gentle and they're so caring...they're very, very nice the detectives...the ones who come here...and then...we have other

officers coming here and we try and make sure that they don't come in uniform where possible because that can be a bit daunting...the ones who come here regularly they're really wonderful.' (Staff interview)

Furthermore, as this extract illustrates, guests also become familiar with officers who work closely with the House and this can break down barriers and build trust over time between guests and the police. It is likely that this is re-enforced by the trauma-informed approaches to practice that are evidenced here. Wearing plain clothes is a way that police can avoid the re-traumatising victims of crime.

It was clear from the evidence gathered for this review that the police- particularly detectives from the Metropolitan Police's Modern Slavery and Kidnap Unit- also considered their work with CBH as a partnership, and one that enabled them to access victims previously unknown to themselves or other police forces.

'We have an agreement with the house we are a partnership, they are our partners, we are their partners. We refer people into them and vice versa people that come to the house that haven't yet spoken to the police. If they decide they want to then we will be contacted, and we will come and speak to them.' (Police interview)

Like staff, officers also felt that the relationship that CBH has built with the police and its support in investigations has resulted in trust being built between the guests and the officers, as guests start to see the 'human face' of policing and in turn, feeling more confident about the process.

'I think the...the relaxed environment helps no end but also the kind of...the positive results that we have had so that the staff here can pass that on and use that experience to encourage somebody to speak and also if they don't want to at the start then that's absolutely fine...there's no pressure...no pressure from us, no pressure from the staff here and it allows that...for them to settle in and familiarity, I'm here quite a lot so are the rest of my team...we bob in and out, they see us...they see us chatting to...to the support staff, they see us chatting to other girls, they know we're human, they...you know they see the kind of human side of us, enjoying the tea and cake or whatever and so they...they look at us and think hang on...these...these

people are actually ok they're not....you know all these girls as we know have had some terrible experiences with police in other countries and so it's kind of showing them that actually we're a little bit different here, well not a little bit we're very different.' (Police interview)

Another unique aspect of CBH is in the use of two interview rooms, one on site and another housed in a building a couple of minutes' walk from the House. Guests can give information and intelligence to the police in surroundings that are familiar and comfortable and where emotional support is on hand before, during and after any interaction. This avoids the potentially traumatising formality of an interview room in a police station:

'What's nice is having the facilities here, so you know, one in the house, one just outside the house where an interview can take place. When we walk away we know that they're being looked after. When I go and do other interviews in different places sometimes...we try as much as possible to avoid police stations, some of our interview suites are within police stations, others are in sort of hospitals or whatever they're...they're all fairly good. We walk away and... they may have a support worker with them, they may not...even if they have, that support worker is going to leave them within an hour maybe and that person's got to sit and re-live what they've just been through. At least here they have got someone on hand twenty-four-seven you know to pick up the pieces really which...which...you know it can be harrowing.' (Police interview)

Overall, guests were reluctant to elaborate on their experiences of co-operating with the police at the House. This is understandable because for many the decision to give information and intelligence would have been an extremely hard and fraught one. The data suggests, however, that whilst the process was clearly a complicated and difficult one, most guests were made to feel comfortable by officers and that women were well supported afterwards.

*'Yes, I did speak to police and I did tell them what happened before you know I work in different houses like that before to earn money to send back for my daughter and but now I'm here and safe in this house, so I don't need to work like before. **[Interviewer] And what was that like?** It was okay, I felt comfortable.'*
(Guest 05)

There was a single exception to this. This guest was upset by the presence of male officers and a male interpreter in her interview and would have preferred just female officers.

'I was feeling bad because you know the questions was too much you know and also the thing that hurt me was that...there was just one female officer and there was two male officer and the male translator you know interpreter. Yeah and was so...I was feeling so you know bad about that, it was...it would be different if there were just female staff, but that part made me feel very bad, yeah I was crying a lot and for a moment I was just leaving the interview and getting out from the room.' (Former guest 04)

This shows that officers must always think about how a situation might feel to the person giving evidence and that all measures are taken ensure that the act of giving information is not traumatic in and of itself.

5.2 Providing immediate pastoral care and support

Outcome: Providing immediate pastoral care and support to women who have been trafficked to cope with the impact of their victimisation and the effects of trauma.

'I need everything when I come here because I not have anything, I was alone.' (Former guest 03)

When guests arrive at CBH they may be alone, homeless, disorientated, have no legal status, and often unable to speak or understand English. Many are in extreme emotional and psychological distress, have no other forms of financial or emotional support and have few, if any, possessions:

'I went interview for Home Office, but they didn't believe me, they chuck me out for me...I sleep like for two or three days in the street. It's very hard...after someone to help me...to get Red Cross and someone to push me, my clothes, everything is breaking. Wondering

what I will become. I speak Arabic; I speak to Arabic police who want to help me because of drunk people or something. I didn't know where I am.' (Former guest 02)

'When I arrived, I had nothing. The police take me here...by that time I was to be honest so tired.' (Former guest 05)

'I was in a bad situation and I was to the police station and they explained me about that they're going to took me to a safe house and because my situation was very bad I didn't even care when they took me.' (Former guest 03)

In interviews, guests reported that in these circumstances the police and NGOs did attempt to reassure them that they were being taken to a place of safety but that at the time many had no understanding of what this, or of what to expect when they arrived.

'Oh, I was scared, very scared...it was very hard for me even to stay because I don't know ...when you lose the trust of the people it's very difficult to...to reveal the trust and when you go somewhere that, ok I know the police is something that protect you...protects human beings. But I didn't know where is the meaning of safe house and the safe house in the first view is like somewhere just closed you can stay there in, everybody can come to you, you can't go anywhere. But during the time when I was in the trip to here and I was like of...where they going to send me? How it be there and how are the people, how I'm going feel in there...I'm going feel good or feel bad, they're going to judge me or not and other things.' (Guest 03)

'Downstairs they [the police] tell me all about this house but I was scared...at the time I didn't understand.'
(Guest 02)

In these circumstances, women need a specialist service with experienced staff who are trained to know what their immediate needs are and how best to approach them, especially when there is likely to be a language barrier. Interviews with guests show that CBH gets this right. All the guests interviewed for this review were clear that despite being apprehensive about how they would get on in the community of people at the House and worries about their lack of English, staff did everything they could to make them feel comfortable, welcome and most importantly, safe immediately upon their arrival.

'When I arrived so I was with them they begin to explain about how the house works and what we are doing and this kind of thing, so it was really such nice. It was the best thing the first time was my room where the staff send me back after the room I was feeling up to the second floor and it was such amazing and everyone was showing us the house and the things and it was really such a nice and I didn't hear about a lot before I came here, but after I came here I start to understand it...to know how they are doing it...how it works.'
(Former guest 01)

'First time yes I feel very, very good...very happy because I was very tired, I was feeling bad like, here I'm happy, welcome.' (Former guest 03)

One guest remembered how important it was to them that they had a room of their own and that it was clean and furnished to a high standard.

'[Interviewer] And so the room, your room was really important to you? It really was...I cry a lot, right....so. [Interviewer] What was it about it that was so important having that room of your own? It was

very tidy...was very...everything was decorated...everything was like...it was really such nice...it just makes me emotional. I was safe.' (Former guest 05)

It is an indication of the responsive nature of CBH that a risk and needs assessment is taken by staff either immediately upon arrival if it is an emergency admission, or at the referral stage if more notice of a guest's arrival has been given. This assessment forms the foundation of their support plan. The list below was provided to the research team by a support worker and illustrates the intensity of this early work and how quickly and effectively it enables staff to understand both the immediate and longer-term support needs of guests.

Is she in danger?
If so, from whom?
What measures need to be put in place to secure her safety?
Does she want to remain in her country, or return to the UK?
If she wants to return, will she be safe?
If she wants to remain, what support does she need?
Does she need urgent medical treatment to address physical, mental or sexual health related concerns?
Is she pregnant?
Does she need antenatal services?
Is she on the National Referral Mechanism?
Is she applying for asylum?
Is she at risk of detention?
Does she need a solicitor?
Can she speak English?
Has she been interviewed by the police for a potential criminal investigation? If not, would she like to meet with the police?

Despite the comprehensive nature of the assessment, the guests who were interviewed for this review did not show any signs of being overwhelmed or distressed by this way of working. Indeed, the guests' accounts of this time show that they were given vital emotional support and encouragement by staff at this stage.

'They asking me say don't worry we are support worker and then if you anything happen like you know, if you need anything, if you want something, if you scared something just tell us what you need...we all supporting you, I said sure.' (Former guest, 01)

'[Interviewer] How did your support worker treat you when you first arrived at the House? They were very caring you know, even if they did something or ask something they was try not to hurt you or you know remind you of bad things and stuff they were very, very caring. I used to cry a lot, I used to just go down like a baby, but they made me feel better and stuff like this.'
(Former guest 04)

As this shows, CBH staff are very present in the lives of the guests they support right from the very beginning of their stay. Support workers can and do respond quickly to the needs of guests as a result of the comprehensive programme of in-house activities. If, for example, a guest has very limited or no understanding of English, within a day or two she is able to start receiving one-to-one English lessons with a volunteer who is experienced at working with women who have been trafficked. The immediate availability of activities such as yoga, art and massage mean guests can engage with immediate therapeutic support, which would be of significant benefit to the individual. A member of staff highlighted the importance of providing a range of in-house activities for women whose primary concern is to feel safe and who may initially not want to leave the

environs of the house. For them, it was a real strength of the House that enables women to be:

'Learning and engaging without actually even having to sort of venture out while they're in that first stage. Because often they find it difficult when they first arrive...so there's something immediately available and I think that's a real strength of the house.' (Staff interview)

The speed interventions and support that are identified and put into place by support workers and other staff, and the availability and accessibility of activities that aim to decrease distress and start the recovery process is a highly distinctive aspect of CBH.

One of the volunteers reflected on how she thought the guests must feel and the support offered by the staff at CBH:

'It's a safe...safe place...it offers the possibility of them being themselves, you know I'm never there at night but I can well imagine the vulnerability of the night and the fear of the night...and that must be tough on staff and... there is always someone there for them and the patience and the understanding, you know when I hear staff it really amazes me because it must be very tough.' (Volunteer interview)

Staff felt that being present, emotionally supportive and caring helped guests feel safe and was essential to developing relationships of trust between themselves and the women they supported. It was noted that the women at CBH had been betrayed, often repeatedly, and abandoned by people (sometimes family) both during their experiences of trafficking and modern slavery but also earlier in their lives and during childhood. These experiences led them to be distrustful and sometimes openly hostile, emotionally shut-down and suspicious of others. The view was that supporting women to feel safe was predicated on establishing trust as this was considered an essential foundation for enabling women to take next steps and that being emotionally available was key to this.

'Another aspect is the people, it's the workers, the volunteers who...where they can learn to trust them, to open up to them...being able to express their fears, their anxieties, their joys and the activities where they can explore themselves in a new and different way...' (Staff interview)

'And that's what you see when they first come in it's...you can feel that kind of anxious energy and then they do start to calm down and they're laughing and they're happy and open. It just changes so quickly actually I'm quite amazed by how quickly that shift is from the day they come in to feeling relaxed.' (Volunteer interview)

5.3 Providing long-term pastoral care and support

Outcome: Providing long-term pastoral care and support to women who have been trafficked to assist them to develop the practical and emotional skills necessary for recovery and to rebuild their lives.

The way I see Bakhita House is that...it's helping the guests to take those first steps sort of after their experiences, so the support is across so many different things...so its practical, literally like their physical wellbeing...you know food, shelter, yoga, reflexology, GP, their medical wellbeing. Mental health, mental and emotional wellbeing so for example arranging counselling and we have therapeutic art inside the house, you know things that allow them to express essentially, so things like art, we have a drama club. We have various activities where they can go out so it's like looking after their emotional and mental wellbeing. So, it's also the legal side, the administrative side of their actual cases so helping them with their income support, with understanding their kind of situation politically when

they're asylum seekers or you know their status.' (Staff interview)

The research conducted for this review shows that with the ongoing support of staff and volunteers guests continue to develop and grow during their time at CBH. It would be misleading to suggest that this is easy work, or that guests do not suffer many setbacks along the way, because they do. Recovering from trauma is never simple, progress is not linear, and as noted previously, many of the women at the House must overcome trauma that is complex and devastating to the human body, mind and spirit.

Other factors also complicate recovery for survivors. Having to navigate the 'hostile environment' that has characterised asylum policy for the last decade or more, for example, has been shown by previous research to have a negative impact on those seeking asylum (Fang et al, 2015). Difficulties accessing culturally competent and specialist counselling services is another challenge that can impede recovery (FLEX, 2016), as is accessing good quality and safe secondary housing (ATLEU, 2017). Victims going through the criminal justice system can also face delays and uncertainty, which can compound the emotional and psychological toll (Franchi, 2017).

Despite the considerable challenges, CBH works with guests to give them the best opportunity to recover and develop the emotional and practical skills they will need to rebuild their lives. As the extract above shows, this operates as three strands of work that are coordinated by support workers, who are assisted by volunteers.

Legal and Administrative: This involves support workers identifying the legal and administrative needs of each individual guest and working towards meeting those by: making the necessary referrals (e.g. to solicitors); making the necessary applications to departments of local and national government, for example to the NRM, Department of Work and Pensions or local housing departments; helping women understand and navigate the system, such as helping in preparation for Home Office interviews; and supporting guests who are going through the criminal justice process. Once guests have moved on from the House this work continues and includes helping former guests

understand official correspondence or changes to their benefit entitlements, keeping up-to-date with legal decisions and the implications of these and supporting women through the criminal prosecution process.

Health and Wellbeing: A vital area of work, this involves staff working with guests to identify any physical, mental (including drug and alcohol misuse), emotional or sexual health needs, pregnancy and birth and supports them to access appropriate treatment in primary care and/or secondary and community services. Tasks undertaken include: registering guests with a GP; volunteers accompanying guests to GP, hospital, dental and/or counselling appointments; encouraging guests to join in with the in-house activities that promote physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, such as therapeutic massage, yoga and exercise; ensuring guests are eating the nutritious food on offer at the House; identifying sleep issues and supporting women to manage or overcome these, and providing practical and emotional support and encouragement to guests as they move through this journey. Staff, for example, have been birthing partners during labour. In addition, because CBH operates as a community, rather than a project that solely focuses on the individual, guests are supported to join in regular activities, such as sharing the evening meal; something guests may not have done for a long time, if ever. Once women have moved-on, staff continue to offer emotional support and encouragement and assistance with helping guests access services.

Education and Skills: The House offers guests many opportunities to learn and practise the skills that can help them rebuild their lives and live independently. One-to-one English classes, baking, cooking (classes as well as preparing the evening meal), craft lessons, computer courses and yoga training are offered at the House. Guests are also encouraged to access English classes and other educational opportunities at local colleges when they feel ready to do so. In addition, guests learn about how life works in the UK from a cultural and practical perspective. To support their employability, CBH guests can volunteer as part of a scheme with the Co-Op and at Oxfam charity shops.

To do this, they are supported in writing an application, interview skills and learn retail and customer services skills while volunteering.

The guests who were interviewed for this review spoke of needing support across all these areas when they arrived at CBH. As the extract below illustrates, guests could feel like their situation was so unfamiliar that they were back in childhood and had to learn everything again.

'Yeah, I walk like a baby you know just doing my first steps at the beginning I couldn't...I didn't know anything, I didn't know even to go...where is the nearest shop here...I didn't know anything at all and even English, you know my English, I couldn't speak even English.'
(Former guest, 04)

Another guest described how important it was to eat and share good food with others, things she had been denied for a long time because of her experience of being trafficked.

'[Interviewer] Having that food together was quite important to you? It was important because for a long time I just eat by myself. [Interviewer] So it's nice? It's very, very nice for me. [Interviewer] To share that food and experience? Oh yeah. Even their...even though I don't like spinach (laughs) it was very good. Because it's nice, because it's a long time that I didn't have nice food. '(Guest 03)

Staff described the support provided at CBH as 'holistic and quite complex' (Staff interview) and the evaluation team would agree with this assessment. CBH provides tailored support that addresses the whole needs of guests and given the range and level of need guests have this is a complex task that requires specialist knowledge and expertise. The staff team at CBH are experts in their field and manage this through the support plan model. There is evidence that staff revisit and review support plans frequently, which is necessary for guests as needs and progress can

change and emerge over very short periods of time. Also, the emphasis of staff is that during this process they always work with the guests rather than working for the guests – an important distinction.

‘When they come we do an assessment and we see their support needs and then we work with them not for them, but with them, to make sure that we meet their needs before they eventually move out...’ (Staff interview)

Volunteers also understood that they worked with guests to help and support them learn new skills that contributed to their recovery and their ability to help themselves. In this case a volunteer talks about the benefit of yoga for guests experiencing insomnia.

‘The PTSD comes with not sleeping properly...a lot of insomnia, so yoga is really beneficial for that and the girl that I’m working one on one she...has really bad sleeping issues so we’re working doing yoga nidra which is sleeping yoga and that’s a very...very good activity for sleep issues so yeah it’s...it’s just letting the body you know quieten.’ (Volunteer interview)

The data shows that volunteers and staff did not work in isolation from each other. Rather, a prevalent theme throughout comments by staff and volunteers is the priority at CBH of working as a collective, providing a community of support.

‘We show them love and we support them through the period of the time...the time that they would be here...we support them that they feel that they are worth something in their lives and we tend to that by...what we do here in Bakhita House we do things together’ (Staff interview)

One interviewee commented on her role, again emphasising the importance of simply 'being present' around the guests:

‘It’s basically looking at the administrative stuff like the appointments and the notes and the...emails...all that sort

of side of it but then also greeting the guests, being with the guests, reminding them of appointments, accompanying them, checking in with them as how they are...just how are they today, you know have they slept? Have they eaten? How are they feeling? Just being generally emotionally available to them so that they can share anything that they want to share so being there...just...just very much being present throughout the day.’ (Staff interview)

Communication

Prevalent throughout all the interviews is the focus on helping the guests learn English. Guests who need to improve their language skills are offered one-to-one language classes with teaching volunteers, and it is not unusual for guests to have multiple classes in one week. This enables women to make progress quickly. Once they are ready, guests also attend English classes and courses outside of the House, such as at a local college. All the guests interviewed for the review had accessed or were currently attending English classes and considered them vital:

‘It’s important for people to English, that is very important for the UK because if you go somewhere how do you communicate, that’s important I like it this house for English.’ (Former guest 02)

There are so many reasons why an ability to learn English can help the guests, and one of the staff highlights how having the right to work must be accompanied by an understanding of the English language:

‘You know it’s meaningless to say you have the right to work, you can’t speak English...in that case you know...lots of English lessons so you’ve got in-house English lessons probably three or four English

teachers coming in over the course of... in any one week.’ (Staff interview)

One of the volunteers also highlights the basic need to learn English so that guests can communicate within the house, but also to carry out everyday tasks, such as shopping:

‘It’s very important because otherwise they can’t communicate even to our...the staff members, you know they need the language that’s why it’s very important. I’m not the only here two...three English teachers you know like, so they need that even when they go out to ask somebody something...actually like Tesco when they go there, at least they can see and choose like but still I think language is super basic.’ (Volunteer interview).

Elsewhere, an interviewee highlights how intimidating it can feel when other professionals are talking about the guests in situations that have life-changing consequences, but they are unable to understand the language. Again, the need to accompany and support women when attending appointments is evident:

‘I think the level of support with...with the world outside Bakhita House, like in terms of the Home Office and claiming asylum and job centres and all of that can seem really scary I think to the guests who don’t even necessarily speak the language I think that can seem really intimidating and I think the fact that we guide them through all of that and you get accompanied to appointments...and... I think that’s really important.’ (Staff interview)

In addition to understanding the language is the need to understand cultural variances. This is summarised in the following quote:

‘If you’ve been brought here and you haven’t actually been living here...you know obviously you’ve been in a sort of a trapped situation you are getting used to a whole new culture, whole new set of societal rules, different economic structure, even attitudes to the police, understanding that the police aren’t corrupt generally, I mean

well who knows, but no... generally you can trust a policeman here, in many countries that's not the case. So yeah understanding of how the system works, understanding of what options they have...so we try and obviously help them with that...to understand what their options are...but it's always...they're just coming from a different culture and a different language, so you are always just sort of trying to work with that.' (Staff interview)

Through the support and multiple activities they provide, staff and volunteers work hard to develop guests' understanding of relevant systems and culture in the UK. Guests are supported to learn about this in sessions, for example by working through the 'Being British' course material, but also at a more informal level, they are familiarised with day-to-day life in the UK through being supported to access services, observing and celebrating religious festivals, being accompanied on trips to the shops, supermarkets and doing things that are part of cultural life in the UK, such as going on a trip to the cinema or out for a coffee.

For some of the guests, however, these challenges of communication and cultural differences are more difficult as a result of previously having limited access to education:

"In some cases level of education in that some of them have left school very, very, very young or maybe not even have been to school...depending on each one's different...some of them are actually incredibly educated but in terms of them sort of moving on from the house and independent living...having a sort of good education behind you is obviously going to be an asset so that's why we have so many in-house lessons like maths and English just to sort of help them get to that level...like a basic level..." (Staff interview)

Another volunteer explained how she was shocked by the level of literacy some guests have in their first language due to limited access to education:

'There are some who are really shocked who came illiterate, young people and older one...you know I had two for a long period one was beautiful young mid-European guest and she was literally studying ABC and there was a very much older woman who was also illiterate.' (Volunteer interview)

However, as noted earlier, emotional support is available whenever guests need it, and sometimes that means that planned activities are not the priority. The flexibility and responsiveness of the staff and volunteers in relation to the emotional needs of the guests is evident:

'But if it's a bad day, you know sometimes it happens with the guests when they're coming in for a lesson and they just want to talk, English can go by the wayside, it doesn't matter, it's not important you know. So in that sense, if they choose to...and that comes with time and relationship building and trust and all I can offer is just to listen and just support her and encourage and some do talk and share...some are fine you know, it's just learning English and they are very keen to learn and to improve for the future, so that is, it depends on the day and the time and the state they are in.' (Volunteer interview).

All the guests who were interviewed for this review reported that they had engaged, or were engaging, with all the House activities – English, yoga, art therapy, massage, reflexology, cooking and baking:

'I like all but I just...the ones I like the best...the most is my yoga and English, difficult to learn English but I like it. Some drawing and exercises.' (Guest 05)

Many reported accessing things outside the House too, such as college, voluntary work and healthcare. Women said they had a number of practical needs when they came to the House, obviously the most important was accommodation, but the list also included legal support, English, support with financial and healthcare issues. The data also showed that women also wanted to be loved, cared for and nurtured:

'I needed to be cared, loved because it's a feeling like I never had in my life before, it's so long story so...yeah they gave you all the kind of support they can give you, they gave love, they can give support you to learn things, to...to teach you how to do and they prepare you how to be ready to...to go through your life alone and stuff like this, everything.' (Former guest 04)

Helping women 'come back to life'

It is the view of the evaluators that CBH does not just provide a service that helps women 'cope' and then move on. Indeed, there was ample evidence in the data that the House has a much more profound and transformative impact on the lives of its guests. During their time at CBH, women develop new insights into who they are and what potential they have as humans, and begin the painstaking task of rebuilding positive identities that over time replace, or at least overshadow, those ruined by their experiences of trafficking and modern slavery. The former guests were the most emphatic about this. CBH changed and transformed them in many ways:

'When I leave here I have everything, I know how to treat my life, I know how to go somewhere, I know how to connect to people, everything for my life I start this house.' (Former guest 02)

'Yes everything, everything...because here really, I change my life, because you being here everything for me...and then my life maybe it was like this, but now it's like this...all...all from here because I learn here that it takes...what is life, what...what can I do with it, something...with everything...my life...everything.' (Former guest 03)

'They give me too much support, not just the support but they change me like a person because I was

completely different when I came at first here in this house and it's not just the support they gave me but they change me, they really did a very, very good job on me...because at the beginning I was you know, I was feeling too lost and I didn't have hope at all you know. I was so scared even from the people here at the beginning because I didn't know anyone and it was my first time that I have contact you know like talking and chatting with people that I don't know and very different cultures and traditions and stuff like this and at the beginning I was so, so lost and so stressed but after you know they keep talking to me and stuff like this, telling me and I started doing courses and different stuff and just keeping myself busy...they push me to change for good and they did it. At the first time, that very first time you don't realise how good is here. It looks like you know people here just push you...you know like to do stuff and sometimes people here usually they think that, oh why they are pushing me to do this because they don't realise it's for our better, you know it's good for us, it's knowledge for us and everything.' (Former guest 04)

Guests reported feeling and being more independent because of their new skills:

'To be honest when I arrive in this country which I say I didn't speak any English, I didn't know any place, I didn't know how to start my life, I didn't know what to do and to be honest I never sleep in the hospitals and I had phobia for the doctors and I can't go there and all the ways they was with me taking from my hands and say, you are going to do, you do it, so you'll do it and I say, no...you'll do it because you're strong and you are going to do it...and thanks to them so I did...so I know how to...to know to get the things what I need and I know

how to go to ask for help if I need something, somewhere and because of them, because they...first they came with me and told me you are going to need to go there and there and then they say try it by yourself. In the beginning I was saying why you do this, why not just don't come with me but after I started to say, oh that is for me because I'm going to leave this house and I need to do things by self, so I need to learn and I was there to say, that is good to learn because where you come sometimes with someone always you never do learn and I have to say really...that is really helpful.' (Former guest 01)

'I work in volunteering and I'm studying at school and I'm thinking for the future to get the job and it's a good step and I have such a good network around of me and I meet such a different people and which I didn't have that opportunity and so that is good for me to say oh yes I'm moving forward so that is something I get it in here so to move...because to be honest to be in one country alone and without language and you don't know nothing there, you don't know about the place, you don't know about the route, you don't know about nothing and it's hard, but I get the support from them and so now I know things how they go...I don't know perfectly but I have idea...how to go, where I need to go and what I need to do.' (Former guest 05)

'If I meet one (another woman in her situation) I told her to come here I think because here they are safe, and they can do. All I I know though...I don't need another people, guys...who to be them boss...boss.' (Guest 02)

All the guests said they would recommend CBH to another woman who was in their position. All expressed their sincere gratitude for the support they had received at CBH and were full of praise for staff and volunteers:

'It's made a lot of difference because when I come here even I didn't have trust in myself anymore and... I have a lot of pain, it's not like pain but pain. [pause] it's pain inside of yourself of course I'm feeling until now I am speaking with you but it's when you have a strength to go on and you give yourself opportunity to have ...to go on, you can do it. Sometimes of course it's not like all the day are like sunshine. It's cloudy and the rain even comes, it has beauty there but...but without them I...I wouldn't have been here. All of them, I'm not saying like only [Support Worker] and [Support Worker], but all of them, all of the support workers, volunteers and I don't know if I can forget anyone.' (Guest 03)

'They did too much stuff...too much...very, very, great job with me and the support workers and everyone from the staff is very, very, very wonderful person each of them, they are so good. I feel so happy and lucky that I was here.' (Former guest 04)

'I was so sad, I was so down, and I thought I can't...can't think it about it for the future and I can't move forward for my life but thanks to them because they help me a lot to move forward and to say yes I'm going to. I don't have enough words to be honest to say how much and how helpful it was this house was for me to be honest it was amazing...It was really, really great job.' (Former guest 05)

'If someone is lucky, lucky, lucky to have...to come here because here is everything what you need, is everything...for me it's everything, I don't know for

*another but for me is everything...a really lucky woman
who is coming here.' (Former guest 03)*

Two interviewees were, however, struggling with the psychological pain and emotional distress they were feeling. Both recognised that they had progressed since they had been at CBH, nevertheless felt that their psychological issues prevented them from seeing a future for themselves:

'[Interpreter] Ok at the moment she doesn't see how she can progress in life because of the fact from a physical point of view she's ok, from a psychological point of view it's a problem that she doesn't know how she can resolve that, so she doesn't know how she's going to progress in the future and therefore she couldn't say what advantage she obtained here...yes well we said it actually, her physical, she went to the doctor, the English but beyond that she's still not sure what's going to happen in the future and it's not clear to her what advantages she has obtained apart from the ones that we said before from being here...the problem is psychological.' (Guest 01)

5.4 Preventing crime and criminal victimisation

Outcome: Supporting the MPS and other partners in the development of information and intelligence on human trafficking to prevent crime and criminal victimisation.

Officers from the Modern Slavery and Trafficking Unit have been involved with CBH from the very beginning of the project. As stated previously, a core aim of CBH when it was established was to reduce the number of victims by supporting women to work with the police and provide them with intelligence and information. This is one of the most distinctive elements of the work of CBH. In practice this works as a genuine partnership arrangement with officers attending the House to interview women, police representation at CBH staff meetings and CBH staff providing information to the police:

'It's invaluable really and certainly for girls that are unsure whether or not they want to speak to Police and they're unsure of...sort of going in to the NRM, taking them away from the life that they know...as bad as it is, it is the life they know. Bringing them here gives it gives

a huge advantage for us in to achieving the ultimate gain of sort of taking them away from that life and hopefully from the police point of view putting the people behind bars that have committed crimes against them.’ (Police interview)

From a police perspective, CBH is the best service they work with because of the safety of the House, the quality of partnership working between officers and CBH staff and the responsiveness of the service:

[Interviewer] In your mind does this compare to some of the other services that you’ve seen? From our point of view, it’s up there at the top...we’ve had some fantastic results, we’ve had...you know. We can...we can take...we can have a phone call in the middle of the night and we can have a girl here within an hour you know without any problems, without some of the difficulties of going through different services, it’s by far the best service.’ (Police interview)

This partnership has been successful. Data provided by the House shows that since June 2015 there has been six prosecutions of traffickers as a result of evidence given by Bakhita House guests. This has resulted in a total of 47 years in prison for the six convicted traffickers. Furthermore, of the eighty-six guests CBH has supported in the past three years, fifty have been interviewed by the police and provided vital intelligence and information. When asked what implications, if any, there would for the police if CBH were to stop working them, the reply was emphatic:

It would be a disaster for us really, it would be an absolute disaster because there are other places, there are other...but...but this...this is kind of the...we can offer so much to the victim of modern slavery by bringing them here. As I said we know that they’re going to be taken care of and if we look after the victim and if we keep the victim happy and sort of move her life on for

her, then we have the best chance of reaching a prosecution by far.’ (Police interview)

6.0 Strengths of Caritas Bakhita House

CBH has key strengths that make it a highly distinctive, unique and high-quality service for the victims of human trafficking and modern slavery.

6.1 The House is a home

CBH provides a tailored package of support for each guest that is designed to meet their individual needs. Staff operate within a well-defined framework of policies and procedures, and yet the support provided by CBH is in no way clinical and never loses sight of the individual. Indeed, it is the homely feel of the House that is perhaps its most nourishing and nurturing element. Making the House feel like a home by ensuring that it a calm and well-ordered space that is maintained to the highest standard of cleanliness and tidiness whilst remaining comfortable is primarily the responsibility of the House Manager. As she explains;

‘I think it’s very important that the house keeps a good atmosphere...an atmosphere of peace...so either it’s... there are obstructions in just...terms of things are not in order like in the lounge or things need to be cleaned... I look after the plants they are part of the atmosphere. Yeah, I treat the house as a home myself, so this is how I try to look after it.’ (Staff interview)

One of the volunteers commented; *‘I think what they’re doing in the house is creating a safe place that’s important.’ (Volunteer interview).* This was expanded upon by one of the staff who said, *‘the house is...this building is a home...where they can learn to relax and feel.’ (Staff interview)*

'There is a sense of social...cohesion and fun...which is really important because it's a home at the end of the day. It is a home and it's not.... it needs to have that feel...that it's a safe, homely, comfortable place where they want to be and where they feel safe and looked after.' (Staff interview)

'I think the welcoming aspect of guests in the house and the care...and the hospitality and the delicacy and the confidentiality....and it's a home for them above all. I think that's what they need, the presence.' (Volunteer interview)

This is further reinforced by guests engaging in the everyday activities that you would see in a typical loving home. They cook and eat together, clean together, share communal spaces and celebrate together. Staff set boundaries and engage in relationships that, whilst professional, communicate a care and concern that guests interpret to be more like family than that which is typically found in a project or service:

'I'd been to the [name of service] is same thing like you know, they give...they give...like supporting, they give food, they give money they give...they give like NHS and everything you know to look after me as well. That's what...that's what I'm thinking as well but the other thing is different is...in the other house we're not...we're not having...dinner together but in here it's beautiful when we having dinner together it was like with the whole family you know, like we have a real family and we're having dinner together and have a chat.' (Former guest 01)

I said, "No, I don't want" or [staff member] or someone "No, no [name] you have to do it." If I sleep sometimes yeah you have the stress or...if I didn't go downstairs they will become knock, knock...are you ok? They will

be check every time, they will be check, don't stay with house, go into out, go to church or somewhere. I don't know like...maybe my family things they will be here and do things like this for me, most are my family for everyone they will do it. (Former guest 02)

[Interviewer] What do you think has been the biggest difference that Bakhita House has made to you and your baby? The...the...the love, the care of the staff especially before...they took me to hospital...before the giving birth and everything like that...that really struck me very much about them. I just want to say I feel very happy in this house because I get love and care in this house. 'I not see them like support worker I see them like family...always I was talking to them for...it was three days after I know all of them being I said like you know what I'm not seeing you like my support worker, I not seeing you like staff...for me here it's like big family in your home together.' (Guest 04)

[Interviewer] What was it about the relationship that made you feel like that? Because the people who works here are very welcome and very lovely and very kind and very understanding which is more important and that makes your like feeling I'm welcome here and so I might be feeling like I'm at home and because where you find people who loves you and people who support you and people that working you...so hard with you and never say tired...I'm tired or never just say wait and just oh yes, yes we do that and that makes me like really feeling I'm at home.' (Former guest 05)

And it is not just because of the space. Staff and volunteers take the place of family and friends to guests at some of the most stressful and challenging

points in their stay at CBH by providing emotional support, encouragement and praise:

'They say [name] you're great, because you know whenever I do English the teacher give like five me star...I say only five star I make it like you know joke you know...alright ten star for [name]...because every time you say you're doing it very good like you know even though like I don't understand you know everything I have to search in the Google, what is this meaning and then I have to look my book as well you know because before I had it in my book, what is this meaning, what is this meaning, you know so whenever I had homework and everything you know I had to organise it...my support worker, I said this is my homework result and then they say I'm proud of you [name], you're doing it very good and so they're proud of me and I'm proud of myself too.' (Former guest 01)

Throughout the interviews from the staff there are comments that indicate the essential nature of accompanying women to appointments. The need for this is summarised by this quote and reflects the earlier comments about creating a familial type of support to enable a feeling of safety and security:

'Just being alongside them in their journey which I don't think should ever be underestimated...of just having someone there who is going to take each step with you when you have been through something that's...incredibly traumatic and you might not have that familial network and so actually that support is really important.'
(Staff interview)

As noted previously, staff commented on the need to be 'present' with the women, the idea that they were available for whenever they are needed. In addition to this presence, it is clear in the comments made by staff that this emotional support is deeply rooted in the ethos of the house, one which has clear spiritual underpinnings informing the support it offers:

'I think looking after the wellbeing of the women I think we do well...there are lots of...well a lot of kindnesses and the principles of kindness are its love, its respect, its community and spirituality.' (Staff interview)

This is explored further, with the interweaving concepts of professionalism and approaches informed by spiritual beliefs:

'I think you understand working with guests there's...because there is the professional...trying to maintain professional relationships but still there is a lot of love we...we give...and especially this I think the many religious sisters which are involved in...in volunteering at Bakhita House they maintain this gift of love I would say for....for what we would like to achieve love and acceptance and respect and yeah that's what we see as...as our...Bakhita House spirituality...it's mainly that holding the guests in it...in that love...' (Staff interview)

This was a new and powerful experience for some of the guests who participated in interviews, who have never had or felt the bonds of family before:

'It is a really, really amazing experience here, an amazing feeling because everyone gives you love and makes you feel important, and you know feel...I have the feeling that I never had before in my life here.'
(Former guest 04)

6.2 Committed and knowledgeable staff team

CBH is an effective and distinctive service because of the combination of staff expertise, specialist knowledge, and the model of working they deploy, which is collaborative, holistic, person-centred, and emphasises clear communication. It is the view of the authors of this report that this is so firmly embedded at CBH because senior and longstanding staff members have been involved since the initial stages of setting up the project and have prior experience of working with

survivors of trafficking. This has established a firm foundation and ethos into which new staff are incorporated.

Staff work to actively support the wellbeing and recovery of the women and want to ensure that they work together to achieve the best possible outcomes for them. Support workers become finely attuned to the patterns, routines and emotional states of their guests and so provide support when needed. Equally, they know when to step-back and give guests the space and time needed to process thoughts, cope with trauma and come to terms with what is happening in their lives:

[Interviewer] When you first came into Bakhita House, you immediately had a good relationship with all the staff? No. [Interviewer]No? They were trying but I was so, so, you know so cold in myself...I was unsure. I was feeling shy as well you know I couldn't speak to much, even my English wasn't that good you know and I was feeling shy to talk because I was thinking myself, oh what if I'm going to say something wrong and they don't understand me you know but now I don't feel shy even if I say something wrong like it's better when someone tell me, oh you don't have to say like that.... but after yes I... I start talking with all of them, at the beginning I always used to say, everything you know everyone was telling me something I was like yes, yes, yes (meek voice) and [Support Worker] I remember because she told me, "Oh my God, when I'm going to hear one time no from you" and I said to her "Don't worry that day will come very soon" and I was like (participant laughing). (Former guest 4)

'The first talk that I had I was with (name of support worker), I was crying (laughs) and you know when you come somewhere and you don't know... anyone...it's very difficult because you've just come from a place that you don't know

everyone and to come another place that this ... but he just come to me he see me crying and said, "Come on, come with me and talk if you want to talk or just stay there and I'm not doing nothing just I'm going to watch you" and I started a bit to talk... it was very difficult to explain myself...about my feelings and how about how I feel and...say it's ok to cry. If you want to cry, cry. If you want to smile, smile, it's ok...everything is ok.' (Guest 03)

This understanding extends to taking a flexible approach to the length a guest can stay and be supported at the House. Staff know that they are always working towards the goal of moving guests into independent living situations and they work hard to achieve this. Staff are willing to challenge each other about the progress of guests and support workers are prepared to push guests if they feel they are not making the progress they could be making if they were to increase their effort or be more focused. However, ensuring as much as is possible that guests are in the best place they possibly can be after being at CBH does give women the best possible chance to continue to grow in confidence and independence when they move-on.

6.3 The programme of in-house activities

The in-house programme of activities developed and delivered by volunteers is essential to the success of CBH. The programme provides the structure to life at the House, teaches new skills and promotes recovery. For example, the guests have access to yoga classes and one of the volunteer's comments on its impact helping guests with their mental health alongside improving physical wellbeing.

'I mean physically obviously it's...I can see the changes in the girls from the first class I do to the last class and physically we all know how beneficial yoga is for the body...but mentally it's teaching them to be still with thoughts which can be uncomfortable sometimes. A lot of girls have PTSD and it's quite noticeable because when they first start in my classes you know they can't close their eyes and they're

very fidgety and kind of you know...nervous systems kind of all heightened....and then after a few classes once they start to relax in... once I guess they start to trust me and just trust the class, trust the yoga then I notice them starting to just sink into and relax and be able to close their eyes' (Volunteer interview)

As this extract also highlights, volunteers bring specialist skills into the House and support women to address and perhaps recover from trauma using ways that may be distinct from that which is provided by support workers and staff. In particular, some volunteers work in ways do not rely on verbal communication but are expressed in the body or through creativity. This overcomes the barrier of language and the reliance on talking so prevalent in Western culture and accesses other parts of the self. This is crucial argues another volunteer because:

'Well the challenges here are really communication because this is what we expect from them, we expect to be able to talk and to say and it is also part of affirming...you know being affirming themselves if they can say no instead of saying yes because you know they are here, they are guests and...and again very often silence is for me means something, I try to respect them and I believe that also here it is respected. You know people cannot talk, sometimes they don't want to.' (Volunteer interview)

In addition, a volunteer comments on the impact of provision of art therapy on guests. She recalls one of the guests saying to her, *"I like coming to the art because I never have to talk about myself"* (Volunteer interview). Another volunteer commented about the guests, *'...there is some trauma in each of them, some of them will reveal it, some of them will not. Some people will talk to me openly and it all floods out some people don't say anything...but they want to tell'* (Volunteer interview).

Activities also allow guests to 'keep busy', and here one of the staff gives an example of a women wanting to be kept busy to avoiding being left with her thoughts;

'We've had girls coming in here...literally are...so...traumatised...I don't know obviously it's...it's a combination of things that happen when they come here, things like yoga, massage, reflexology, even having dinner with other people, art, drama, ways of expressing themselves...is something that a lot of safe houses don't have and I think...the girls talk about it...how much they love them and how much it helps them and it keeps them busy...and that is the one thing you know one of our girls she came here and she said "Please [name], I really need to be busy, I need to be doing things because I'm in sitting in my room and I'm thinking about what's happened to me." So, we say right ok we'll do this, this, this and this...go volunteering which we started trying to encourage the girls to do a lot, out twice a week for a day doing volunteering, keeping their mind off it and the improvement that we've seen in her because we're just encouraging her to do nice things...you know...makes a big difference.' (Staff interview)

Guests echoed this during the interviews.

I think it's [activities] good cause it doesn't...you don't stay at home because when you're just in your own room by yourself, you end up having all these...all these thoughts you...because when you're by yourself...it's something I personally don't like when I...when I sit by myself and I sit for a very long time, I start to have all these irrational thoughts and it's something that...I don't like so being...getting out the house, doing something, having a laugh with other people it's...it's good cause it makes you forget what...what's happening to you, what your experiences are so you don't have to think, so like it makes you less depressed.' (Former guest 06)

7.0 Case studies

Two case studies are presented in this section of the report. They have been included in the review because they give important insights into the guests at CBH and the nature of their journeys through the service.

7.1 Laura

Laura was eighteen years and six months when she arrived at CBH. Originally from Romania, Laura was trafficked into the UK by a distant relative who forced her into prostitution in a house in London. Laura told support workers that during this time she was given food and other items but was never given any money.

Prior to being trafficked Laura had spent her childhood in care institutions in Romania. She was abused and raped by a relative as a teenager and had experienced other highly traumatic events, such as the imprisonment of her father.

Laura was brought to Caritas Bakhita House after being stopped by the UK Border Force with her trafficker. When she first arrived at the House, Laura was shell-shocked and struggled to answer even basic questions. She had been dehumanised and struggled to show any emotion. Laura found trusting anyone extremely difficult and had developed a very confrontational outer shell that she used to protect herself. This made the task of supporting her a real challenge, however, staff understood this and were able to work together to provide the flexible support that Laura needed. At times, they worked with her closely and when necessary they stepped back to give her space. Laura created a close relationship with a volunteer at the House and they worked alongside staff to give her the support and encouragement she needed.

Laura joined in with all the in-house activities and was supported to get the foundations of a new life for herself in place. She applied for, and received, a passport and National Insurance number. She attended English and Maths classes outside of the House and volunteered at Oxfam and a local charity shop. During her stay at CBH Laura co-operated with the police and seven

months later, despite being pressured by her trafficker to withdraw her statement, gave evidence in court. Her trafficker was convicted and sentenced to four and a half years in prison.

Laura decided to return her country of origin but has stayed in touch with CBH. The detective who worked on her case has visited Laura and recently supported her when she gave evidence by video-link at a second trafficking trial, which resulted in another conviction. A CBH staff member commented, *'on the video link Laura was able to answer questions and presented as a confident young person who wants to make her own decisions. We are really proud of her and the progress she has made.'*

7.2 Aneesa

Aneesa was in her mid-sixties when she entered CBH. For the previous fifty years she had been a domestic slave to a family from her country of origin, who had brought her with them when they moved to the UK. Aneesa was discovered by police officers after they received a call from a member of the public. The police recognised that Aneesa was a slave and persuaded her to leave the family home and she was subsequently taken to CBH.

Aneesa had never been educated and so was illiterate and unable to speak English. The relentless nature of the domestic work and extremely poor living conditions, she slept on the floor, left her with significant physical health problems. Aneesa had no friends and was extremely isolated. She also struggled to come to terms psychologically with what happened to her and found it difficult to accept that she was exploited by her 'employer.'

At CBH she quickly became known as 'mama Aneesa' because she was so friendly and kind to everyone. Aneesa attended English and the other activities at the House. Staff helped her access the medical attention she needed and supported her to reconnect with her family in her country of origin via Skye and WhatsApp. Staff applied for social housing for Aneesa and after a short spell in temporary accommodation she now has a flat of her own – although the process was quite traumatic for her. Aneesa is now able to live a very simple but mostly independent life. She has a Freedom Pass, shops locally, is a

member of the local mosque and regularly visits CBH. Staff continue to support Aneesa in numerous ways and help her to understand and resolve changes to her welfare benefits and entitlements and engaging with local services. Staff and other guests also provide Aneesa with emotional support and companionship.

8.0 Areas of Development

All the interviewees were asked how CBH could develop as a service. Guests and former guests struggled to identify how the service could change or improve and given the high-quality support they have received this is perhaps unsurprising. Other interviewees did express some views and the evaluation team have identified further possibilities from the data which are presented in this section of the report.

8.1 Access to therapists

Throughout the interviews with volunteers and staff was the challenge of getting women prompt and timely access to counselling or other talking therapy. Staff also identified that accessing therapists who were culturally competent and had experience of working with trafficking and modern slavery survivors was difficult. Establishing an in-house counselling provision would help guests access the specialist emotional and psychological support they need quickly and aid recovery.

8.2 Training for staff and volunteers

Staff were grateful for the training opportunities they had had at CBH but were keen to access further training because they wanted to continue to develop their professional knowledge in relation to trafficking and associated topics. It was recognised that policy and practice in this area changes quickly and that it was important for their role and their continuous professional development that they were supported to access training and education.

Volunteers were very complimentary about the reflection evenings and the external speakers that do come in to CBH to train them on aspects of trafficking and modern slavery. Some volunteers did suggest that they would benefit from further training opportunities.

9.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Caritas Bakhita House offers a sanctuary for some of the most vulnerable and traumatised women in the country.

The House has a partnership with the police that is firmly embedded and police and CBH staff work together in the effort to achieve the best outcomes for current guests and prevent further victims. Having officers in the House as a matter of routine can humanise policing and make it more likely that any preconceived ideas guests have about the police are challenged in a gradual and gentle way over time. Guests are not placed under any pressure to work with the police and are instead given the support and space they need to decide for themselves. It is the view of the evaluators that CBH offers survivors of trafficking a uniquely supportive environment in this regard and that staff and police should be commended.

Staff at CBH have the specialist knowledge needed to provide immediate pastoral support and care to those who have escaped trafficking and domestic servitude. They understand that women have a range of immediate needs and procedures are in place for these to be identified and acted on quickly. The immediate availability of activities, many of which are therapeutic, gives women the best start in their recovery journey and is a distinctive and powerful feature of CBH. More than this, however, staff at CBH recognise that what women need the most is emotional support and encouragement offered by staff who are present in their lives at this time of crisis. This support and encouragement is the foundation for the feelings of safety and trust that enable women to access all the opportunities available at the House and begin the slow process of recovery and rebuilding. The skill and care used by staff, often with women whose lives have made it hard to trust others, is recognised by volunteers and the women themselves as crucial to the success of the project.

The support needs that women at CBH have are very high. The trauma they have experienced and the situations they have come from have left them traumatised and extremely isolated. CBH is set up to support women over time to begin the long and often difficult process of recovery. CBH provides opportunities for women to learn and develop new skills in a caring and supportive environment. It also encourages them to move beyond the House

and build the confidence they will need to live independently. The support offered at CBH is powerful and gives women space to transform their lives and develop new identities that are not connected to their trafficking or other negative life experiences.

CBH and the police work in partnership to help disrupt the crime of human trafficking and modern slavery and obtain justice for victims. The police reap significant benefits from the expertise of the staff, the high quality of the service and its ability to respond quickly to their needs, the interview facilities on-site and support provided to victims. It is the view of the evaluators that this aspect of the work of CHB is truly distinctive and should be commended.

The evaluators recommend that Caritas Bakhita House:

1. Share this review widely with partners and stakeholders to promote the service and seek ongoing and additional funding
2. Establish an in-house counselling service that provides specialist provision for women who have been trafficked and are survivors of modern slavery
3. Continue to invest in training for staff and volunteers
4. Continue to develop the programme of in-house activities available to guests.

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