

Become a Sahara project volunteer, and support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women in Manchester who are rebuilding their lives after domestic abuse.



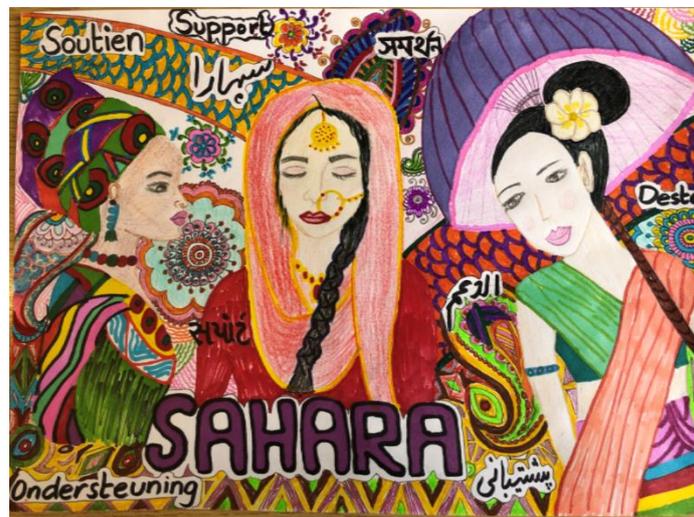
**MANCHESTER  
WOMEN'S  
AID**

What is the Sahara project ?

The Sahara project is a support service for Black Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) women in Manchester who are rebuilding their lives after experiencing domestic abuse. It is run by Home-Start Manchester in partnership with The Pankhurst Trust Inc. Manchester Women's Aid.

Home-Start is part of a national charity available in hundreds of communities. We recruit, train and supervise volunteers to help families with young children. Our volunteers, who know about being a parent, support other parents by visiting them in their own homes for a couple of hours each week. Manchester Women's Aid is an independent charity providing a range of services for women and children affected by domestic and sexual abuse.

As a Sahara volunteer, you will receive an excellent course of preparation training from Home-Start and Manchester's Women's Aid. You also get on-going support, regular supervision sessions, additional training and out of pocket expenses.



What kind of families would I be helping?

No community has the monopoly on domestic abuse but Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women in Manchester can face particular barriers to accessing the help they need when they are experiencing domestic abuse. Sahara volunteers will work with BAME women and their families in Manchester, who have experienced domestic abuse and are now rebuilding their lives.

We take the safety of volunteers very seriously. You will only ever be matched with a family where there is a risk of domestic abuse is low/non-existent. The Sahara project make volunteers safe by working closely with other professionals and completing regular risk assessments.

## As I volunteer what would I actually do?

Sahara volunteers visit families in their own homes to offer friendship, practical advice and help to access services/community support to a family on an ongoing basis (the average length of support is 6 months but we ask for a minimum 12 month commitment).

You must be willing to spend around 2/3 hours per week with your family after training. You should have a good understanding of how domestic abuse impacts families, relationships and the wider community.



You will be very carefully matched with a family who have been affected by domestic abuse and you will agree a time that suits you. You will visit the family each week for a couple of hours. How you help is really down to the family - some may need someone to talk to about their previous abusive relationship, others may need more practical help with getting out, meal planning and cooking, playing with the children or finding out about local services. All we ask is that volunteers don't look after the children without the parent being around, don't do regular housework for the family and don't take the family in their own car.

In a nutshell you will be:

- offering support, friendship and practical help
- visiting the families in their own homes, where the dignity and identity of each individual can be respected and protected
- reassuring families that difficulties in bringing up children are not unusual and can be particularly difficult after escaping an abusive relationship
- emphasising the positive aspects of family life and healthy relationships
- encouraging families to widen their network of relationships and to use effectively the support and services available in the community

## Do I need to have special experience or training?

Sahara welcomes volunteers of all ages and backgrounds particularly BAME women. Volunteers do not need specific qualifications, but they do need the ability to:

- Listen with understanding
- Maintain confidentiality
- Be committed to the scheme and to the families they visit.

**DOMESTIC ABUSE  
SUPPORT SERVICE FOR  
BAME WOMEN & GIRLS**

All volunteers are carefully recruited and selected, and prepared before being matched with a family.

A volunteer may be a natural parent, a foster, adoptive or step parent or an older sibling who has taken on the parental role. A volunteer may not have parenting experience but lots of professional experience of working with children or families.

All prospective volunteers must fill in an application form, provide two references and agree to an enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service, as well as completing a Course of Preparation.

Every prospective volunteer must attend the preparation course. The aim of the course is to build on the skills you already have as a parent or carer. You do not need any formal qualifications to complete the course, just parenting experience.

The content of the course includes the following topics:

- Domestic abuse and how it effects families
- Mental health awareness
- The role of the Home-Start Volunteer
- Values and attitudes
- Family life: parents and children
- Family life: stress factors
- Communication skills
- Community support networks
- Safeguarding
- Confidentiality
- Commitment, boundaries and support
- Home-visiting and the mechanics of Home-Start



The course takes place over 6 weeks, usually on the same day each week, from 10 am until 2pm. You will find the course to be non-threatening, informal and friendly, the best way to learn is through being relaxed and having fun. One day of the six week course is dedicated to Domestic abuse awareness and how to support families. This will be delivered by Manchester's Women's Aid who are experts in improving the lives of women affected by domestic abuse.

Further training is available once volunteering starts, including first aid, drug and alcohol awareness, mental health awareness, cultural awareness, child development and much more!



What would I get out of volunteering with Home-Start Manchester?

Knowing you have helped someone flourish after they have been through traumatic experiences in the past can not only boost your self-esteem and confidence but could be great for your overall well-being. Many of our volunteers progress into employment or gain places on training as a result of the experience they acquire through volunteering. *After 6 months of volunteering we are able to provide you with a reference.*

Many of our volunteers tell us how proud they feel of the difference they have made.

So what commitment am I required to give?

- Attend the initial course of preparation.
- 2-3 hours per week to support a family (at a time that works for you).
- Access supervision every 6 weeks.
- Attend on-going training sessions and an annual Safeguarding refresher session.

We recognise that volunteers may stop volunteering at any time but we would expect and hope they would be able to offer their time to Home-Start for at least 12 months.

What next?

Either complete the application form or contact the office on the details below to request one. We will then invite you to come and meet with us so that we can find out a little more about each other!

If, following this meet up, we both feel that this is the right choice for you; you will be invited to attend our next Course of Preparation. Whilst you are start to process

the checks (DBS and references).



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