

LUMINARY

LITERATURE REVIEW



EMPOWERING EMPLOYMENT FOR
SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE:
WHAT WOMEN NEED AND WHY IT MATTERS

BY REBECCA BRANCH, LUMINARY PROGRAMMES MANAGER





In memory of our Chair of Trustees Sally Beckwith, who having advised us on this literature review, passed away before it was published. Sally was a fierce advocate for women, committed to growing their opportunities for work, education and training knowing they held the keys to a life of independence. As an academic, Sally rooted our vision and mission in research and good practice, weaved around the lived experience of women - she championed their voices in every part of our work. A hugely important part of why Luminary has blossomed into the organisation that it is, is because of Sally's leadership, and her commitment to growing a well-researched model, with women's experiences at its heart. Going forwards, we hope we can honour Sally's commitment to empowering women in every decision we make.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
OUR CONTEXT	3
THE BARRIERS TO EMPOWERING EMPLOYMENT	5
POWER & CONTROL	5
IN-WORK POVERTY	6
WORK VS. BENEFITS	7
UNPAID WORK & CARING RESPONSIBILITIES	9
THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON WOMEN AND PAID WORK	12
OVERCOMING WOMEN'S BARRIERS TO WORK	13
FLEXIBLE APPRENTICESHIPS ARE AN ESSENTIAL TRAINING GROUND	13
FLEXIBLE WORKING TO BALANCE CARING RESPONSIBILITIES	14
ESTABLISHING SAFETY	15
CULTIVATING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS THAT SUSTAIN PAID WORK	17
DELIVERING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS IN A SUPPORTIVE, PSYCHOLOGICALLY INFORMED ENVIRONMENT	19
CULTIVATING FINANCIAL LITERACY AMONG TRAINEES AND GRADUATES	20
CASE STUDY FROM A LUMINARY TRAINEE	23
CONCLUSION	24
APPENDIX: RESEARCH BASED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LUMINARY'S MODEL	25
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	28

INTRODUCTION

Luminary have conducted this literature review to ensure that our mission and approach are responding to a genuine, documented need and are informed by the recommendations of existing research. For this reason, we've read extensively around the theme of unemployment among women, particularly survivors of gender based violence. Most research in this arena is focused on Domestic Abuse survivors, but we believe that the same principles apply across the gender based violence experience. **Some of this research uses the phrase "battered women" - language that Luminary wouldn't choose to use, but will quote to represent the research accurately, using the terminology of the researcher.**



We've drawn from a variety of research but have attempted to base this piece of work in our 'home town' of North East London where Luminary's work is rooted. This has been helped by a piece of research by Camden Women's Forum, resulting from their landmark inquiry exploring how women and girls are best supported into good, sustainable employment. We refer to their research throughout this review, rooting global research in our locality.

We'll discuss the key barriers to employability for women who have survived gender based violence, as highlighted by our reading. However, the bulk of this review will focus on the recommendations made, noting those already featured in Luminary's response and suggested improvements to our model.

OUR CONTEXT

Luminary writes from an assumption that paid work is positive. Not only for its financial benefits, but because of the dignity of work - not to mention the networks and community that come with it. It's on this principle that Luminary¹ was founded.

¹ "About Us – Luminary Bakery." <https://luminarybakery.com/pages/about-us>. Accessed 1 Jul. 2020.

“Luminary is an innovative response to a need we saw for women who have had a social and economic disadvantage. We are a social enterprise designed to offer opportunities for women to build a future for themselves. We provide a safe and professional environment where women can grow holistically – encouraging ambition, restoration and second chances. We use baking as a tool to take women on a journey to employability and entrepreneurship, equipping them with transferable skills for the working world. We offer courses, work experience and paid employment within our bakery, empowering women to build their career.

By investing in and releasing them to realise their dreams - through training, employment and community - we aim to break cycles of poverty, violence & disadvantage once and for all.”

Luminary exists to serve women experiencing multiple disadvantage. Our referral criteria requires those applying for our programmes to have experienced a form of disadvantage and gender-based violence. We seek to serve this group of women, recognising that women experiencing multiple disadvantage are likely to be the furthest from the job market - as evidenced in the research to follow.



THE BARRIERS TO EMPOWERING EMPLOYMENT

POWER & CONTROL

Economic abuse involves behaviour that restricts how someone acquires, uses and maintains money and economic resources, such as accommodation, food and clothing or work. In relation to work, some women experiencing abuse may find themselves prevented from being in education or employment by the perpetrator. For others, their pay might be taken from them or their bank access limited. Some women might find the perpetrator limits the hours they are allowed to work. All of these things are done with the intention for the perpetrator to maintain power and control.² Economic abuse places a barrier to the woman's independence, reaffirming her dependence on the perpetrator.

Given the cohort of women we support, economic empowerment is especially important, as the research is replete with evidence that economic dependency on an abuser is a major barrier that prevents women in abusive relationships exiting, thereby suggesting that strategies to alter this situation are essential³. Another journal from researchers Bell & Moe second this. Although Luminary do not agree with the phrasing - their principle supports this theory.

Bell & Moe's research states: "We suggest that battered women who are able to work have greater chances of establishing some level of independence, which in turn may lessen their abusers' ability to control them and increase the likelihood that they will be able to escape the violence".⁴

Supporting women affected by gender-based violence to become financially independent, is a surefire way to address the barriers they face to safety. *"Financial resources are critical in battered women's struggles to find safety and gain independence from their abusers. The ability to find and maintain employment during or after an abusive relationship is of paramount importance to women seeking to escape domestic violence. Women who have adequate financial resources will likely find it easier to live independently from their abusive partners, at least economically if not emotionally, socially, and legally".⁵*

² "(PDF) Development of the Scale of Economic Abuse."

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/5444856_Development_of_the_Scale_of_Economic_Abuse. Page 565, Accessed 7 Jul. 2020.

³ "Financial Literacy: Building Economic Empowerment with" 8 Aug. 2012,

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257579814_Financial_Literacy_Building_Economic_Empowerment_with_Survivors_of_Violence. Page 281, Accessed 7 Jul. 2020.

⁴ "Abject Economics: The Effects of Battering and ... - CiteSeerX."

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.857.9096&rep=rep1&type=pdf>. Page 2, Accessed 31 Jul. 2020.

⁵ Ibid

IN WORK POVERTY

It is frequently reported that employment rates are at an all-time national high. In December 2020, when this review was published the estimated employment rate for women was 72.1%; this is 0.1 percentage points up on the same period the previous year.⁶ These are statistics to be viewed with caution, the ONS caveat this data, explaining *“The increase in the employment rate for women in recent years is partly a result of changes to the State Pension age for women, resulting in fewer women retiring between the ages of 60 and 65 years. However, since the equalisation of the State Pension age, the employment rate for women has continued to rise, though it has now decreased because of the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.”*



Dig even further beneath the headlines of these statistics and one finds zero-hours contracts and in-work poverty have grown, and women are disproportionately affected⁷. The gender pay gap further disadvantages women. In 2018, a Camden woman working full-time earned 18% less than a Camden man working full-time.⁸ In-work poverty is a trend we see across the capital and hear from women we support, that many women are working in insecure employment with low pay and poor working conditions.



As a result, it should be highlighted that being in paid employment is not in itself a safeguard against poverty. Despite an increase in women’s employment in the UK, women are slightly more likely to live in poverty than men when this is measured on the usual household basis (21% of adult women, compared to 19% of adult men in 2016-17).⁹

The latest Joseph Rowntree Foundation report on UK Poverty referenced in-work poverty throughout. There are many factors that contribute to in-work poverty, but the report shows that being in low-paid work and the high housing costs typical in the capital, make it very difficult to escape poverty in London. This was attributed to the housing crisis, combined with

⁶ "Employment in the UK: September 2019 - Office for National" 10 Sep. 2019, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/employmentintheuk/december2020>. Accessed 1 Jul. 2020.

⁷ "Contracts that do not guarantee a minimum number of hours" 23 Apr. 2018, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplinwork/earningsandworkinghours/articles/contractsthatdonotguaranteeaminimumnumberofhours/april2018>. Accessed 1 Jul. 2020.

⁸ "Supporting women into employment: recommendations report - Camden Women’s Forum 2019, Page 4 quoting "Employee earnings in the UK: 2018 - Office for National" 25 Oct. 2018, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/annualsurveyofhoursandearnings/2018>. Accessed 1 Jul. 2020.

⁹ "UK Poverty 2019/20 | JRF." 7 Feb. 2020, <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2019-20>. Accessed 1 Jul. 2020.

the rise of the 'gig' economy - where working conditions are poor and pay and working hours are not guaranteed.

It is important to note that the likelihood of in-work poverty for BAME women is significantly greater. Racial inequalities intersect with and compound gender inequalities. According to the Women's Budget Group "Although BAME women have seen improvements in their education outcomes, this has not translated into equivalent corresponding labour market success. Racism and sexism in the workplace affect BAME women's employment circumstances, with discrimination and bias rife at every stage of the recruitment process¹⁰". A report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on Poverty, Ethnicity and the Market concurs: "Households from ethnic minority backgrounds tend to have much lower incomes and are more likely to be in poverty. In 2015/16, 50% of Bangladeshi, 40% of Black African/Caribbean and 46% of Pakistani households were in poverty, compared to 19% of White British households."¹¹ Thus making women from BAME backgrounds more vulnerable to the low-paid work and in-work poverty.



WORK VS. BENEFITS

As a result of in-work poverty - among other factors - the likelihood of women becoming worse off by transitioning from benefits to paid work, is a major barrier to them exploring employment. Fears of stepping away from a reliable income and the loss of financial security can prevent women from making this transition. "Camden Women's Forum spoke to many women in receipt of welfare benefits who had concerns about the impact that work could have on their benefits, with the very real risk that they could end up worse off if they take on work".

¹²

Feedback found that many women experienced confusion and a lack of access to clear, easy to understand information about the impact work will have on their income, including welfare benefits, so they can make informed decisions about taking a job or increasing their hours. Responses indicated that some women, particularly single parents, were unclear whether moving into work would be financially beneficial once they had factored in the costs of

¹⁰ "Female Face of Poverty - Womens Budget Group." 1 Jul. 2018, Page 9. <http://wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/FINAL-Female-Face-of-Poverty.pdf>. Accessed 1 Jul. 2020.

¹¹ "Supporting women into employment: Evidence Base - Camden Women's Forum 2019, Page 9 quoting "Poverty and Ethnicity in the Labour Market | JRF." 29 Sep. 2017, <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/poverty-ethnicity-labour-market>. Accessed 1 Jul. 2020.

¹² "Camden Women's Forum - Camden Council." <https://www.camden.gov.uk/camden-women-s-forum>. Page 21, Accessed 1 Jul. 2020.

childcare, travel and a reduction in welfare benefits. One focus group attendee at the British Somali Community Centre was quoted saying, “I want a full-time job but childcare is £400-500 a week, so what is the benefit of working, as then I have to pay rent, tax and childcare?”.

There is clear learning for Luminary in response to this: we must incorporate into our support for women an assessment of the pay and working hours they’ll need to make transitioning away from welfare benefits worthwhile. Camden Women’s Forum found that women struggled to use the Government’s benefits calculator independently - some women weren’t aware of it, others found it confusing. The report identified several North London based services able to help women to calculate the impact of work on their benefits. Potential partnerships lie ahead for Luminary here.



In relation to apprenticeships, the report highlighted “*Women in receipt of welfare benefits face particular barriers when considering an apprenticeship as a route into good work, particularly if they are single parents. Some of the women we spoke to said that they would not consider an apprenticeship as they were low paid so they would not be any better off than if they were on benefits. Others said that even if they were marginally better off it would be hard to justify once they factored in balancing family responsibilities. The low pay of apprenticeships restricts women from gaining some of the wider benefits of these entry level schemes, such as gaining work experience, learning a new skill, gaining confidence and inspiring their family members and peers*”

In response, Luminary must continue to develop apprenticeship programmes that pay fairly, and address additional financial barriers women may face to taking these opportunities such as covering her travel, lunch & uniform expenses.

ANNA’S EXPERIENCE OF A LUMINARY BAKERY APPRENTICESHIP

Before meeting Luminary Anna experienced some painful, life-changing trauma – and eventually decided to move to the UK for a fresh start. She began to seek out ways to work and support her child, but the doors remained firmly closed. Following a recommendation from a support worker, she discovered Luminary Bakery.

“I wanted to learn, because when I came to this country I didn’t know a lot, not even English. But I wanted to change our lives for the better. In life, you meet people who make all the difference. Before I came on the course, I didn’t know what I wanted to do. I had two hands and a child to look after, but nothing was happening. Then I met Alice [Luminary’s Founder] and she said, “You want something. Let’s make it happen together!” That was the motivation I needed. After coming to Luminary, I started to

accept that maybe I could do it. And now, I dream!”¹³

After completing Luminary’s Employability and Independence Programme, Anna successfully interviewed for Luminary’s Bakery Apprenticeship scheme - six months of supported training and work in our bakery to introduce trainees to the working world. Reflecting on that time, Anna told us *“From the time that I have done the course and the time that I started apprenticeship I would say that the staff gave me the possibility to learn, adapt and challenge myself. When I first started I knew that it will be difficult having to learn everything from the beginning because it was the first time working as a baker. I always asked questions and got an easy explanation. Everyday I got better, from icing one cake to being the fastest cake decorating in the town!”*

For Anna, the apprenticeship gave her a chance to train at a pace that was suitable for her skill level. The training element meant that she didn’t have to pretend she knew all the answers - she could ask questions, invite support and learn as she worked. During her apprenticeship, we were proud to watch Anna grow in skill and efficiency, she has honed the art of detailed decoration and is one of our most efficient bakers. Since completing her apprenticeship, Anna continues to work flexibly for Luminary alongside her caring responsibilities - this allows her to supplement her income, continue to grow her skills, while allowing room for her caring commitments.

UNPAID WORK AND CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

As well as considering their own financial situation, many women must explore their employment options in the context of the family structure they are part of. Women have to consider the impact of paid work on the financial structure of their family, where paid work may interfere with their partner’s benefits and leave the household worse off. One woman interviewed by Camden’s Women’s Forum stated *“As soon as I started working they stopped my husband’s Employment and Support Allowance and when I stopped work we were put on Universal Credit.”¹⁴* This family would have had to wait five weeks for their first universal credit payment - a period feared by many. Quite understandably, many women and the families they are a part of don’t consider exploration of paid work worth the risk.

Working parents are entitled to the Government’s 30 hours of free childcare for three and four year olds, but some women’s circumstances meant they were only eligible for 15 free hours from the Government, making it less financially viable to work. For example, where women

¹³ Kaila H. Johnson, Luminary Bakery Ltd, *Rising Hope: Inspirational Stories and Recipes from Luminary Bakery* (London: HQ, 2020) Page 191

¹⁴ “Camden Women’s Forum - Camden Council.” <https://www.camden.gov.uk/camden-women-s-forum>. Page 22, Accessed 31 Jul. 2020.

can't access part time work, they would have to pay more to top up the childcare hours. For those in low paid work, this can outweigh the benefits of working.



As you might expect, many women interviewed by Camden Women's Forum cited childcare responsibilities as a key barrier to work. This not only affected women in lone parent families; several women said that although their partner was not working, they would not or could not provide childcare, which limited their ability to work. Women at the British Somali Community Centre told Camden Women's Forum researchers: "*Fathers are still not involved in childcare much and it is all left to the women.*"¹⁵ Other women said that there was a cultural expectation for them to provide childcare, which meant their family members did not want them to leave their children in childcare to learn or work. In our context, where many women have fled an abusive partner and had to leave their supportive community, they may now be the sole carer for their children. These women face additional childcare challenges and a greater barrier to engaging in vocational training.

The participant quoted by Camden Women's Forum was right to recognise the gendered aspect of unpaid work - it is widely recognised that women provide the majority of unpaid care work for children, family and friends. To be clear on our understanding of unpaid work, the Office of National Statistics holds multiple categories to describe unpaid work: including housework, adult care, child care and volunteering. Fresh analysis of ONS data by Young Women's Trust has found the unpaid work of young women aged 18-30, such as cooking, cleaning and taking care of children, contributes at least £140 billion to the UK economy.¹⁶ In comparison the UK's highly esteemed financial services industry contributed £132 billion to the economy in 2018.¹⁷

This peer led research by Young Women's Trust, based on a survey of 85 young women between the ages of 18 & 30, revealed that over half said unpaid work was getting in the way of their ability to take up paid employment. Many surveyed said their male partners and siblings were free to do paid work, while they felt pressured, and in some cases, bullied, into supporting the household. The research identified the restrictions placed on young women's paid work as an expression of economic abuse: "*some young women reported that they were*

¹⁵ "Camden Women's Forum - Camden Council." <https://www.camden.gov.uk/camden-women-s-forum>. Page 22, Accessed 31 Jul. 2020.

¹⁶ Found in "Valuing Young Women's Unpaid Work - Young Women's Trust." <https://www.youngwomenstrust.org/assets/0001/3183/UnpaidWorkResearch.pdf>. Accessed 1 Jul. 2020 who calculated Figure based on value of women's unpaid work calculated by ONS 2015, from the UK Harmonised European Time Use Survey (HETUS), with 3% annual uprate for inflation from 2015, and adjusted to represent 18-30 year old women (20% of 18-100 UK female population). By the same calculation, the unpaid work of all women aged 18-100 accounts for at least £700 billion.

¹⁷ "Financial services: contribution to the UK economy - House of" 31 Jul. 2019, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn06193/>. Accessed 1 Jul. 2020.

*fearful of negative repercussions from either a partner or family member for not completing unpaid work*¹⁸. The testimonies taken revealed examples of economic abuse where young women were actively prevented from accessing paid work or economic autonomy. As an organisation working with survivors of gender-based violence, we take women on a journey of employability mindful of the power dynamics at play in their past and current context. This reality has informed Luminary's holistic approach to date and should continue to do so - where employability support is always supplemented with holistic support, including an ongoing offer of safety planning to minimise the risks facing women. This highlights that alongside employability skills, another key area women require support in is the mediation skills required for them to negotiate paid work with their families.

*"Many young women found that unpaid work had a negative impact on their mental health and over half of them reported it had an impact on their sleep, relationships and ability to find work themselves. This was particularly apparent for young women providing unpaid adult social care to family members, who felt that the expectation of them were born out of generations of women before them doing the same"*¹⁹. By supporting women to overcome the social and cultural barriers to paid work, Luminary is fulfilling the intention set out in our manifesto: to break generational cycles of poverty and disadvantage.

UNPAID CARE WORK AND EMPLOYMENT: IN THE CONTEXT OF CAMDEN

According to the 2011 census, 7.9% of people in Camden are caring for others (not as part of their paid work). This equates to around 16,000 people and 70% are women. Compared to the general population carers are more ethnically diverse, often due to cultural expectations on women, and because proportionately more BAME women live in the most deprived areas of Camden. Women are equally likely to work whether providing care or not. Women are also significantly more likely to be single parents, managing work and childcare on their own. The 2011 census recorded that there were 6,228 lone parents living in Camden and 5,828 of these were women (93.6%). 27% of these women worked part-time, 21% worked full-time and 52% were not in work. Women who care for children or older relatives need flexible work so they can balance care and work responsibilities.²⁰

¹⁸"Valuing Young Women's Unpaid Work - Young Women's Trust."

<https://www.youngwomenstrust.org/assets/0001/3183/UnpaidWorkResearch.pdf>. Page 12, Accessed 1 Jul. 2020.

¹⁹"Valuing Young Women's Unpaid Work - Young Women's Trust."

<https://www.youngwomenstrust.org/assets/0001/3183/UnpaidWorkResearch.pdf>. Page 17, Accessed 1 Jul. 2020.

²⁰ "Camden Women's Forum - Camden Council." <https://www.camden.gov.uk/camden-women-s-forum>. Page 16, Accessed 31 Jul. 2020, quoting Camden Clinical Care Commissioning Group, 'Camden Carers Profile 2014', 1 September 2015

www.opendata.camden.gov.uk/Health/Camden-Carers-Profile-2014/3ddh-2cac

THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON WOMEN AND PAID WORK

Taken from the Women's Budget Group report 'Crisis Crises Collide: Women and Covid-19'²¹

The Covid-19 global pandemic and resulting economic crisis collides with pre-existing inequalities, so that different groups of women will be disproportionately and differently impacted - namely through interruptions to paid work.

• **Young women are disproportionately likely to work in the sectors that have been hit hardest by lock-downs.** 36% of young women, compared to 25% of men in the same age bracket, worked in sectors that have been closed down including restaurants, shops, leisure facilities and travel and tourism.²²

• **Women are more likely to be low paid and in insecure employment.** 69% of low paid earners are women.²³ 74% of those in part-time employment are women. 54% of those on zero hours contracts are women.²⁴

• **On average, women carry out 60% more unpaid work than men.**²⁵ This means they earn less, own less and are more likely to be living in poverty.

• **Mothers are more likely to be losing their jobs and to be furloughed.**

The unequal and gendered distribution of care responsibilities is driving many women, particularly mothers, out of the labour market due to school closures. 16% of mothers have lost their job permanently as a result of the current crisis (compared to 11% of fathers) and 34% of mothers have been furloughed (30% of fathers)²⁶

²¹ "Crisis Collide: Women and Covid-19 - Womens Budget Group."

<https://wbg.org.uk/analysis/reports/crises-collide-women-and-covid-19/>. Accessed 23 Dec. 2020.

²² "Sector shutdowns during the coronavirus crisis: which workers" 6 Apr. 2020,

<https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/14791>. Accessed 23 Dec. 2020.

²³ "Women, Employment and Earnings - Womens Budget Group."

<https://wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/final-employment-2020.pdf>. Accessed 23 Dec. 2020.

²⁴ "Full-time, part-time and temporary workers (seasonally adjusted)."

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/fulltimeparttimeandtemporaryworkersseasonallyadjustedemp01sa>. Accessed 23 Dec. 2020.

²⁵ "Women shoulder the responsibility of 'unpaid work' - Office for" 10 Nov. 2016,

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/articles/womenshouldertheresponsibilityofunpaidwork/2016-11-10>. Accessed 23 Dec. 2020.

²⁶ "the impact on women in coventry - Womens Budget Group." 1 Jul. 2020,

<https://wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Covid-19-report-The-impact-on-women-in-Coventry.pdf>. Accessed 23 Dec. 2020.

OVERCOMING WOMEN'S BARRIERS TO WORK

FLEXIBLE APPRENTICESHIPS ARE AN ESSENTIAL TRAINING GROUND

Luminary offers multiple apprenticeships as an entry point into work for women. By combining training with paid work, these positions are well suited to women who have experienced long term unemployment. However, the research of Camden Women's Forum - quoted in the chapter on women's negotiation of work and benefits - highlighted some crucial challenges for our client group that may need to be incorporated into our apprenticeship design. These include the wage of apprenticeships and flexible working to accommodate caring responsibilities.



Their research noted that by resolving these blockages, women are able to engage and reap the benefits of apprenticeships: "gaining work experience, learning a new skill, gaining confidence and inspiring their family members and peers."²⁷

RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTIONS:

- (Short Term goal) Luminary to access funding to help reduce women's barriers to accepting an apprenticeship position, including covering her travel costs, lunch & uniform expenses.
- (Medium term goal) Luminary are already offering flexible part-time apprenticeships - which take place between 10am - 2pm in term time, allowing women to fulfill the 'school run' - which address the barriers of caring responsibilities. Looking forward, we aim to continue these part time apprenticeships, offering as much flexibility to tailor to her circumstances as possible.
- (Medium term goal) We exist to offer opportunities for women to enter the working world. We plan to offer a variety of apprenticeships and paid positions in the future; based on different skills, offered with different working patterns to maximise the opportunities and options we offer women. For example, apprentices in business admin, baking and barista skills, with options of weekend and weekday working patterns.
- (Medium term goal): We recognise that the transition from being a Luminary programme graduate to Luminary staff member can be challenging. To support women with this we'd like to facilitate a peer support group for apprenticeships - an hour

²⁷ "Camden Women's Forum - Camden Council." <https://www.camden.gov.uk/camden-women-s-forum>. Accessed 21 Jul. 2020.

monthly which they can attend in work time. This may be hosted by a Progression Support Worker in the short term, until we can train a member of alumni to facilitate.

FLEXIBLE WORKING TO BALANCE CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

The recommendation from Camden Women's Forum was clear, "*Women who care for children or older relatives need flexible work so they can balance care and work responsibilities. However, we heard that not all women have access to flexible working opportunities and that some employers think flexible working is a burden, or a privilege granted to those who deserve it rather than provided as standard*".



In June 2020 the government launched a review of the way the rights and welfare of survivors of domestic abuse are supported in the workplace. This acknowledged the impact that current and historic abuse has on survivors' capacity to maintain work. "*Domestic abuse has a profound impact which goes far beyond what they face at home, with 1 in 5 survivors needing to take time off work due to abuse*". They anticipate that flexible working will be an element of the recommendations made to employers. The availability of flexible working, unplanned leave and other employment needs will be examined in a new review of how employers and government could better support domestic abuse survivors at work.²⁸ The review has been prompted by the advocacy of numerous women's organisations, in preparation for the Domestic Abuse Bill - who have successfully highlighted the need for bespoke support and flexibility in the workplace if survivors are to maintain their employment. As an organisation that is both an employer and a champion of employability for survivors, it is imperative that Luminary is modelling good practice on how to support survivors in the workplace to other employers.

RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTIONS:

- (Short term goal) We are in the process of gathering graduate's testimonies detailing how domestic abuse has affected their ability to enter or sustain paid work to submit evidence into the all party parliamentary inquiry into domestic abuse and employability. We commend the recognition of the affect of violence against women and girls on women's access to paid work and independence. We are delighted to see best practice on how to support survivors of gender-based violence in the workplace developed.

²⁸ "Government to review support in the workplace for ... - Gov.uk." 9 Jun. 2020, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-review-support-in-the-workplace-for-survivors-of-domestic-abuse>. Accessed 2 Jul. 2020.

- (Short term goal & ongoing) We'll continue to champion the use of mindful, sensitive language in relation to work, being sure to recognise the value and worth of the unpaid work many women have undertaken for much of their lives. We're clear, Luminary doesn't introduce women to work, it introduces them to paid work.
- (Long term goal) For each role at Luminary, could we offer a 'maternal equivalent' with an option to work condensed hours within school days to allow women with caring responsibilities to enter the workforce.
- (Long term goal) Recognising the barrier childcare poses to paid work. How can Luminary proactively be advocating at a national level for investment into affordable childcare for everyone, including for women in education and single parents.
- (Long term goal) Ideally Luminary would be modelling best practice in human resources for women and resourcing other employers with the tools to do the same.

ESTABLISHING SAFETY

The researchers are clear: establishing safety is paramount for survivors of gender-based violence. Luminary should move forward in confidence, knowing that wide-ranging research endorses our model, evidencing that survivors of gender-based violence require a safe space that combines training and recovery, rebuilds self confidence and equips women with the essential skills needed to navigate the working world.



It is essential that the first step in our work with women, focuses on establishing safety - settling women into a psychologically informed space and building safe, trusting relationships with key support staff and peers. For women still living in high risk environments this will mean supporting them to establish safety plans at the earliest opportunity. For these women, work to minimise and eradicate the ongoing risks facing them is essential for their own safety, but equally crucial for the success of their independence journey. *"We find that both the women with solid and lucrative careers and those who were unemployed or less well established in their jobs encountered difficulty in finding and/or maintaining work because of fear, anxiety, physical injuries, emotional trauma, stalking, and the need for safety."*²⁹

Ongoing safety planning will need to be an active, ongoing part of our journey with women. *"Establishing any level of independence from an abuser, such as by working, runs counter to his goals of establishing power and control through physical and sexual assault, social isolation, emotional degradation, and economic dependence"*. We recognise that our core aim - to support women towards independence - is directly at odds with the intentions of perpetrators. As a result, safeguarding must be a critical feature of Luminary's support for women. *"In the most recent studies, battered women's attempts to work have been correlated with greater and more severe abuse, both for those on welfare."*³⁰



From research we know that women can expect there to be reprisals as a result of the engagement with support or paid work, so Luminary must continue to be vigilant. This will be different, depending on the woman's context so it is essential that our team are trained to recognise the varying expressions of power and control. For those experiencing domestic abuse, we may see sabotage and heightened control. For women who are relied on for unpaid work in the home, this may express itself as "guilt tripping" or shaming. Whatever the context, an aspect of Luminary's role in preparing women for paid work will need to be equipping women to respond appropriately to the reprisals from her partner, perpetrator or community.

²⁹ "The Effects of Battering and Violence on Women's Work and"
<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.857.9096&rep=rep1&type=pdf>. Page 2,
Accessed 21 Jul. 2020.

³⁰ "Abject Economics: The Effects of Battering and ... - CiteSeerX."
<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.857.9096&rep=rep1&type=pdf>. Page 2,
Accessed 1 Jul. 2020.

RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTIONS:

- (Short term goal) An aspect of Luminary's work in preparing women for independence will need to be equipping women to respond appropriately to the reprisals from her partner, perpetrator or community. At the start of the programme and again when trainees become graduates, we'll publicly acknowledge this risk during holistic development sessions and offer 1-1 safety planning to support women to manage this risk. In doing this, we'll be careful to frame safety planning as an opportunity for women to take back their power, rather than victim blaming.
- (Medium term goal) In addition to annual safeguarding training, all of our frontline charity team should be trained in safety planning and help to establish 'safer conversations' as part of regular practice with women.

CULTIVATING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS THAT SUSTAIN PAID WORK

International research, as well as learning sourced locally, make a case for increased access to vocational and employability skills training for women looking to begin paid work. Researcher Patricia Murphy makes the connection between vocational training, increased safety and a sustainable journey away from violence, before advocating for increased investment in interventions that combine a response to abuse, with vocational training. "Investment in vocational training and employment resources may go a long way toward reducing the revictimization of battered women by helping them feel empowered and supported while leaving their batterers and establishing safe and productive lives³¹".



While collecting oral testimonies for their inquiry into women's paid work, Camden Women's Forum³² received direct requests for employability training: "Women at the British Somali Community Centre also said that they wanted to improve their employability skills. These include CV development, job applications, interview practice, basic work skills such as timekeeping, and applying the skills they already have. These women said it would be good if employment support sessions could be run somewhere local and familiar to them as many of them did not have the confidence to go somewhere new".

³¹ "Abject Economics: The Effects of Battering and ... - CiteSeerX." <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.857.9096&rep=rep1&type=pdf>. Page 13, Accessed 31 Jul. 2020.

³² "Camden Women's Forum - Camden Council." <https://www.camden.gov.uk/camden-women-s-forum>. Page 17, Accessed 1 Jul. 2020.



It would appear that women require the skills not just to obtain paid work, but to sustain it. Research revealed that where survivors are able to overcome the barriers facing them and engage in paid work, they struggled to sustain regular work. "Although battered women are just as likely as non battered women to be employed they have lower individual incomes than non battered women, experience more medical problems that affect their jobs, and are more likely to have had periods of unemployment than non battered women"³³. In addition, the drug and alcohol dependency adopted by some women as a trauma response, negatively impacted women's ability to maintain their work. The research summarised, that while survivors are employable, they have a harder time maintaining work in the same job over a period of time.

In light of this, it is essential that Luminary's curriculum and the narrative championed throughout the programme is that of not just getting a job, but sustaining it for the long haul. Our sessions covering themes like resilience and difficult conversations, as well as those more directly related to employability, set women up to successfully obtain and maintain paid work and provide continued support throughout their employment journey.

RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTIONS:

- (Short term goal, ongoing) Throughout the programme, our narrative is consistent - we are not just about getting a job, but gaining meaningful work that can be sustained for the duration. We must continue to deliver content that equips with the internal skills needed to maintain work through challenging seasons along with progression and career planning
- (Medium term goal) From November 2020, Luminary will launch a new programme for current graduates with an intensive focus on employability skills - CV development, job applications, communication at work and transferable work skills such as timekeeping - building on the skills they began to develop in the first phase of their training.

³³ "Abject Economics: The Effects of Battering and ... - CiteSeerX."
<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.857.9096&rep=rep1&type=pdf>. Page 4,
Accessed 1 Jul. 2020.

DELIVERING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS IN A SUPPORTIVE, PSYCHOLOGICALLY INFORMED ENVIRONMENT

It's imperative that Luminary continues in its integrated, woman-centred approach, recognising that under the homogenous umbrella term of "survivors" is a diverse group of women, each with their own experience, preference and personality. Our support is shaped on this sentiment. Alongside a consistent curriculum, we offer a plethora of opportunities - work experience, coaching, mentoring, counselling - hoping that each woman will be able to find the appropriate support she needs for her employability journey. *"We recognise that every woman's journey into work will be different. For some women, work is the end point of a very long journey, so it is important that women have access to the support they need. For some this will be additional training, for others it may be coaching, counselling or support with job applications. In addition, some women will need support once they are in work to help them sustain their employment."*³⁴



The effects of abuse on women's work and employability are varied and wide-ranging. One notable effect is the inverse relationship between abuse and self esteem, the combined effects of the social isolation, emotional degradation, and feelings of worthlessness created by the perpetrator, erode the very qualities required for a woman to feel confident in engaging with paid work. *"Even for women who had worked fairly regularly prior to and during their abusive relationships, the emotional toll of violence was devastating"*³⁵. Researcher Angela Moe supports this, citing *"Some of the women in our study felt that they were neither capable of working nor worthy of employment... the psychological and emotional aspects of domestic abuse foster poor self-esteem, depression, and feelings of low self-worth, all of which negatively affect women's employability"*³⁶.

In response, it is the task of Luminary and the supportive community surrounding the women we support to counter this narrative. Our hope is that our organisational culture, wellbeing offering and the employability skills learned will empower her and instill a sense of pride.

³⁴ "Camden Women's Forum - Camden Council." <https://www.camden.gov.uk/camden-women-s-forum>. Accessed 1 Jul. 2020.

³⁵ "Abject Economics: The Effects of Battering and ... - CiteSeerX." <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.857.9096&rep=rep1&type=pdf>. Page 9, Accessed 31 Jul. 2020.

³⁶ "Abject Economics: The Effects of Battering and ... - CiteSeerX." <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.857.9096&rep=rep1&type=pdf>. Page 9, Accessed 1 Jul. 2020.

Some women will do as much unlearning, as they do learning in their time with us. Our work seeks to offer her an alternative truth to that of the perpetrator, speaking hope and affirmation over her life - countering the negative narrative she might have heard about herself historically. This culture is set by staff, but will be most effective when it is cemented with peer to peer affirmation.

RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTIONS:

- (Short term, ongoing) There appears to be research evidence to support an approach that combines holistic support with vocational training that works for women. In our culture of 'outcomes' Luminary should proudly champion the holistic model - where engagement with safety planning is as much of an indicator of success, as getting a job.
- (Medium term) Luminary should be championing and encouraging peer support at every opportunity, setting this culture at the start of the programme and creating space for it in holistic development sessions and workshops.

CULTIVATING FINANCIAL LITERACY AMONG TRAINEES AND GRADUATES

*"Empowerment can encompass many domains of an individual's life, including one's personal financial abilities. Hence, economic empowerment addresses an individual's knowledge, skills, and confidence to address her own financial well-being. One of the more important findings of our study is that financial literacy is a significant predictor of economic empowerment for Intimate Partner Violence survivors. This supports the potentially critical role of financial literacy education in assisting survivors to gain the knowledge, confidence, and skills over their own financial well-being."*³⁷

Best evidenced here by Postmus et al., a key theme underpinning much of our reading has been the crucial role of financial literacy in a woman's journey to becoming more independent.



Financial literacy breeds economic empowerment - the benefits of which are multi-faceted. Although the impacts of economic empowerment are best seen in the financial realm, they ripple out into every sphere of a woman's life. For those still existing in coercive, abusive

³⁷ "(PDF) Financial Literacy: Building Economic Empowerment" 8 Aug. 2012, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257579814_Financial_Literacy_Building_Economic_Empowerment_with_Survivors_of_Violence. Page 276, Accessed 1 Jul. 2020.

environments, economic empowerment can be the catalyst that allows her to take steps away from the perpetrator. For other women, it will give them confidence to negotiate a fair wage and working conditions. For many, economic empowerment will mean the daunting task of calculating the interaction of a salary and welfare benefits will become less intimidating, as she gains insights into her financial situation.



Given the cohort of women we support, empowerment within the field of economics is especially important, as the research is replete with evidence that economic dependency on the abuser is a major barrier for women in abusive relationships, thereby suggesting that strategies to alter this situation are essential. In response, Luminary should consider how opportunities for women to develop financial literacy can continue to be a central part of our curriculum, supplemented by 1-1 support. Given the challenges that women expressed to Camden Women Forum, where women struggled to calculate their benefits with potential income from paid work, some form of assessment with an external advisor could feature as part of the programme.

Crucially, researchers from Camden Women's Forum found the strongest predictor of economic empowerment was identifying as "other" for race - women that belong to ethnic groups, beyond those commonly stated in equalities data were more likely to be less economically empowered. This confirms with research, what Luminary has long acknowledged - that there are important cultural variations that pose additional barriers to economic empowerment. This supports a case for intentional, specialist support for women from minority groups to overcome the significant disadvantage and additional barriers they face in this area.

RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTIONS:

- (Medium term) Luminary to incorporate workshops and emphasis in support work on financial literacy, equipping women with the skills to understand the complexities of their financial situation and take “take hold” of its direction. This will be a key learning outcome for the new Employability and Independence Programme, launching in November 2020.
- (Medium term) As part of our new programme, we plan to incorporate a session with an external benefits advisor for each graduate, leaving them clear on how paid work will affect their benefits and how much they need to earn to benefit from work.
- (Medium term) Given the particular barriers women who identify as black and minority ethnic face in achieving economic empowerment, Luminary must consider how we can better serve women from these communities specifically. Looking forward, we'd like to host bespoke employability workshops addressing issues affecting women from BAME communities in their pursuit of paid work. We plan for these to be hosted by friends of Luminary who work in HR and come from BAME communities themselves.



CASE STUDY FROM A LUMINARY TRAINEE

Jasmine* was referred to Luminary while she was living in a women's refuge with her children. She had been married at 19 years old and her husband had stopped her from continuing her education or earning money. She lived through a financially, emotionally and physically abusive marriage until she was able to escape, with her children, in 2019.

When she first started at Luminary, Jasmine had no confidence and experienced episodes of very low mood and anxiety, with real hopelessness. 'I believed I was a failure and had lost all of my good qualities. Luminary was the first time I had experienced freedom and respect... now I feel that I am special and I have a choice.'



Jasmine quickly found that she was a fast learner and a talented baker, through holistic development sessions she started considering for the first time who she was and what she wanted to be. She had found a passion in her life for the first time since her children and was ready to pursue it.

Jasmine has now moved into Phase 2 of the Employability and Independence Programme with renewed passion and motivation. She is finding the sessions challenge her thinking and offer her new learning as well as building her confidence in herself. She has already applied for two jobs. Jasmine is hopeful that she can one day work at Luminary Bakery, she would particularly like to use her skills in cake decorating and using new flavours in classic recipes.

'Now I will live as an independent woman with love, respect and freedom.'

CONCLUSION

In summary, wide ranging research supports the belief laid out in our introduction, that paid work in itself, provides safety, facilitates healing and increases the likelihood of women staying safe in the future. Stable personal finances are critical to women finding safety and gaining independence from abuse and disadvantage. The ability to find and maintain employment having exited an abusive situation is crucial for those fleeing abuse. Women who are financially independent will likely find it easier to live independently from their perpetrator, at least economically, if not emotionally, socially and legally.

What has also been highlighted is the unique role that vocational training has to play in a woman's recovery and employability journey. *"In addition to the obvious individual and social economic incentives for ensuring women's safe and productive employment, research has suggested that paid work, increased financial independence, and educational and vocational training and success, if occurring in a safe and supportive context, are emotionally and psychologically rehabilitative for battered women. Moreover, investment in vocational training and employment resources may go a long way toward reducing the revictimization of battered women by helping them feel empowered and supported while leaving their batterers and establishing safe and productive lives"*³⁸.

In conclusion, Luminary can move forward confident that we are responding to a genuine need in women's lives, as identified by research. We are affirmed that our model - combining holistic development with employability support in a psychologically informed environment - is rooted in the recommendations of research. What's more, we're also confident that we exist in the right context. In their inquiry, Camden's Women's Forum highlighted a gap in supplementary employability support for women. Little did they know, they were describing Luminary's holistic model. It is serendipity that Luminary would launch a training centre in the borough of Camden six months after their inquiry. It is serendipity that Luminary would launch a training centre in the borough of Camden six months after their inquiry. *"We recognise that every woman's journey into work will be different. For some women, work is the end point of a very long journey, so it is important that women have access to the support they need. For some this will be additional training, for others it may be coaching, counselling or support with job applications. In addition, some women will need support once they are in work to help them sustain their employment."*

³⁹ **The Luminary team move forward, confident that we are in the right place, at the right time, with the right model for women.** To strengthen our model, we've outlined some

³⁸ "Abject Economics: The Effects of Battering and ... - CiteSeerX." <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.857.9096&rep=rep1&type=pdf>. Page 13, Accessed 31 Jul. 2020.

³⁹ "Camden Women's Forum - Camden Council." <https://www.camden.gov.uk/camden-women-s-forum>. Page 17, Accessed 31 Jul. 2020.

recommendations from the research we've engaged in, to guide the continued improvement of our support for women.

APPENDIX

Our recommendations and actions in full, are included here as appendices.

RESEARCH BASED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LUMINARY'S MODEL

Key

Short term 1-6 months

Medium Term 6 months - 2 years

Long Term 2-5 years

FLEXIBLE APPRENTICESHIPS ARE AN ESSENTIAL TRAINING GROUND

- (Short Term goal) Luminary to access funding to help reduce women's barriers to accepting an apprenticeship position, including covering her travel costs, lunch & uniform expenses.
- (Medium term goal) Luminary are already offering flexible part-time apprenticeships - which take place between 10am - 2pm in term time, allowing women to fulfill the 'school run' - which address the barriers of caring responsibilities. Looking forward, we aim to continue these part time apprenticeships, offering as much flexibility to tailor to her circumstances as possible.
- (Medium term goal) We exist to offer opportunities for women to enter the working world. We plan to offer a variety of apprenticeships and paid positions in the future; based on different skills, offered with different working patterns to maximise the opportunities and options we offer women. For example, apprentices in business admin, baking and barista skills, with options of weekend and weekday working patterns.
- (Medium term goal): We recognise that the transition from being a Luminary programme graduate to Luminary staff member can be challenging. To support women with this we'd like to facilitate a peer support group for apprenticeships - an hour monthly which they can attend in work time. This may be hosted by a Progression Support Worker in the short term, until we can train a member of alumni to facilitate.

FLEXIBLE WORKING TO BALANCE CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

- (Short term goal) We are in the process of gathering graduate's testimonies detailing how domestic abuse has affected their ability to enter or sustain paid work to submit evidence into the all party parliamentary inquiry into domestic abuse and employability.

We commend the recognition of the affect of violence against women and girls on women's access to paid work and independence. We are delighted to see best practice on how to support survivors of gender-based violence in the workplace developed.

- (Short term goal & ongoing) We'll continue to champion the use of mindful, sensitive language in relation to work, being sure to recognise the value and worth of the unpaid work many women have undertaken for much of their lives. We're clear, Luminary doesn't introduce women to work, it introduces them to paid work.
- (Long term goal) For each role at Luminary, could we offer a 'maternal equivalent' with an option to work condensed hours within school days to allow women with caring responsibilities to enter the workforce.
- (Long term goal) Recognising the barrier childcare poses to paid work. How can Luminary proactively be advocating at a national level for investment into affordable childcare for everyone, including for women in education and single parents.
- (Long term goal) Ideally Luminary would be modelling best practice in human resources for women and resourcing other employers with the tools to do the same.

ESTABLISHING SAFETY

- (Short term goal) An aspect of Luminary's work in preparing women for independence will need to be equipping women to respond appropriately to the reprisals from her partner, perpetrator or community. At the start of the programme and again when trainees become graduates, we'll publicly acknowledge this risk during holistic development sessions and offer 1-1 safety planning to support women to manage this risk. In doing this, we'll be careful to frame safety planning as an opportunity for women to take back their power, rather than victim blaming.
- (Medium term goal) In addition to annual safeguarding training, all of our frontline charity team should be trained in safety planning and help to establish 'safer conversations' as part of regular practice with women.

CULTIVATING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS THAT SUSTAIN PAID WORK

- (Short term goal, ongoing) Throughout the programme, our narrative is consistent - we are not just about getting a job, but gaining meaningful work that can be sustained for the duration. We must continue to deliver content that equips with the internal skills needed to maintain work through challenging seasons along with progression and career planning.

- (Medium term goal) From November 2020, Luminary will launch a new programme for current graduates with an intensive focus on employability skills - CV development, job applications, communication at work and transferable work skills such as timekeeping - building on the skills they began to develop in the first phase of their training

DELIVERING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS IN A SUPPORTIVE, PSYCHOLOGICALLY INFORMED ENVIRONMENT

- (Short term, ongoing) There appears to be research evidence to support an approach that combines holistic support with vocational training that works for women. In our culture of 'outcomes' Luminary should proudly champion the holistic model - where engagement with safety planning is as much of an indicator of success, as getting a job.
- (Medium term) Luminary should be championing and encouraging peer support at every opportunity, setting this culture at the start of the programme and creating space for it in holistic development sessions and workshops.

CULTIVATING FINANCIAL LITERACY AMONG LUMINARY TRAINEES AND GRADUATES

- (Medium term) Luminary to incorporate workshops and emphasis in support work on financial literacy, equipping women with the skills to understand the complexities of their financial situation and take "take hold" of its direction. This will be a key learning outcome for the new Employability and Independence Programme, launching in November 2020.
- (Medium term) As part of our new programme, we plan to incorporate a session with an external benefits advisor for each graduate, leaving them clear on how paid work will affect their benefits and how much they need to earn to benefit from work.
- (Medium term) Given the particular barriers women who identify as black and minority ethnic face in achieving economic empowerment, Luminary must consider how we can better serve women from these communities specifically. Looking forward, we'd like to host bespoke employability workshops addressing issues affecting women from BAME communities in their pursuit of paid work. We plan for these to be hosted by friends of Luminary who work in HR and come from BAME communities themselves.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Author: Rebecca Branch, Luminary Programmes Manager

Design: Rachel Stonehouse, Luminary Head Bakery Trainer

Photos: Thomas Rose, Jess Herbert, Lizzie Bielicki and Deborah Stevenson

A special thanks to Alice Williams and Sally Beckwith for your insight, edits and expertise, and to Camden Women's Forum, Young Women's Trust & The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, whose research is quoted in this review. We are so grateful for the work you do and proud to serve those living with multiple disadvantage alongside you.

Copyright of Luminary Ltd, 2021. Do not reproduce without permission.