

Organisation Name		Reference code
Hibiscus Initiatives		2024-10-YWG22
Organisation Address		
Resource for London 356 Holloway Road London N7 6PA		
Website Address		
https://hibiscusinitiatives.org.uk/		
How did you hear about the Triangle Trust?		
website		
Please describe your organisation's purpose in one or two sentences.		
Hibiscus enables Black and minoritised migrant women in contact with the criminal justice and immigration systems to re-build their lives.		
Type of organisation? (tick all that apply and complete relevant details)		
Charity	Registered Charity Number	Date Registered
Yes	1104094	2002
Community Interest Company	Registered Companies House Number	Date Registered
No	4533442	
Social Enterprise	Social Enterprise Mark Awarded Yes/No	Date Awarded
No	No	
Grant Summary		
Funding would enable Hibiscus to retain a Young Women's Project Worker (YWPW) who would offer holistic, trauma-informed support to migrant young adults aged 18 and 30 in the London Community (at our North London Women's Centre), in prisons, and through Wraparound support for young migrant women on probation in London.		
Please describe the specific needs of the young women and girls you work with that this project will address		
<p>Young adult women in contact with the criminal justice system (CJS) are likely to have experienced violence, abuse, exploitation, poor mental health, addiction, exclusion from education, poverty and homelessness and 63% of girls and young women serving community sentences have experience rape or domestic abuse (Agenda Alliance). However, as a minority in the CJS because of both their age and gender they are overlooked in both policy and services.</p> <p>Girls and young Black and minoritised migrant women face additional inequalities and experience double standards as criminal justice agencies are quick to criminalise them, but slow to offer support when they are victims of crime. As a result they become disillusioned, retraumatised and are at risk of further harm.</p> <p>These inequalities continue once young women receive a custodial sentence. Women account for only 4% of the total prison population, of which young women are just 9%. Prison does not keep women safe: rates of self-harm are 11 times higher in women's prisons than in men's, and young women account for 40% of these incidents (Prison Reform Trust, 2024).</p> <p>Despite this, there is a lack of tailored responses to their specific needs. The Female Offender Strategy makes no reference to young women and they are mentioned in</p>		

passing in the Female Offender Strategy Delivery Plan, in relation to the high rates of self-harm amongst this age group. HMPPS have developed tools to support work with young adult men in prison, but there are no equivalent resources for young women. The under-representation, lack of support and inequality is even more acute for young migrant women, who experience the same issues as their white British counterparts, but also face many additional barriers. Limited knowledge or understanding of the UK criminal justice system and processes prevents their access to justice. Fear of authorities due to insecure immigration status and previous experiences of abuse, exploitation or discrimination means they are more likely to mistrust the CJS and less willing to share information, resulting in more severe sentences and their needs being missed.

For those with language needs, reliance on interpreters can further hinder trust and understanding. 80% of young migrant women we see through our work at Westminster Magistrates Court require an interpreter. Many also have limited education and are illiterate, leaving them extremely vulnerable in a system ill-equipped to address their needs. Inadequate language provision across the CJS means women become "spectators rather than participants in their own case" and as a result are more likely to be remanded into custody (Robson, 2021).

The majority (62%) of young migrant women in contact with the CJS who we support have committed offences linked to financial need, e.g. begging, petty theft, or working without documents. Women are driven to engage in these activities due to financial insecurity and destitution, made worse by immigration restrictions which prevent them from working legally or accessing public funds. Many have families and young children to support, either here in the UK or left in the care of grandparents/other family members at home. Cultural expectations on women to be the sole or main providers for their families, for example within the Roma community, adds to this pressure.

As with all young women, violence against women and girls disproportionately affects migrant women this age group, with many experiencing abusive relationships, domestic violence and coercive control which can lead to offending behaviour. In prisons, we see young migrant women arrested for offences committed due to coercion linked to financial insecurity and debts; or for working with false documents, often without their knowledge. This can be a strong indicator of potential trafficking, yet survivors of trafficking continue to be criminalised instead of protected (Prison Reform Trust 2024; 2018).

What are the key outcomes you will be seeking to achieve for young women and girls either at risk of offending or who are already caught up in the criminal justice system?

With support from Hibiscus, we would expect:

- 90% of young women will better understand their circumstances, rights and options

As noted above, young migrant women experience many barriers in navigating the CJS. Hibiscus project workers help women to understand the system, their rights and options. In 2023-24, 94% of women Hibiscus supported in prison reported better understanding their situation, rights and the options available to them; and 88% felt able to make informed choices and take action regarding their situation as a result. Understanding the conditions of their bail, community sentence or post-release licence is also essential for women to avoid further criminalisation, and reduces the risk of women re-entering the CJS.

- 75% will access support to regularise their immigration status

Insecure immigration status is a key factor which pushes young migrant women into contact with the CJS, due to the restrictions it places on their right to work, study, housing, benefits and access to support services. Hibiscus supports women to access vital immigration advice and legal support. We are regulated to OISC level 2; co-deliver the Protea Clinic providing free one-off legal advice to our service users; and work to

find and liaise with legal aid solicitors to represent them.

- 60% will have increased financial stability

Linked to immigration status are young women's financial needs. We offer emergency welfare funds to provide immediate assistance if women are unable to meet their or their family's basic needs; as well as referrals to local services such as food and baby banks. Young migrant women are often misinformed about what support they are entitled to, and may be given incorrect advice or decisions by mainstream services. We ensure women are receiving all eligible payments, e.g. asylum support or s17; and partner with specialist services such as employment or debt advisors, to help them work towards long-term financial stability.

- 75% build positive connections and reduce isolation

Many of the young women we work with have limited support networks in the UK, especially young mothers looking after children at home. Women who have experienced trauma and exploitation, including survivors of trafficking, are often reluctant to socialise with other women from the same community, due to fears of re-exploitation. Through engaging in Hibiscus activities, women join a community with other migrant women who understand their situation and experiences, build friendships and support one another.

- 40% develop practical knowledge and skills

Young migrant women are highly resilient, capable and resourceful. Many face long waits for their immigration case to be decided, yet are not allowed to work or study in the meantime due to the restrictions imposed. We provide practical workshops and classes to help them develop knowledge and skills for the future, such as English classes, employability skills and information workshops.

What are the key activities you will undertake with this funding to achieve this?

We will employ a Young Women's Project Worker (YWPW) to provide:

- Individual casework, advice and advocacy

The YWPW will provide dedicated support to up to 40 young migrant women aged 18-30. This intensive holistic, gender-specific and trauma-informed practical and emotional support is tailored to each young migrant woman's needs, such as housing, family relationships, immigration, mental and physical health, and violence against women and girls, including coercive control, domestic violence and trafficking. Central to all these issues is the impact of the hostile environment, which prevents women with insecure immigration status from accessing mainstream services and support.

Building trust with young women takes time, and many experience multiple challenges and setbacks on their journey to recovery so our YWPW will provide long-term support to maintain the young woman's practical and emotional wellbeing. Women receive an average of 18-24 months of individual casework support before leaving our service or continuing to attend activities only. Over time we aim to help women build the skills, confidence and agency to advocate for themselves.

Women may be referred to the YWPW by Hibiscus teams at Court, in prison, or on release from detention; or directly by one of our many referral partners such as probation, social services, health professionals and other women's sector organisations.

- Developing partnerships

We partner with specialist organisations to deliver additional support to women we work with, e.g. Street Talk providing long-term trauma counselling to women who have experienced trafficking/modern slavery, and A Fairer Chance, supporting women into employment.

The YWPW will strengthen and build new partnerships with organisations working with younger women, to build strong networks of support and ensure their services are open and accessible to young migrant women.

- Dedicated activity programme

In addition to individual support, the YWPW will develop and deliver a specialist activity programme designed to meet young women's needs, and support them to engage and participate in our regular activities. In-person activities at our Women's Centre help to reduce isolation & build friendships/connection with other migrant women, whilst online activities enable women with young children who are unable to attend in-person to join. Groups in prisons are designed to offer in-reach support and preparation for release. Activities will be designed in consultation with young women we are supporting, with a focus on identified needs including building healthy relationships, financial management, mental health and well-being, and developing skills to support future employment.

Does your proposed project already exist or is this a new piece of work? If this project is already operating, please describe to us how you will use this as an opportunity to build on what you have achieved to date. If this is a new piece of work, please explain what this funding will enable you to do differently.

- Young Women's Project Worker - funding from The Triangle Trust would cover the salary for this post. A dedicated Project Worker can deliver this work to support Black and minoritised migrant young women aged between 18 and 30
- Community & Women's Centre Manager - Community & Women's Centre Manager will be responsible for line management of the Young Woman's Project Worker and they will provide oversight of the project
- Head of Department - the Head of Department will line manage the Community and Women's Centre Manager. She would provide strategic oversight and would be accountable for delivery on the funded objectives

What expertise and track record do you have to be able to deliver this work successfully? Please specifically mention your expertise linked to gender and trauma informed approaches.

Hibiscus has over 35 years' experience of supporting Black and minoritised migrant women in contact with the immigration and criminal justice systems, having been established in 1986 to address the gap in provision for Black and minoritised migrant women in HMP Holloway, and to challenge the racial injustices and inequalities that they experienced. Since then, we have gained an unrivalled track record of delivering high-impact support and advocacy services to Black and minoritised migrant women in the community, prisons, courts and immigration removal centres.

Since our inception, we have worked with all Black and minoritised migrant women aged over 18, but we have seen a growing need amongst young migrant women who are being caught up the criminal justice system, in many cases, because of circumstances that they find difficult to control. Most of the young women we support have experienced systematic abuse, either from partners or traffickers, and as the government's immigration policy has become increasingly hostile, from the systems that should be in place to protect them.

Hibiscus aims to challenge the systemic problems of racism, gender injustice, violence against women and girls (VAWG), anti-immigration sentiment and lack of access to timely and fair justice experienced by Black and minoritised migrant women in the immigration and criminal justice systems. We put the voices and experiences of Black and minoritised migrant women at the centre of our work to promote positive narratives based on lived experience, whilst challenging the negative policies that deny them the support they need; and by listening to women, we can put systems in place to help them become advocates for change.

After consultation with women who said that after they had benefited from Hibiscus support, they were keen to become advocates for change, we established a empowerment and agency programme to support women with experience of the immigration and criminal justice systems to champion systemic changes. Since 2021,

42 women who benefited from support at our women's centre have worked alongside our Policy and Public Affairs team to campaign for change through workshops, creating podcasts, joining parliamentary debates and speaking directly to MPs. All of Hibiscus' work is trauma and gender informed and we take a holistic approach to tailor support to each women's specific needs. It is through this targeted support that we have identified the need to have a project worker who will work specifically with young adult Black and minoritised migrant women. Our purpose is to help young women understand their rights, options and entitlements so they access appropriate support, and alleviate isolation and the worst effects of poverty, destitution and institutional violence. Without this trauma-informed wraparound support, many women (and their children) face re-traumatisation, re-exploitation, criminalisation, homelessness and destitution.

Please explain how the grant will be spent

A breakdown of the £40,000 per annum request is:

	2024/25	2025/26
Salaries (inc ENI & Pensions)		
Project worker (1FTE)	£32,450	£34,073
Direct costs		
Staff travel and subsistence	£1,200	£1,260
Workshops, activities & materials	£3,000	£3,150
Mobile phones	£250	£263
Contributions to overheads		
HR, Finance, IT contributions, SLT	£3,100	£1,254
TOTAL	£40,000	£40,000

Who will be responsible for overseeing and delivering this work?

- Young Women's Project Worker - funding from The Triangle Trust would cover the salary for this post. A dedicated Project Worker can deliver this work to support Black and minoritised migrant young women aged between 18 and 30
- Community & Women's Centre Manager - Community & Women's Centre Manager will be responsible for line management of the Young Woman's Project Worker and they will provide oversight of the project
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How do you plan to continue this work once the grant ends?

Hibiscus benefits from loyal support from Trusts and Foundations, such as John Ellerman Foundation, Justice Together Initiative, Man Charitable Trust and the Oak Foundation, Livery funders, including Goldsmiths Charity and Statutory funders including the National Lottery Community Fund and Ministry of Justice. The majority of our grants are multi-year and are a combination of restricted and unrestricted grants which supports all areas of our work. We have a strong pipeline of potential applications which is constantly evolving and we will continue to apply to Trusts and Foundations for funding to support our projects and our core costs, both of which include contributions to the salaries of our staff.

A dedicated Young Person's Project Worker will allow the organisation to further develop our comprehensive understanding of the needs of young migrant women, and how we can best tailor our services to support them. This knowledge, skills and understanding will be built into our Learning and Development programme to ensure that the wider frontline delivery team benefit from the expertise they bring, so that if future funds are not forthcoming, the team will be able to continue providing the same high quality level of specialist support. In addition, through strengthening Hibiscus'

partnerships with other specialist young women's services, the role will contribute to a legacy of a stronger landscape of support for young migrant women at risk of contact with the criminal justice system.

Hibiscus is investigating sustainable funding models, including generating income from the Hibiscus training programmes, which will help to fund the organisation's core costs, including our communications programme and rent for our office space.

Are 80% of your beneficiaries women and girls? Please provide a breakdown of your beneficiary numbers for the last two years.

Hibiscus was established in 1986 to support Black and migrant women in HMP Holloway. Since then, we have expanded our work to include support in the London community, in prisons, custody, courts and in immigration removal centres.

When we started working in Immigration Removal Centres 12 years ago, we only provided support to women, but our contract was with the Home Office who requested that we also supported some men in immigration removal centres. Over the years, the number of men we were supporting grew, and this contributed to our decision to end our Home Office contract. The contract ended in March 2024 and since then, we have re-established ourselves as a "by and for" organisation that will only support women and girls.

Between April 2023 and March 2024 we supported 960 Black and minoritised migrant women; of whom 178 were supported by our community team, 157 were in HMPs Downview, Bronzefield and Peterborough and 588 accessed services from immigration removal centres. In addition, we supported 41 women in Westminster Magistrates Court between November 2023 (when this service started) and April 2024.

Does your organisation have existing knowledge and expertise working across the criminal justice system?

Supporting Black and minoritised migrant women in the CJS has been at the heart of our work since 1986, and we remain the only organisation that supports women at the intersection of the immigration and criminal justice systems.

Hibiscus Courts project

This provides specialist support to migrant women at Westminster Magistrates Court. Our project workers provide early intervention, assessment and referrals to migrant women appearing at the Court. We support women to understand the Courts process and their options; liaise with other professionals to inform their case, including input to Pre-Sentence Reports; provide language support, advice and advocacy to address immediate needs; and onwards referrals to provide them with ongoing support from other Hibiscus teams or externally.

Prisons work

We support migrant women at HMP's Downview, Peterborough and Bronzefield. The team attend each prison weekly to conduct 1-1 appointments and we operate a telephone helpline 2 days p/w. The team carry out follow-up casework based on each woman's individual situation and needs, e.g. providing advice/info, liaising with other professionals, referrals to prison/external services, and help to understand/navigate the prison system or immigration paperwork. Group workshops offer information, wellbeing or empowerment activities. Unlike many prison-based services, we can support women whether on remand, sentenced, or if detained under immigration powers at the end of their sentence. Many women need support for several years as their case slowly progresses.

Detention work

Our team supports women in Yarl's Wood IRC, providing immigration guidance and help with services, including bail, asylum and detention processes, induction support

and detention updates. The team sources and advocates for legal representation and provides emotional and psychological support as the women are highly traumatised. The team is accredited by OISC, possess counselling qualifications, and are trained as IDVAs.

Through-the-gate and Wraparound support

Our TTG project worker can help facilitate a smooth transition to encourage community inclusion and reduce cycles of re-offending. They may liaise with housing services to prevent homelessness, connect women with community services, i.e GP or mental health services, and assist women to access education, work, or activities at our Women's Centre. They work with women from 3 months pre-release and up to 6 months post-release.

Our Wraparound project workers receive referrals from probation as part of the London women's community rehabilitation services to provide individual holistic casework support to women released on license or serving community sentences. This community alternative helps women address the reasons they have been drawn into the CJS and prevents them re-offending/be taken into prison.

Our work is respected by prison, probation and immigration staff who regularly express appreciation for our services

Will you be receiving funding from any other sources for this project?

No

Do all staff have enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks? If no please state why.

Yes

Reason why not all staff have DBS checks.

Total funding requested in this application (£10,000 to £80,000 with a maximum of £40,000 in one year)

£80000

Proposed grant start date

4/1/2025

Proposed grant duration in months

24

How much funding is required each year?

Year 1

£40000

Year 2

£40000

What was your organisation's expenditure in the most recent financial year?

£1815183

What was your organisation's annual income in the most recent financial year?

£1873894

What value of unrestricted reserves did your organisation have at the end of the most recent financial year?

£897853