



Snapshot 2021 Narrative

Sakeenah Homes

<https://www.sakeenahhomes.com/london-womens-shelter>

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated many of society's problems and highlighted key needs in the London community. Many of us did, in fact, find ourselves in tough situations. For example, you may have faced issues ranging from cabin fever to the inability to pay for basic supplies. You may have been one of the 30,611 mental health crisis calls received in London. Some of us, however, were not fortunate enough to pick up the phone and call for assistance. Some of us may have wished that the only difficulty we had with the pandemic was cabin fever. This is because many women were forced to remain at home with their abusers, with no access to social support or safety nets. Indeed, London saw a 23.4% decline in domestic and sexual violence calls between 2010 and 2020. Worse, many of these women were immigrants who were disproportionately affected by the pandemic. This meant that isolated women had to deal with the issues of abuse, the pandemic, being a woman, and being an ethnic minority all at the same time. Fortunately, organizations such as Sakeenah Homes in London exist.

Sakeenah Homes has reacted to the need for Muslim women and children to find a safe haven from dangerous situations by establishing transitional homes. During the pandemic, their personnel went above and above, opening three more homes, servicing over 5000 clients, launching a new counselling program, mailing out grocery gift cards, and doing everything they could to reach survivors. They accomplished all of this while dealing with health concerns and adhering to COVID-19 standards to protect the

safety of its residents and staff. They have yet to be affected by a COVID-19 outbreak.

Sakeenah Homes impressed me with its dedication to building self-sufficiency among survivors. For example, they educate the women skills that allow them to live independently financially. Another example is the People's Market, which likewise provides a sense of normalcy to the ladies. This is because the People's Market is a market *for the people, by the people*, where people who are food insecure can come and shop for free. They also assist the women in overcoming everyday challenges. For example, they are frequently denied access to homes and assistance. This work is crucial because it sees Muslim women as active actors in control of their life, rather than passive victims.

Sakeenah Homes has done and continues to perform tremendous work in the last year. They cannot, however, do so on their own. Representatives of Sakeenah Homes, for example, stated that the pandemic has worsened already existing flaws in our system. They also emphasized the housing situation, which presents challenges for women seeking long-term housing alternatives. As a result, we require governmental changes to assist Muslim women fleeing abuse, as well as a cultural shift in how we regard and treat Muslim women. We can appreciate the value of a safe, affordable house now more than ever. We everyone deserve equal access to protection and shelter, especially during a difficult time such as a pandemic.

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