

bright CHOICES

ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017



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Bright Choices

Bright Choices is a partnership between Sacro, the Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Equality Council (ELREC) and the Multicultural Family Base (MCFB). It is specifically designed to help women, men, children, families and communities who are experiencing difficult relationships stemming from disagreements about what behaviour is acceptable. We can help you if:

- > You do not want to grow up or raise your family in the traditions of your community
- > You or someone you know is accused of 'dishonouring' or 'bringing shame' to his/her family, community or religion
- > You know that someone else is suffering because they are accused of 'dishonouring' their family
- > You are unhappy or abused in your marriage but you cannot leave your husband or wife
- > You want support from a trained professional to help you discuss issues with your family or community about choices you want to make in your life
- > You or someone you know needs help to stay safe in their family home or in their community.

How We Can Help

Bright Choices offers free, confidential support to deal with such issues by:

- > Helping you to stay safe and well
- > Helping you to find out about your rights, responsibilities and choices
- > Supporting you to make informed decisions
- > Providing practical and emotional support to help you build your confidence and skills
- > Seeing you at home, in the community or in our offices
- > Facilitating a conversation between you and someone who has hurt you to help you decide how to move forward, if this is what you wish to do.

Situations Where Bright Choices Can Help People:

The following are based on real stories of people that Bright Choices has helped but any identifying information about them has been changed to protect their anonymity:

- Farah comes from Egypt and she has three daughters under the age of 10. Farah asked Bright Choices for help because her husband and her community were putting pressure on her to take her daughters back to Egypt and have them cut. This is a practice known in the UK as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Farah had survived FGM herself as a young girl and she did not want her daughters to go through it. Farah also felt vulnerable because she struggled with her English. Her dream was to build her skills so that she could get a job and provide a good life for her children. Bright Choices connected Farah to the relevant social services and spoke to her children's school to make sure that they were safe. Bright Choices also helped Farah to access appropriate healthcare services, English language courses in her community and to learn to travel independently by bus around Edinburgh to be more independent.
- Maria is from central Africa and she is 24 years old. She asked Bright Choices for help because after her father died, her mother was putting pressure on her to get married. Maria wanted to finish her university course and get some work experience before getting married and having children. Maria said that she tried to discuss this with her mother but every time she tried, they would end up having a big fight. Bright Choices suggested that she could access mediation support so that she and her mother could have a conversation about this and come to an agreement about how to move forward. Maria's mother unfortunately did not want to participate in mediation. Instead, Bright Choices offered Maria conflict resolution and communication support so that she could have a productive conversation with her mother about her wishes for her own life. She was also given information on her rights to marriage, such as the fact that she could decline a marriage proposal, and the fact that it is illegal in Scotland to force someone to get married. Through this support, Maria was able to discuss with her mother what she wanted for her life and they came to an agreement that Maria would finish her course and look for work before she considered any arrangement for a marriage.
- Hamid and Safina came to the UK because they were victimised in their home country in the Middle East for having a marriage out of love which was not arranged or agreed on by their families. They needed some emotional support to come to terms with the abuse they endured in their home country as well as help to make sure that their two young children could start building a life here. Bright Choices supported Hamid and Safina to get a house that is appropriate for their needs and to communicate with their lawyer to support their asylum application. The service also provided support individually to the children to make sure that they were coping well with living in Scotland and settling in to school. Hamid and Safina now have refugee status in the UK, a place they can call home that is comfortable and their children are thriving at school. Bright Choices is now helping them to connect to their local community and use local resources so that they can start having a wider social circle and feel more included in what is happening in Edinburgh.

About Bright Choices

Bright Choices was established in Edinburgh in 2015 with funding from the Big Lottery for four years. The service was created to offer a wide range of support services to people affected by what is known as 'Honour Abuse' or 'Honour-Based Violence', which includes domestic abuse, forced marriage and female genital cutting or Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Bright Choices directly helps Edinburgh's minority communities, through emotional and practical support; mediation, conflict resolution and communication support; outreach and advocacy; community workshops on health and human rights for children, young people and adults; and free awareness raising and training events for front-line professionals in relevant services.

Frequently Asked Questions:

> What is confidentiality and how does Bright Choices apply it?

Confidentiality is very important to Bright Choices because it helps the service to build positive trusting relationships with the individuals and families that access support. Confidentiality means that what people choose to discuss with the Bright Choices team is not shared with anyone else, including other people in the family, the community or other professionals. The only exception to this is that if anyone who receives support from Bright Choices discloses that his/her life is in danger from someone else; or that he/she poses a risk to someone else; or that there is risk to young children or the general public then Bright Choices will need to engage with other relevant services to make sure that people are safe. In every occasion, Bright Choices will try its best to make sure that it involves the person or people using the service in going forward with involving anyone outside the service.

> Do you share information with Social Work and the Police?

Although Bright Choices works in partnership with Police Scotland and Social Services to help keep people safe, the service does not share information with any other service unless it is *absolutely necessary*. The only time Bright Choices might communicate information to Police Scotland and Social Work is where there is a serious concern for anyone's safety, and that includes people supported by Bright Choices, their families, their communities, children or the general public.

> Do you help families to break up?

Bright Choices believes that any person who wants to be supported by the service knows his/her life and his/her circumstances better than anyone. However, the service will also advise people and help them to explore their situation in depth because sometimes there are risks involved that are not obvious at first sight. The first step taken by Bright Choices is to explore the issues raised by people to see whether it is possible for a resolution to be found. In many situations, it is entirely possible for a family to stay together with the right support and the involvement of the right services, including Social Work and NHS services, among others. However, sometimes there are situations where it is not possible or feasible for a family to stay together, either because there cannot be an agreement on how to do this safely, or because family members agree that the best way to move forward is for the family not to live together any more. Bright Choices will always aim to gather all essential information and to consult with people concerned before taking any drastic actions.

> How easy is it to access Bright Choices?

Accessing Bright Choices is very easy: anyone can be referred to use the service, either by a professional, they can refer themselves to access support, or they can refer another friend or family member for whom they feel concerned. Bright Choices feels it is important that anyone who receives support from the service gives explicit consent for the support to be offered, as this would be the most productive way to work together. Once referred, Bright Choices will arrange an initial meeting with the person or people who are looking to receive support as soon as possible. This meeting is usually arranged within two weeks of receiving the referral, and the aim is for the person or people referred and the Bright Choices team to have a clear idea about what the issues are and how to best offer support. During this meeting, a Risk Assessment will also be carried out for the Bright Choices team to become aware of any dangers that might be present during the course of the work. This will make sure that the service provided is appropriate and helpful to the person or people involved. The Bright Choices team also consists of team members who come from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds and who speak a variety of languages, including Urdu, Punjabi, French, Polish, Hausa and Farsi among others, to make sure that there is the option for some people to access the service in their own language.

> Mediation can be dangerous in some situations. How do you make sure that the service you provide is safe?

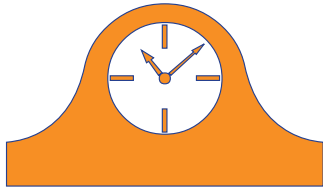
It is true that there have been situations where providing mediation in situations of Honour Abuse or Honour-Based Violence has had very negative results. In order to make sure that Bright Choices provides mediation safely, the service carries out Risk Assessments specifically designed to explore any obvious or hidden risks coming from the mediation process. To minimize any risks, Bright Choices makes sure that this process is carried out by highly trained professionals who are specialists in cross-cultural mediation and who have been highly trained in identifying and addressing any risks that could arise as a result of the mediation process. In some situations, it is possible that the risks might be too high for mediation to go ahead. In such situations, Bright Choices might not offer mediation, but another service such as practical and emotional support instead, to ensure that people are safe and feel listened to but in a way that is safer and more appropriate for the issues raised.

22 

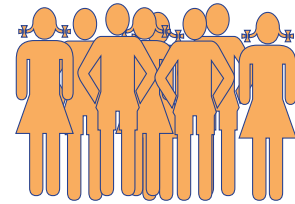
NEW **REFERRALS** FOR TWO INDIVIDUALS AND 20 FAMILIES TO RECEIVE SUPPORT

176 

SESSIONS OF **SUPPORT** WERE PROVIDED IN PEOPLE'S HOMES



79

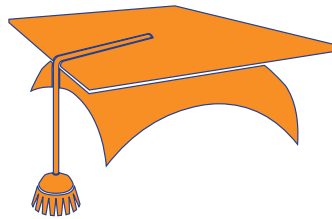


890

INDIVIDUALS **BENEFITED** FROM BRIGHT CHOICES SUPPORT

700

HOURS OF ONE-TO-ONE AND FAMILY **SUPPORT** WERE PROVIDED OF WHICH:



HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS **ATTENDED** WORKSHOPS ON HUMAN RIGHTS & HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE

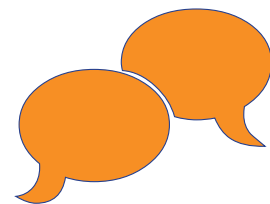
623 INVOLVED PRACTICAL & EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

78 INVOLVED MEDIATION & CONFLICT RESOLUTION SUPPORT

189 HOURS INVOLVED EMOTIONAL AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT & SAFEGUARDING FOLLOWING MEDIATION & CONFLICT RESOLUTION INTERVENTIONS

264

PROFESSIONALS IN NHS, EDUCATION, SOCIAL WORK, POLICE SCOTLAND, STUDENTS AND THE THIRD SECTOR WERE **TRAINED** ON HOW TO RECOGNISE AND RESPOND TO HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE



181

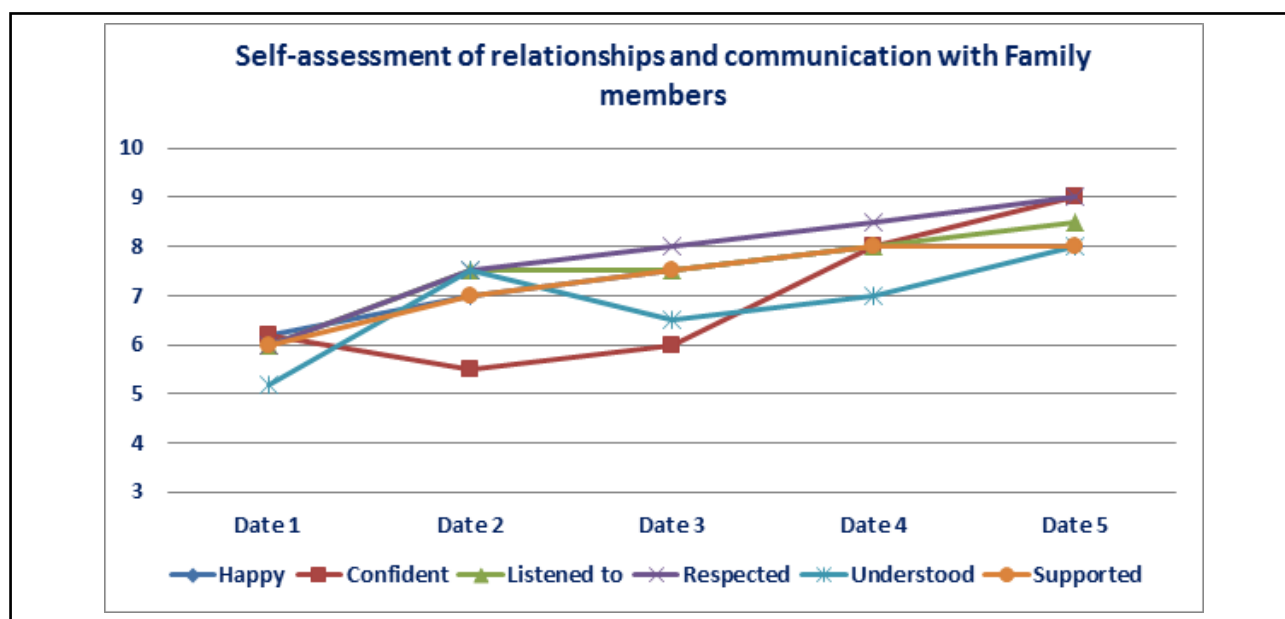
SESSIONS OF **SUPPORT** OF MORE THAN TWO HOURS WERE PROVIDED IN THE COMMUNITY

A Review of Year Two

During its second year, Bright Choices has continued to successfully deliver person-centred emotional and practical support to people who access the service. Further work has been carried out to create new partnerships both with third sector organisations who deliver similar support to women, children and families, as well as statutory services such as Social Work, Schools, Colleges and Universities, the NHS, Police Scotland and the Edinburgh Child Protection Committee.

Supporting Improved Communication Within Families

One of the key goals of the Bright Choices service is to support families to reduce conflict by supporting them to improve their communication skills. This is achieved both through mediation and conflict resolution services, as well as through emotional and practical support. On a monthly basis, people supported by Bright Choices are asked to rate how Happy, Confident, Listened To, Respected, Understood and Supported they feel by their own families. They are asked to provide a score from 1 to 10, 1 indicating 'Not at all', and 10 indicating 'completely'. It is hoped that over time, the overall average scores will increase, suggesting that family communication improves with support from Bright Choices:



Joint Work With The Edinburgh Child Protection Committee

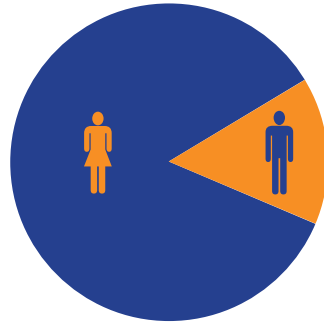
Bright Choices has had ongoing communication with the Edinburgh Child Protection Committee (ECPC) regarding our work on Honour-Based Violence. The ECPC has endorsed the content of training provided to both school-based staff and pupils on aspects of Honour-Based Violence. Bright Choices is now offering a basic awareness training package, endorsed by the Edinburgh Child Protection Committee on 'Introduction to Honour-Based Violence', covering Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation.

By the end of the 2017 calendar year, Bright Choices will begin to deliver a Level 2 (specific contact workforce) training programme on FGM based on the Edinburgh and Lothians Inter-agency Procedures for girls and women at risk of FGM. This will form part of the Edinburgh Child Protection Committee learning and development strategy and calendar.

OF ALL PEOPLE ACCESSING BRIGHT CHOICES SUPPORT:

85%

WERE **GIRLS** OR WOMEN

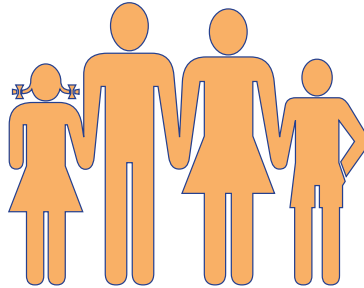


15%

WERE **BOYS** OR MEN

75%

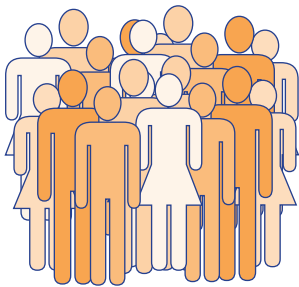
HAVE **CHILDREN**



32

CHILDREN INDIRECTLY **BENEFITED** FROM BRIGHT CHOICES SUPPORT

ETHNICITY



- 13%** CAME FROM A **WHITE EUROPEAN** BACKGROUND
- 3%** IDENTIFIED AS **MIXED ETHNIC** BACKGROUND
- 42%** ORIGINATED FROM **SOUTH ASIA**
- 19%** CAME FROM AN **AFRICAN** BACKGROUND
- 23%** IDENTIFIED AS **ARAB**

RELIGION

- 7%** IDENTIFIED AS **CHRISTIAN**
- 3%** IDENTIFIED AS **BUDDHIST**
- 74%** IDENTIFIED AS **MUSLIM**
- 16%** IDENTIFIED AS **SIKH**





International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation

On 6 February 2017, the International Day of Zero Tolerance to FGM, Bright Choices organised an event for professionals in partnership with the Edinburgh Child Protection Committee. The event invited professionals working in Education, Health, Social Services, Police Scotland, the Scottish Government and the Third Sector to learn more about the work being done in different professional areas to support survivors of FGM and to protect children from the practice.

The event was opened by Michelle Miller, Chair of the Edinburgh Child Protection Committee, Chief Social Work Officer and Head of Safer and Stronger Communities, City of Edinburgh Council. Speakers included survivors of FGM, Findings from research on FGM in Scotland, as well as representatives from key child protection services within Police Scotland, the NHS, Social Work, the UK Border Force and Education. The event was closed by Anne Neilson, Director for Public Protection for NHS Lothian.

The event was very well attended by professionals across all different areas of work involving people affected by or at risk of FGM and the feedback received was overwhelmingly positive:

When participants were asked what they have learned from attending the event, some of their responses are included below:

- > 'Ask questions, don't be afraid'
- > 'Understanding cultural issues'
- > 'Be more aware of prevalence'
- > 'Greater knowledge'
- > 'Improved knowledge'
- > 'Look out for signs in the people I work with'

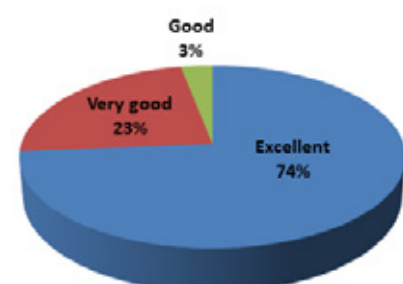
Other general feedback and comments included:

- > 'Very interesting event. Well done!'
- > 'Survivors' stories were very powerful. They were very brave!'
- > 'Found this event very powerful, particularly the survivors' stories'
- > 'Great inclusion of multi-disciplinary services'
- > 'Very informative, excellent speakers who were all very passionate when talking.'

What was the most interesting part of the event?



How do you rate this event?





Bright Choices Recognised by the Scottish Social Services Council



At the beginning of 2017, Bright Choices was nominated for a Scottish Social Services Council Award in the category 'Head Above the Parapet'. The category was addressed to individuals or services who have 'spoken up about an issue, promoting social justice and championing the interests of the vulnerable'. The award is intended 'to encourage people to stand up for others and challenge rhetoric that can damage the people we work with'. Bright Choices was shortlisted and eventually won the award at a ceremony held in June of 2017 at Crieff Hydro. The entry submitted by the service as well as a short video summarising the work being carried out by the team are available on the Scottish Social Services Awards website: www.sssa.scot

OF ALL PEOPLE ACCESSING BRIGHT CHOICES SUPPORT:



36% WERE AFFECTED BY **FGM**

60% WERE AFFECTED BY **DOMESTIC ABUSE**

32% HAD EXPERIENCED **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

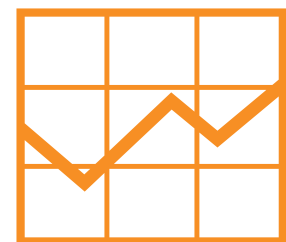
21% WERE EXPERIENCING **PRESSURE TO MARRY**, HAD BEEN IN A FORCED MARRIAGE OR FELT UNABLE TO LEAVE A MARRIAGE

50% EXPERIENCED **CONFLICT** WITHIN THEIR **FAMILIES**

43% EXPERIENCED **CONFLICT** WITHIN THEIR **COMMUNITIES**



50% WERE SUPPORTED TO ACCESS APPROPRIATE **ACCOMMODATION** FOR THEIR OWN AND THEIR FAMILIES' NEEDS



32% RECEIVED SUPPORT WITH **IMMIGRATION** PROBLEMS



45% RECEIVED SUPPORT TO ACCESS APPROPRIATE **MENTAL HEALTH** SERVICES

My Life, My Choices: A Course on Human Rights and Honour-Based Violence For Young People

In its second year, Bright Choices decided to strengthen its prevention work by raising awareness of human rights and Honour-Based violence with young people, who can be the most vulnerable to being victimised by forced marriage and female genital mutilation and who might be experiencing or witnessing abuse in their own or their friends' lives.

To address these issues, the service created a course module for young teens titled 'My life, my choices'. This course starts by introducing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child separating 'rights', 'wants' and 'needs'. It discusses conflicts within families and ways to address this, and introduces concepts around rights to one's own body, choices, privacy, and marriage.

To date, the course has been delivered to over 700 pupils from the ages of 12 to 16 and the young people and teachers who have attended have provided excellent feedback:

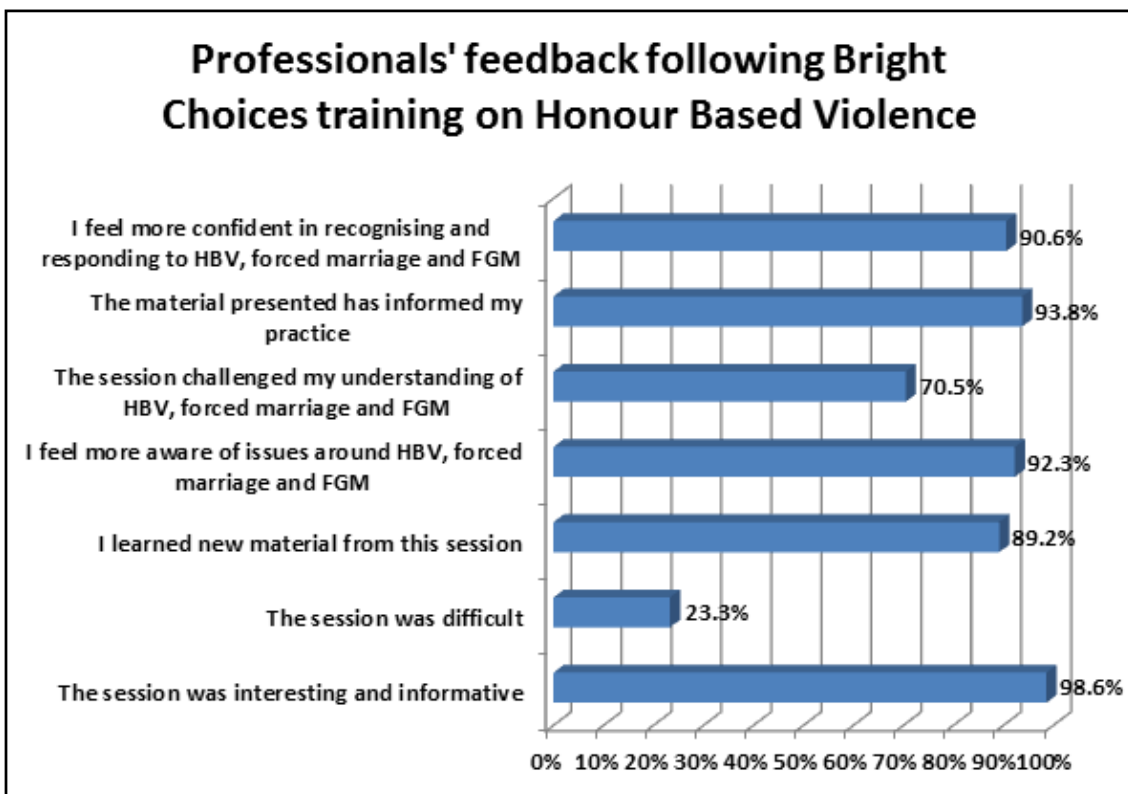
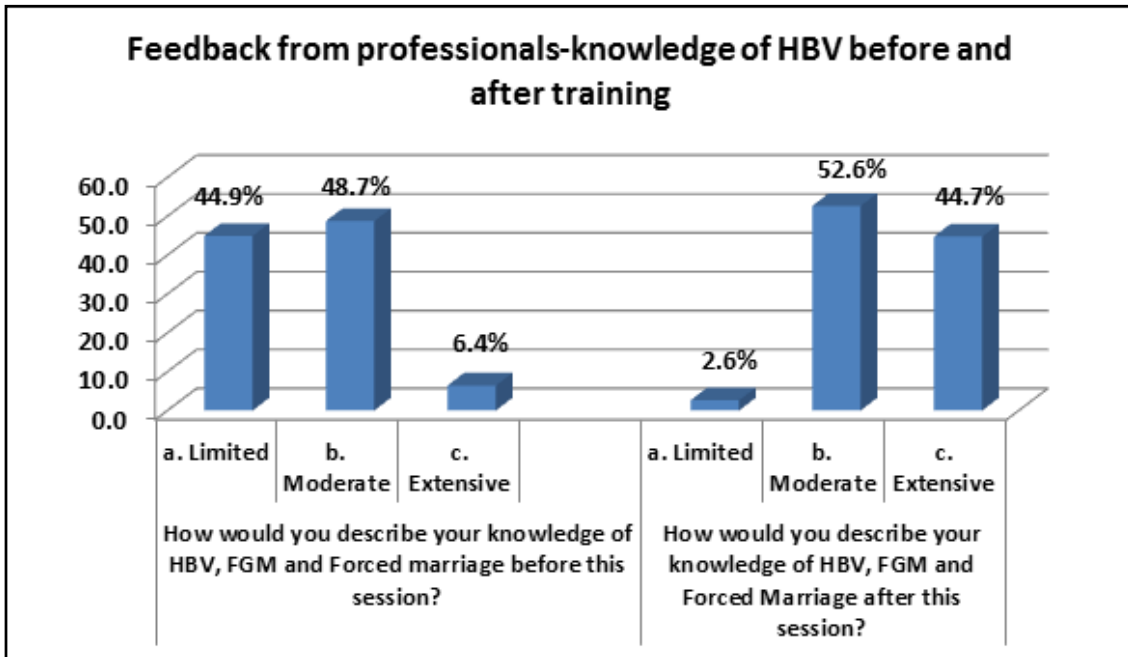
Responses to closed-ended questions from S2 and S3 pupils attending 'My Life, My Choices' course			
After this session	Yes	Not sure	No
I know the difference between 'wants' and 'needs'	96%	4%	0
I know about my rights as a child and an individual	93%	7%	0
I know what are some examples of unhealthy relationships with family and other people	95%	5%	0
I know that no-one should make me marry a person I don't want to	98%	2%	0
I know that no-one should make physical harm/alteration to my body for non-medical or non-therapeutic reasons	98%	2%	0
I know where I can go for support	92%	6%	2%

Additional Feedback from S2 and S3 pupils

- > "Great and Informative lesson"
- > "This has helped me a lot to understand about healthy/unhealthy relationships and my rights and needs"
- > "Boy circumcision is as bad as girl 'circumcision'. It is not their choice."
- > "Thank you. You have opened my eyes"

Training for Professionals

Training and awareness raising for front line professionals continues to be a very popular aspect of Bright Choices. During its second year, the service provided training to 264 professionals working in the NHS, Education, Police Scotland, Social Work, the Third Sector, as well as social work students on placement. The training provided is tailored to the specific responsibilities and work remits of different professionals and covers the warning signs of different forms of Honour-Based Violence—how to address it with individuals and families accessing services—as well as relevant legislation and appropriate responses according to the work remits of different professionals.



Assessing Safety and Risk Over the Course Of Work with People Using Bright Choices

In order to assess the impact of Bright Choices support in the lives of people supported by the service, risk assessments are reviewed on a monthly basis. These measure changes in people’s lives in terms of Well-being, Family and Community Relationships, Safety and Risk and Awareness and Access to Choices.

When a risk assessment is being reviewed, the higher a person scores, the more risk he/she experiences. Ideally, over time, Bright Choices is aiming to see a gradual reduction in scores as a result of individuals and families receiving support, developing a higher sense of well-being and resourcefulness and developing long-term life skills as per the targets they set for themselves at the initial stages of support.

To date, risk assessment reviews over a 12 month period indicate that Bright Choices support is successful in helping people to develop in these areas, as indicated by the graph below:



The graph above indicates that there is a general reduction in risk and isolation and an increase in wellbeing, choices and positive relationships over time.

Community Workshops

One of the key aims of Bright Choices is to raise awareness of Honour-Based Violence with vulnerable people in the community as well as with professionals working in the front line. Following consultation with people in the community and partner organisations, it was suggested that since Honour-Based Violence affects so many different areas of life and many different generations within families and communities, it would be most productive to create workshops on topics that relate to HBV rather than one overarching HBV workshop for the community.

As a result of this process, Bright Choices created a number of community workshops including, but not exclusively:

- Conflict resolution (covering recognising conflict, generational differences in beliefs and wishes for the future, domestic abuse and child protection)
- Women's health (covering the importance of accessing health care for specific issues such as breast and gynaecological health, pregnancy, and female genital mutilation, as well as how to access specialist support for FGM if this is required)
- Getting ready for marriage (covering the legal age for marriage, different types of marriage such as love, arranged and forced marriage, recognising domestic abuse if/when it happens, the right to be respected and appreciated as a spouse, as well as the right to exit a marriage)

Workshops on the above issues have been delivered both on an 'open access' basis as well as to established groups within partner organisations. Feedback collected at the end of each workshop indicated the value of connecting with community members on such issues, as well as what participants felt they gained from attending them:



Funding for Specific Work on Female Genital Mutilation

Following the ongoing work carried out by Bright Choices on FGM, including the mini-conference on the International Day of Zero Tolerance on FGM, Bright Choices was invited to participate in events carried out by Waverley Care and Police Scotland on FGM. Considering that between 35-40% of women accessing Bright Choices are directly affected by FGM and many of them have young daughters at risk of the practice, Bright Choices was successful at securing 3 years' funding from the Tampon Tax Fund to recruit a specialist FGM Support and Protection Worker.

The FGM Support and Protection Worker's responsibilities primarily include the provision of ongoing emotional support to women who have survived FGM, support to access appropriate specialist healthcare, as well as support to ensure the safety of young girls who are at risk of the practice. The worker will also be responsible for engaging more directly with both men and women from FGM practicing communities to raise awareness of the harmful effects of the practice, its illegal status in the UK and the importance of protecting future generations.

Bright Choices Working with 'Together Scotland' and the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child:

During the summer of 2016, Bright Choices provided a report to Together Scotland providing insight into the risk of Honour-Based Violence against children in the country. The report compiled by Bright Choices was subsequently presented by Together Scotland to Ms. Amal Adoseri, Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, United Nations, in Geneva, on September 27th 2016. The full report can be found at:

<http://www.togetherscotland.org.uk/pdfs/TogetherReport2016.pdf>

Specific mention of Bright Choices, including an anonymised case study can be found on pages 58 and 71-73. This report is used to inform the government of individual UN member countries of the state of children's rights and to make recommendations for future improvement. It will be used to make recommendations by the United Nations to the Westminster Government for the time period 2016-2026.

Bright Choices at Edinburgh Airport

Following the service's ongoing work on FGM, Bright Choices was invited by the UK Border Force in Edinburgh Airport to support with raising awareness with passengers and airport staff to recognise and engage with passengers who may be at risk. This initiative was one of many awareness-raising activities undertaken by Bright Choices and is of particular benefit in highlighting the dangers and distress associated with Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage. The exercise was successful and was reported in the media at: goo.gl/dPEsS5



Bright Choices in the Media:

- Bright Choices was featured on BBC reporting Scotland on 6 February 2017 following the mini-conference the service organised in partnership with the Edinburgh Child Protection Committee on the International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The segment features two former Bright Choices service users whom, through their journey with the service felt empowered to share their stories publicly to inform professionals of the damaging effects of FGM as well as best practice guidelines when working with affected victims and children at risk of the practice. To protect their anonymity, the two women were given pseudonyms, and one's face was pixelated to avoid recognition that might place her at risk of retribution from her community.
- On 29 March 2017, Service Team Leader Angela Voulgari and Volunteer 'Aisha' (name changed to protect her confidentiality) were interviewed for a two-page article in the Daily Record. Aisha discussed her experience of FGM while Angela talked about the ways in which FGM victims and children at risk of FGM are supported and protected in Edinburgh. The article can be found here: goo.gl/LhdtHf
- Bright Choices Service Team Leader, Angela Voulgari and Volunteer 'Aisha' appeared on the Kay Adams Programme on BBC Radio Scotland on 4 May 2017. Aisha bravely discussed her experience of Female Genital Mutilation at the age of six in Sudan, as well as how her life in Scotland changed when she was offered appropriate medical attention and support from Bright Choices.

Feedback from Individuals Accessing Bright Choices Support

Entering its third year, Bright Choices is looking forward to continuing to offer support, conflict resolution and awareness raising services to anyone affected from Honour-Based Violence Below is a sample of service users' responses to these questions:

- 'What have you achieved through support from Bright Choices?'
- Focus, Confidence, Ability to smile, I actually have choices!
- I am able to plan for the future
- Confidence, resilience, knowledge, access to information and HOPE!
- I feel free, brave, strong. I used to cry a lot and I still do but not as much as before. I believe now that I can change my life for the better.
- I am going to college with your support and also getting my driver's licence. I have more independence!
- You have given me hope and I can dream now! I am very strong now!
- More confidence, I am smiling more now. I like my life better with Bright Choices!
- I have will to live again.
- I can appreciate my family much more and enjoy life.
- 'What more would you like from Bright Choices?'
- I would like to learn to drive
- Reconstruction for FGM
- Improve my English
- Safety for my children-issues with passports
- Secure accommodation
- Help with our immigration status-we have fought for 12 years
- Support to help us through our Asylum application
- Help me to feel safe in my home

Bright Choices staff are also encouraged to record any feedback from Service Users that was not provided in written format, but verbally during the course of the work, for example during a home visit or support session. Below are some recent examples of verbal feedback provided to staff by Service users:

- > “I was just walking on the street being so depressed and sad how everything is collapsing in my life one thing after another and then I thought “I know what I need to do – I need call Jana! [Bright Choices project worker, MCFB] she will know what I shall do, because I can trust her. [Bright Choices] helped me like nobody in my life. My own family was never this great to me. I owe you so much, if I kept doing one favour a day for you it still not be enough. You are my family, you come to my mind first when I am thinking, Oh what shall I do next?”

Service user supported to access healthcare services for FGM, as well as child protection support to safeguard her daughters from the practice.

- > “Without Bright Choices I felt like I cannot even celebrate my achievement and great success because you were there for me all this horrible time. Without you it’s not the same and I cannot celebrate on my own. You became so close to me, and I know that even when I moving forward and I won’t see you that much... you will always have big place in my heart and around my table! You can always come and eat with us [the family supported by Bright Choices] just not during Ramadan”!

This family was supported with immigration, community safety, housing, employment and educational support for their children. They now enjoy refugee status in the UK and they are safe from honour killings in their home country in South Asia.

- > “I came here and I struggled so much because my own community turned their back on me but I found support in you that I never dreamt about. I was even thinking of going back home but then I met you and everything changed”.

This service user was on the run from her violent husband while her community bullied and harassed her for leaving him.

- > “It’s amazing to see how long of a journey I came along. I was so low and not believing anything, good, bad, it didn’t matter I just did not trust people. I always thought they had some kind of agenda as people in my community would have if they were ever nice to me. But with Bright Choices support I am a different person. I even got job – like the first proper, full time job in my life and that is all because of you. I can see myself now in completely different light and that is just BIG”!

This young service user was experiencing pressure to marry by her mother and extended family. She was supported through conflict resolution, emotional support and signposting to agencies that helped her find employment.

Acknowledgments:

We would like to offer our warmest thanks to the organisations that have made Bright Choices possible:



We would also like to thank the following organisations for their support:

- > Police Scotland
- > Chalmers Sexual Health Centre
- > The Scottish Government
- > The Lothian Community Health Initiatives Forum
- > Health All Round
- > Saheliya
- > Sikh Sanjog
- > Shakti Women's Aid
- > Immigration and Asylum Social Work
- > The University of Edinburgh School of Social Work
- > Waverley Care
- > The Edinburgh Child Protection Committee
- > Lifeline Pregnancy Counselling and Care
- > Meal on Me
- > The Muslim Women's Association of Edinburgh
- > Beyond the Veil
- > The Council of British Pakistanis in Scotland
- > Edinburgh Central Mosque
- > Iqra Academy
- > Annandale Mosque and Community Centre
- > Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre
- > Edinburgh Women's Aid
- > The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service
- > Edinburgh Napier University
- > Health 4 You
- > The UK Border Force
- > NHS Lothian
- > Children and Families Social Work
- > Immigration and Asylum Social Work
- > LinkNet Mentoring
- > The Edinburgh Royal Infirmary-Accident and Emergency Team
- > Amina-The Muslim Women's Resource Centre
- > KWISA (Kenyan Women in Scotland)
- > Kingston Communications
- > Edinburgh Interfaith Association
- > Changing Perceptions-Bright Red Triangle

The Future of Bright Choices

With the advent of Year two, Bright Choices is starting to reap the fruits of its efforts.

Through meaningful engagement with individuals from communities affected by Honour-Based Violence, the service is now starting to see a shift in attitudes towards a more inclusive environment for the most vulnerable individuals in these communities. People who previously did not have a voice are now able to reach out for support to help them build on their own potential in order to shape their own lives in the way they and their families wish. This has been achieved both through the involvement of people using the service in shaping the future of Bright Choices, as well as their active involvement in advocating for a change in attitudes on what constitutes 'honourable' behaviour in their own communities.

Bright Choices is looking forward to continuing its work within communities affected by Honour-Based Violence in order to ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable people in Edinburgh.

Contact us at:

Bright Choices

Sacro, 29a Albany Street, Edinburgh EH1 3QN

Tel: 0131 622 7500

Fax: 0131 624 7269

Email: brightchoices@sacro.org.uk (enquiries)
brightchoices@sacrosecure.org.uk.cjsm.net (secure)
[n.b. this address will only accept email sent from another secure address]

