



Annual Report and Statement of Accounts

2018/2019



CONTENTS

	Page
1. Message from the Co-Chair	3
2. Management and Governance	4
3. About MWNUK	5
4. MWNUK Online	6
5. New Updates	8
Research Report: 'Muslim Women's Experiences of the Criminal Justice System'	8
"We Rise" MWN Members Platform	9
Awards	10
6. Ongoing Projects	12
'Doing Politics, Changing Society' Programme	12
Mental Health Workshops	13
Inclusive Mosque Initiative	13
7. MWN Helpline	14
8. Our Fundraisers	18
9. Outreach	22
10. Advocacy	24
11. Campaigning	26
12. Financial Statement and Accounts	30
13. Recognition and Thanks	31



MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIR

2019 has been an award-winning year for MWNUK- quite literally! In January, our Executive Director Faeza Vaid was awarded an MBE for her years of service to Women's Rights. In March, trustee Sophie Garner won the Birmingham Law Society's Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year award. In April, trustee Dr. Khursheed Wadia won the WJM Mackenzie prize for the best book in political science for 2017-18. And in May, MWNUK were awarded the prestigious Charity Governance Award in the Improving Impact (4-25 staff) category. We were specifically commended for demonstrating best practice to strategic and operational decision making - the best compliment any charity could receive!

In 2017 we had shared with you the successes of MWNUK's campaigning, as a result of which the Foreign Office had amended its repatriation policy so that forced marriage victims under the age of 18 no longer had to reimburse the government the costs of their journey home. However the policy had remained in place for victims aged 18 and over which we continued to campaign against. We were elated when in January 2019 the Foreign Office finally abolished its policy of charging all victims of forced marriage the costs of their repatriation.

Significant progress was also made in campaigning for reform of marriage and divorce laws. When we attended the United Nations for the CEDAW review we placed our concerns firmly on the agenda, resulting in recommendations being made on the issues by the CEDAW committee to the UK government. We have subsequently had positive discussions with the Ministry of Justice regarding our proposals for law reform. We have also continued to engage with government officials and departments on a range of issues, including the introduction of ethnic pay reporting.

As always, our inputs are grounded in the lived experiences of Muslim women and girls in the UK. The MWN Helpline helped almost a thousand individuals in 2018 on a range of 44 different issues, and 2019 will certainly exceed that figure. Our anonymised data may be accessed through an online dashboard on our website so that it can be used by policy influencers to tackle the inequalities and injustices faced by Muslim women and girls. This year our research focus has been on highlighting the many barriers faced by Muslim women when attempting to obtain justice and protection; our report 'Muslim Women's Experiences of the Criminal Justice System' was published in June 2019 and is already being accessed widely.

Education and awareness raising activities have continued through workshops, events and outreach activities; across the UK and abroad. We have also forged stronger partnerships with organisations, including Care International, Fawcett Society, Midlands Asian Lawyers Association and Black Antelope Law. And we have been overwhelmed by the support shown by the record number of fundraisers we have had this year. Thank you to all for your support, our gratitude knows no bounds.

Earlier this year Stylist Magazine described MWNUK as "small but mighty". The developments over the past year, all with a management structure shuffle, are testament to that! Thank you Shaista Gohir OBE for your fantastic work as Interim Executive Director! And we are now super pleased to welcome back Faeza from maternity leave, Shaista back onto the board of trustees as Co-Chair, and Dr. Iram Sattar back onto the board as Treasurer.

May our next year be mightier still!

Nazmin Akthar
Co-Chair of MWNUK

MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE

Board Trustees

- Shaista Gohir OBE (Co-Chair)
- Nazmin Akthar (Co-Chair)
- Dr Iram Sattar (Treasurer)
- Sophie Garner (General Secretary)
- Dr Khursheed Wadia

Honorary President

- Baroness Haleh Afshar (no voting powers)

Patron

- Janie Frampton (no voting powers)

Executive Director

- Faeza Vaid MBE

Executive Assistant

- Risha Chauhan

National Membership and Outreach Officer

- Farah Hameed (Up until September 2019)

Outreach Workers

- Nigat Ara
- Manchester (Up Until December 2019)
- Zaheda Vaid
- West Midlands

Helpline Manager

- Shameem Hussain

Helpline Support Workers

- Adeeba Begum
- Ayisha Karim
- Maria Sattar (Up until September 2019)
- Shahna Aowlad
- Shaila Pervez
- Sumaira Mehmood
- Zaheda Vaid
- Zeinab Abid

Helpline Caseworker

- Saima Pasha

ABOUT MWNUK

Our Vision:

A society where Muslim women can have an effective voice and the opportunity to exercise their rights to contribute equally.

Our Mission:

To achieve an equal and just society through Islamic feminism.

Our Aim:

To gather evidence about the experiences of Muslim women and girls on key issues affecting them and use the information to improve their rights through advocacy and campaigning.

MWNUK's 3 prioritised impacts are to ensure:

1

Greater knowledge and awareness amongst Muslim women about different interpretations of the Qur'an which can affect their lives.

2

Muslim women facing abuse and discrimination are supported to improve their situation and gain justice.

3

Muslim women gain skills and confidence to explore and take forward ideas.

MWNUK ONLINE

www.mwnuk.co.uk

MWNUK's information-rich organisational website includes:

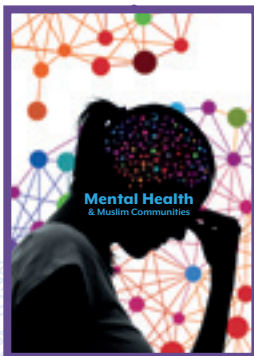
- Our resources
- Our research
- Examples of our advocacy work
- Examples of our campaigning work
- A gallery of events
- Events listings



Front Cover: Updated MWNUK booklet about our work (2019)

The site is frequently accessed and resources are regularly downloaded.

In the last year our most downloaded information booklets have been:



Mental Health & Muslim Communities

78%

download increase since last year



Muslim Marriage and Divorce

75%

download increase since last year



Domestic Abuse Can Kill

58%

download increase since last year

mwnuk.co.uk
DOWNLOADS



TYPE OF MWNUK RESOURCE	TOTAL DOWNLOADS UP UNTIL SEPT 2019	TOTAL DOWNLOADS UP UNTIL SEPT 2018
Research Reports	16, 868	11, 821
Information Booklets	37, 985	25, 551
Consultation Responses	17, 541	15, 641
Media Statements	36, 627	27, 278
Evaluation Reports	1, 460	833
Annual/Other Reports	6, 682	6, 496
TOTAL DOWNLOADS	117, 163	87, 620

Our Social Media Accounts



Facebook
@Muslim Women's Network UK
5370 followers*
@MWNUK Member: 761 friends*



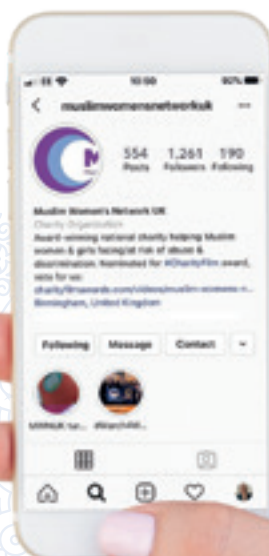
YouTube
Muslim Women's Network UK:
Our videos have been viewed **57,000+ times***



Instagram
@MuslimWomen
1261 followers*



Twitter
@MuslimWomenUK
6506 followers*



**All statistics taken as of September 2019*

NEW UPDATES

RESEARCH REPORT: "Muslim Women's Experiences of the Criminal Justice System"



We produce a range of resources to help raise awareness of issues affecting Muslim women in the UK. Our latest research report is based on evidence from our helpline database, where Muslim female service users have come into contact with criminal justice institutions such as the police, Crown Prosecution Service or judiciary.

The main aims of our research were to examine how the criminal justice system responds to Muslim women who have been victims of violence and abuse and whether they are 'getting justice' and what factors are contributing to any 'justice gap'. In many of our case studies the responses they have received have been insufficient or inadequate.

Report Cover: Muslim Women's Experiences of the Criminal Justice System (2019)

Key Findings

1. Poor standard of investigations
2. Victims not kept informed or provided with key information about support available
3. Victims' Right to Review Scheme flawed
4. Poor CPS and judiciary standards of service
5. Police missing risk factors and not taking safeguarding measures
6. Needs of different communities not taken into account

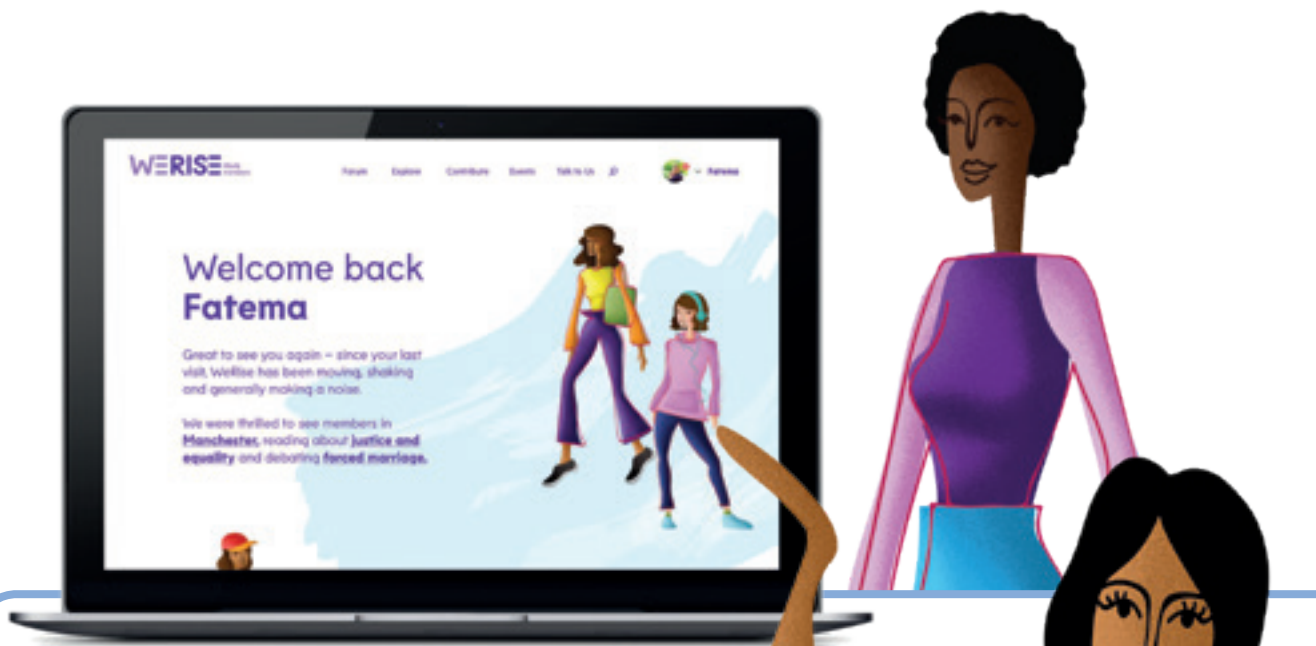
Recommendations

1. Find ways of assisting women in minority communities to report abuse and improve the avenues that already exist
2. Improve speed of response
3. Keep victims updated on investigations
4. Provide information about decisions not to prosecute or proceed
5. Update eligibility criteria for Victims' Right to Review Scheme
6. Amend and review the law and guidance on revenge porn
7. Strengthening guidance on forced marriage
8. Increasing understanding, improving the recording of cases and strengthening guidance on honour-based abuse
9. Strengthening guidance on domestic abuse
10. Further training on stalking and harassment
11. Improve barristers' and judges' understanding of domestic abuse
12. Unconscious bias training for judges should be provided

Further details about our findings and recommendations can be found in the Executive Summary and the full version of the report. Please visit our website to download:

www.mwnuk.co.uk/reports.php

“We Rise” MWN Members Platform



The **We Rise** platform has been created to bring together a community of thinkers, creators and mould-breakers who are taking positive action to improve the lives of Muslim women all over the UK.

Members will be able to engage with the new platform through:

- an online discussion forum
- by voting on current issues
- by contributing articles or videos about personal experiences and stories, opinion pieces, events, features, and their work

It will also be a space for MWN UK to share resources and information about the issues and topics that we continue to work on.

To join go to our website
www.mwnwerise.co.uk

Awards

The Queen's New Year's Honours List 2019 Member of the Order of the British Empire

At the start of 2019 Faeza Vaid was appointed an MBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours List for her Services to Women's Rights. It is Faeza's dedication to actively championing women's rights over the last 10 years that earned her this well-deserved honour.

Faeza joined MWNUK in 2008 and became the Executive Director in 2011. She has played a key role in representing MWNUK and the interests of Muslim women and girls locally, nationally and internationally. As well as running the organisation operationally, she has contributed to local forums, government steering groups, delivered bespoke training, appeared on broadcast media, and spoken at many events, including the 2018 March4Women rally.

Following the award, Faeza said:

"...what is truly humbling is the recognition from others in the sector all saying 'well deserved'. This tells me that not only is our work necessary, but it adds value and is appreciated."



Our Executive Director Faeza Vaid collecting her MBE medal (May 2019)



Birmingham Law Society Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year

In March 2019 one of our Trustees, Sophie Garner, specialist employment and discrimination barrister at St Philips Chambers in Birmingham, won Birmingham Law Society's Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year award for 2019.

The award was given for Sophie's voluntary work, spanning over 25 years, in setting up and working as trustee for numerous voluntary organisations such as MWNUK. Most of the organisations she has worked with deal with women's rights, human rights or equality, and it is fantastic for her to be honoured with this award for the commitment she has shown to these causes over the years.

Sophie Garner with her award from the Birmingham Law Society (March 2019)

W.M.J. Mackenzie Prize (2017-2018)

One of our Trustees, Dr Khursheed Wadia and her colleague Professor Danièle Joly won the prestigious W.M.J. Mackenzie Prize for 2017-2018, for their book 'Muslim Women and Power: Political and Civic Engagement in West European Societies.' The prize is awarded each year by the Political Studies Association UK for the best book in political science.

"It's brilliant to have won ... In the 30-year history of the prize, bar one exception, all the winners have been men! So, it's hugely pleasing that a book by women, about women, which interprets politics and 'doing politics' in its broadest, most inclusive and non-elite sense, has won the prize".

Dr Khursheed Wadia (Board Trustee)



Dr Khursheed Wadia and Professor Danièle Joly win the WJM Mackenzie Prize (April 2019)



Co-Chair Nazmin Akthar at the Charity Governance Awards (May 2019)

Charity Governance Awards (2019)

In May 2019, MWNUK were thrilled to win the award for 'Improving Impact (4-25 Staff)' at the Charity Governance Awards. We share this accolade with fellow winners 'Derry Well Women' based in Northern Ireland.

"Winning an award is always an honour but to win because our board have been 'demonstrating best-practice in an evidence-based approach to strategic and operational decision making' is simply the best recognition we could have received."

Nazmin Akthar (Co-Chair)

ONGOING PROJECTS

Doing Politics, Changing Society: Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic Women and Activism Programme

A partnership project with the University of Warwick, funded by the Higher Education Innovation Fund and ERSC Impact Funding.

In June 2018 a cohort of 15 women from BAME backgrounds participated in a series of workshops designed to build participants' knowledge of British political and civic institutions and gain practical skills to 'do politics.' As a result the participants created their own campaigns which are now live:

Yay or Nay

Empowerment through education about consent and healthy relationships

  @yayornayproject



Yay or Nay campaigners at the programme's final event (March 2019)

No2Honour

Challenging misconceptions of honour in South Asian communities

  @no2honour



No2Honour campaigners at the programme's final event (March 2019)

Let's Talk Melanin

Challenging society's beauty norms, by celebrating body diversity amongst young Black women.

  @letstalkmelanin
 @letstalkmelanin1



Let's Talk Melanin campaigners at the programme's final event (March 2019)

Ability For All

Raising awareness about the everyday obstacles that people with disabilities face at university

 @Ability_For_All
 @ability_for_all_2018



Ability For All campaigners at the programme's final event (March 2019)



Programme participants with their certificates of completion, Dr. Khurshed Wadia (centre-left) and the former Lord Mayor Yvonne Mosquito (centre) (March 2019)

Mental Health Workshops

Since 2018, in partnership with Wandsworth Clinical Commissioning Group, our Treasurer Dr Iram Sattar (who is a GP with an interest in mental health and teaching), has been delivering a series of workshops on Mental Health to BAME women in Wandsworth, London.

The aim of the workshops is to change attitudes towards mental health illness in Muslim communities. Myths and misconceptions are challenged and knowledge is shared so that stigma and discrimination is reduced and those affected seek help sooner rather than later. The emphasis is on equipping attendees with skills as well as knowledge, so they know how to speak to someone with a mental health problem. The workshops have been delivered in English, Urdu and Punjabi. Attendees included full-time mothers and the elderly from various backgrounds including Pakistani, Somali and Eritrean.

4 of 6 workshops delivered so far



90

Attendees to date



Dr Iram Sattar and workshop attendees from the Eritrean Muslim Community Association (July 2019)



Dr Iram Sattar and workshop attendees from Mushkil Aasaan care agency (December 2018)

Inclusive Mosque Initiative

MWNUK are grant-holders for the Inclusive Mosque Initiative (IMI). The grant will help strengthen IMI's organisational capacity and help them rent a UK mosque space for one year that operates on inclusive Islamic values e.g. champions gender justice, recognises the diversity of Muslims by ensuring LGBT inclusion, the importance of disabled access, multi-denominational and welcoming non-traditional families.

MWN HELPLINE

During 2018, the Helpline team supported **931 individuals** on over **44 different issues** (up from 42 issues in 2017). The top issues were:

- 1 Domestic Abuse**
33% of calls mentioned this as an issue, for 21% it was the primary reason for calling
- 2 Mental Health Feelings 28%**
- 3 Relationships 19%**
- 4 Divorce 18%**
- 5 Marriage 15%**

A National Specialist Faith and Culturally Sensitive Service

- We help women and girls who are suffering from or at risk of abuse or facing problems
- You can call us confidentially
- You can remain anonymous if you wish
- All callers are treated equally
- We do not make judgments about people's backgrounds or lifestyles.

PLEASE CONTACT US if you are in a crisis situation and need immediate help or just want information about your rights and the help or support that is available.

Contact MWN Helpline

0800 999 5786 Free from landlines and mobile phones
0303 999 5786 Calls charged at standard network rates
 Text us **07415 206 936**
 Email us **info@mwnhelpline.co.uk**

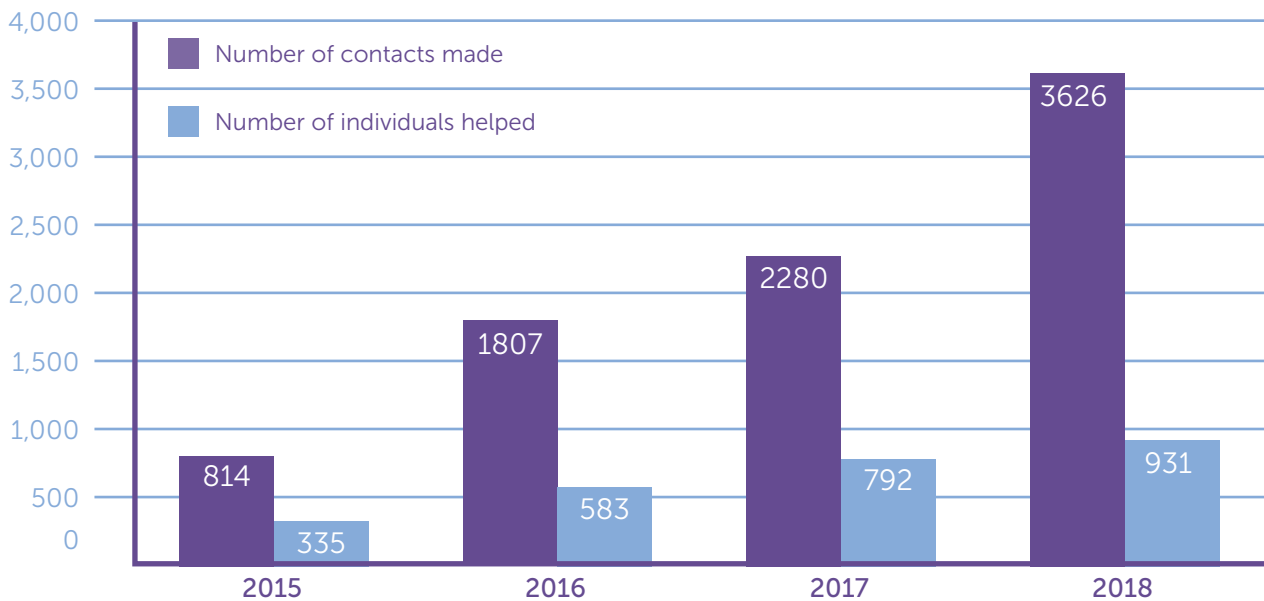
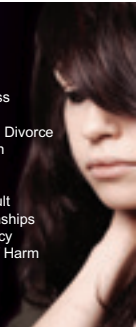
www.mwnhelpline.co.uk

In an emergency call 999

To contact your local or any other police force call 101

You can call us about

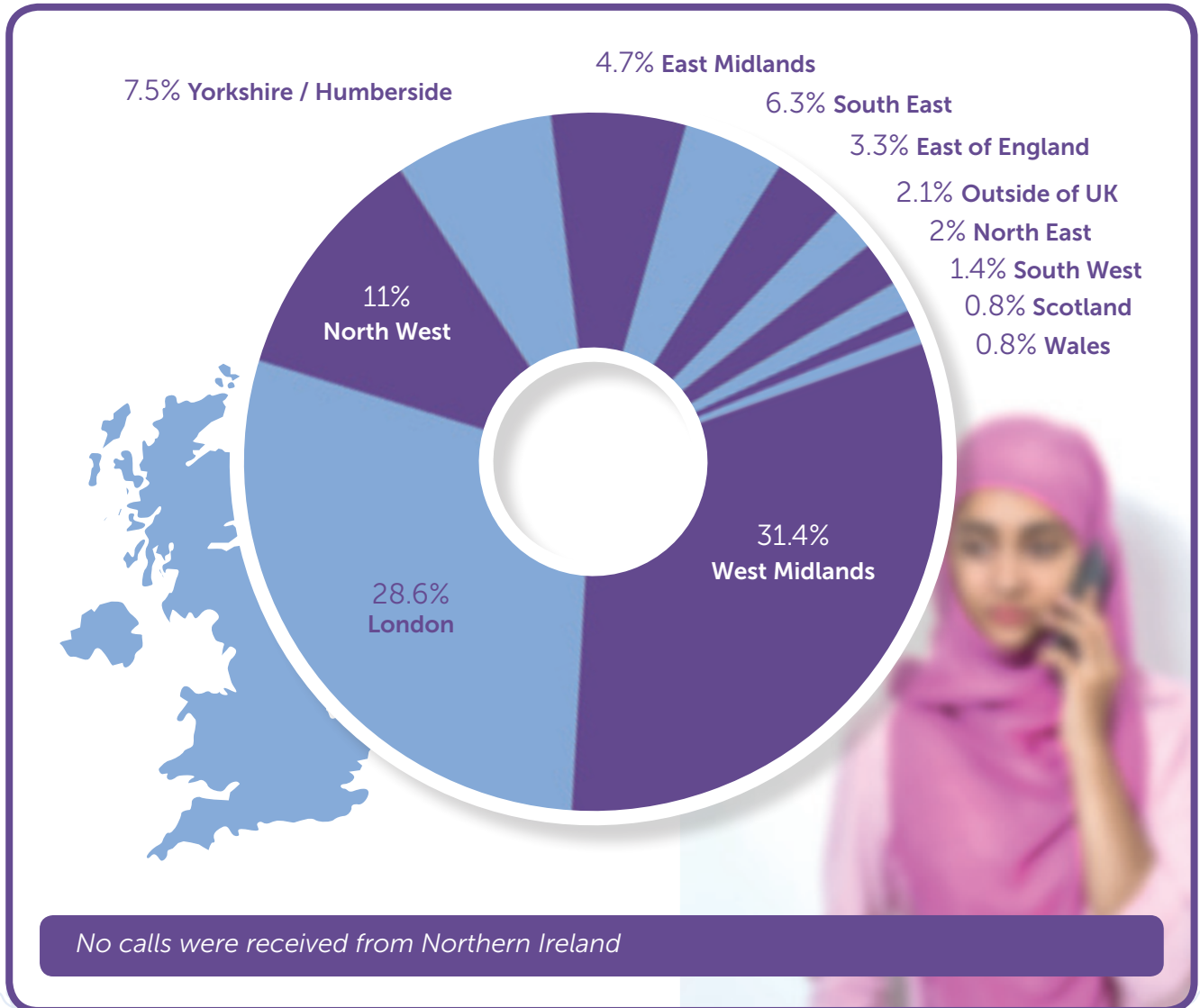
- Addictions (Alcohol and Drugs)
- Child Sexual Abuse / Exploitation
- Discrimination / Islamophobia
- Domestic Abuse
- Faith and Spirituality
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Forced Marriage
- Honour Based Violence
- Housing and Homelessness
- LGBT
- Marriage and Divorce
- Mental Health and Feelings
- Rape and Sexual Assault
- Sex, Relationships and Pregnancy
- Suicide / Self Harm



The chart above shows how the number of individuals helped and number of contacts made by our team to service-users has increased year on year since the MWN Helpline was launched in 2015.

Location of Service Users (2018)

81.7% of callers were recorded against a specific location. Of these calls where the location was recorded **60%** of these were either from the **West Midlands (31.4%)** or **London (28.6%)** which is consistent with previous findings



Languages Used

Most service users use **English** for the calls (**93.6%**). The remaining **6.4%** of contacts used the following languages which are spoken by team members on the Helpline or were handled via a language helpline service.

LANGUAGE USED	RECORDED	%
Bengali	9	1
English	872	93.6
Punjabi/Mirpuri	8	0.9
Urdu	40	4.3
Other	2	0.2

Counselling Support

MWNUK offer a faith and culturally sensitive counselling service. In 2018, there were 52 referrals made from the Helpline service to the Counselling team. Public services, academics, media, students, funders and other third sector organisations to register on the dashboard and utilise our findings.

MWN Helpline Case Study - Nisbah's Story

Nisbah* was in her 30s and had been married for three years. She shared how her experiences in her marriage were making her very unhappy and depressed. Over a series of telephone conversations, she revealed how her finances and contact with family and friends was restricted by her husband. She also shared how he would regularly belittle her and verbally abuse and threaten her unless she complied with his numerous demands.

How We Helped

The helpline team helped her to recognise that her treatment amounted to coercive control and that it was domestic abuse. She was provided with information about support available including what action she could take.

Nisbah contacted the helpline 5 months later and said:

"You helped me cope with my marital problems and helped me to see a light at the end of the tunnel. Fast forward a few months and I am at a much better place in my life now. I am no longer with my husband as we separated two months ago. I believe I have been empowered and supported enough to make a decision concerning my life in order to take care of my mental health and well-being for the better."

*not her real name

To access the MWN Helpline you can:

- Call us: **0800 999 5786**
(This is free to call from landlines and mobiles)
Or on **0303 999 5786**
- Text us: **07415 206 936**
- Email: **info@mwnhelpline.co.uk**
- Webchat: Via our website **www.mwnhelpline.co.uk**



Data Dashboard

Now in our fifth year, the MWN Helpline has actively shared our anonymised data through annual independent helpline evaluations (available on our website). The MWN Helpline Dashboard was created to make accessing key data patterns even more user friendly and transparent.

We welcome policy makers, public services, academics, media, students, funders and other third sector organisations to register on the dashboard and utilise our findings.

Register here



[www.mwnhelpline.com/
dashboard/register.php](http://www.mwnhelpline.com/dashboard/register.php)



Opening Hours: Monday Friday (10am-4pm)

All messages and calls received outside of our opening hours will be responded to as soon as possible during our opening hours.

Remember, if you are in immediate danger always DIAL 999

OUR FUNDRAISERS

MWNUK is proud to say we have dedicated fundraisers who run, bake and even jump out of planes for us! We cannot thank them enough for supporting us and the work we do to empower Muslim women and girls. As a small token of our appreciation we wanted to highlight their generosity by featuring some of them here.

Some of our fundraisers raise money to broadly help us deliver our everyday work, including training, projects and resource production.

Others raise money specifically for the MWN Hardship Fund, which is a pot of money held in trust for those who have accessed the MWN Helpline and might need additional support to deal with their crisis. We individually assess each application and can quickly ensure hardship provision is made available should we need to. Support has included providing hygiene packs, food, clothing and travel vouchers to emergency accommodation and counselling support.

MWNUK Supporters



Name: Raxsana Islam and friends

Location: Southend

Activity: Raxsana and a group of talented Muslim women organised the first ever charity luncheon held in aid of MWNUK, proving you can do good and have fun!

Funds Raised: £1256

Raxsana Islam and Co-Chair Nazmin Akthar at charity luncheon (July 2019)



Name: Nazmin Akthar and daughter

Location: Oxford

Activity: Our dedicated Co-Chair and her energetic two-year-old completed the 7K Blenheim Challenge at Blenheim Palace this April.

Funds Raised: £1182.85

Co-Chair Nazmin Akthar and her daughter at the finish line (April 2019)



Name: MILF (M-is-for-Muslim) Comedy Night

Location: London

Activity: As part of Sex Standing Up's interactive comedy nights, the organisers held this event to raise awareness of sexual health issues and raise funds for MWNUK during Ramadan.

Funds Raised: £450

Comedian Sadia Azmat headlining the MILF (M-is-for-Muslim) comedy show (May 2019)



Name: Kai & Zeb Javed
Location: Newcastle
Activity: The first ever skydiving MWN fundraisers became our highest fundraisers to date (in both senses of the word)!

Funds Raised: £2,091.96

Kai Javed's skydive (May 2019)

MWN Hardship Fund Supporters

Name: Robert Carpenter
Location: Newcastle
Activity: This proud Geordie completed a 90 minute walk for us in February. Hope we are just as spritely at 76!

Funds Raised: £769.75



Fundraiser Robert Carpenter (Feb 2019)

Name: Residents of NPS Cuthbert House
Location: Gateshead
Activity: These inspiring staff and residents who may not have much themselves, held a bake sale to help others in need.

Funds Raised: £54.50



Cakes from Cuthbert House bake sale (January 2019)

Name: Sidrah Walimia
Location: Birmingham
Activity: Running her third race for MWNUK, our loyal fundraiser Sidrah ran 10K in September.



Sidrah Walimia with her medal (September 2019)

Name: MWN Helpline Team
Location: Birmingham
Activity: Our amazing MWN Helpline staff and volunteers gave their own time to complete a 5K run in August for the MWN Hardship Fund. Well done team!

Funds Raised: £1105.50



The MWN Helpline Team at their 5K run (August 2019)

Long Term Donors

These are some of our long-term donors who regularly donate to help us with our work. They have individually donated hundreds of pounds over the years. We can't thank them enough for their generosity and commitment to our cause.



Gareth Hopcyn

Gareth has been part of the anti-Racist movement for decades and in recent times has wanted to show solidarity with Muslims in need. He and his wife have also donated toys and books for the children of survivors of abuse. Thank you to Gareth and his family for their kindness and compassion.



Razia Gohir

Razia is a grandmother of twelve who goes to Pakistan every year to donate her time and funds. She felt she wanted to help people in the UK and so became a regular donor to help MWNUK empower women and girls closer to home.

Corporate Partner



We are delighted to announce that Paget Rangers Football Club chose MWNUK as a charity partner earlier this year and will be supporting us by raising funds for us and helping us encourage more Muslim women and girls to take up sports.

We believe that participation in sports improves physical wellbeing and mental health, builds confidence and leadership skills, and is a crucial empowerment tool which can be used to promote women's rights and challenge abuse. We are so pleased Paget Rangers F.C. recognise this.

We will be working with them to open up new avenues to welcome Muslim women's sport teams and members to become part of the club's community - and already have various ideas as to how we can achieve our respective aims.

We look forward to a long and fruitful partnership!

A massive

Thank You

to all our Fundraisers and Donors!

How Your Fundraising Can Help

The time before and after deciding to leave an abusive situation is extremely stressful: fear of being caught, fear of the unknown, and doubts that everything won't be okay. Every day without shelter, provision and a supportive plan can increase the likelihood of returning to abusive situations.

This is why the MWN Hardship Fund is so vital

Help Women in Crisis

Contact us to fundraise - contact@mwnuk.co.uk

MWN Hardship Fund Case Study **-Tahira's Story**

A school contacted the helpline because they were supporting Tahira*, a parent who was being abused by her husband and in-laws. Our helpline team spoke to Tahira in Urdu. They learnt that she had come to the UK on a spousal visa from Pakistan, had three children and was also heavily pregnant. Her husband had not applied for her indefinite leave to remain and was using her insecure immigration status to control her. He would beat her regularly and lock her in the house. Tahira's son had started to copy his father and hit his sister. She wanted to leave her husband but had no money or accommodation and was worried about being sent back to Pakistan. She did not know her rights or what support was available, and she felt trapped.

How We Helped

The helpline team advised Tahira on her rights and support options. Because there were no refuges available to accommodate her family, the Hardship Fund was used to pay for temporary accommodation and food was arranged from the local food bank.

In the following days, the helpline team made a Destitute Domestic Violence Concession application so that she could access benefits and begin sorting out her immigration status through a solicitor. We worked with social services to find alternative short-term accommodation and helped her apply for long-term accommodation.

Following the birth of her fourth child, she was provided with further monetary support from the Hardship Fund. Eight months later, Tahira received indefinite leave to remain in the UK and was settled in her new home with her children.

*not her real name

OUTREACH

Our outreach workers have supported activists across the country in running community events, coffee mornings, and awareness-raising sessions on a number of issues. They also disseminated MWNUK's 'activist packs' which include our information booklets on domestic abuse violence, honour based violence, forced marriage, child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, discrimination and women's rights. Over the last 2 years, over 750 activist packs were distributed.



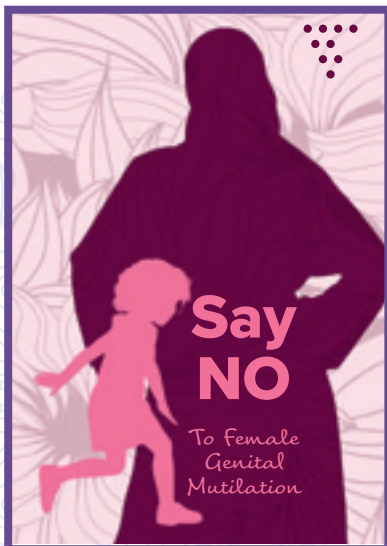
Outreach Worker Nigat Ara (centre) with attendees at a Ladies Night event in Rochdale, organised by Razheero Events (Feb 2019)



Outreach Worker Zaheda Vaid (left) at the 'This Muslimah Can' Event organised by Naheed Gultasib (right) from Walsall Women's Forum (June 2019)



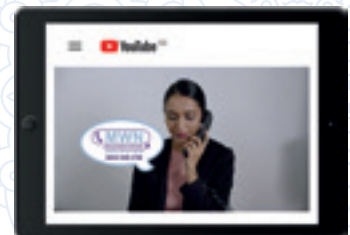
Outreach Worker and Helpline Support Worker at West Midlands Police's Forced Marriage and Honour Based Abuse Conference in July 2019



In the last 2 years of the additional booklets requested by grassroots activists were on topics of FGM, Forced Marriage and Domestic Abuse.

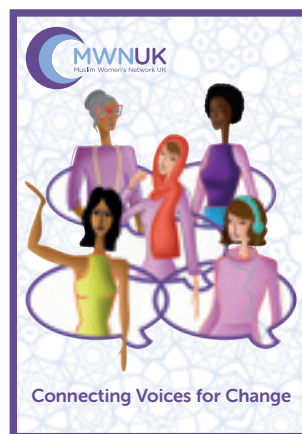
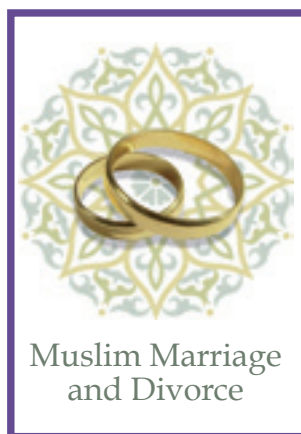
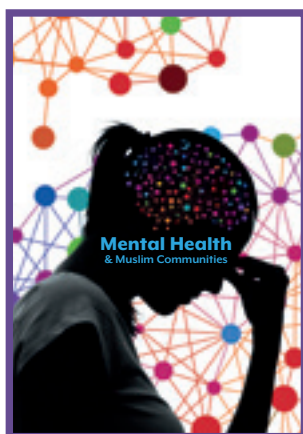
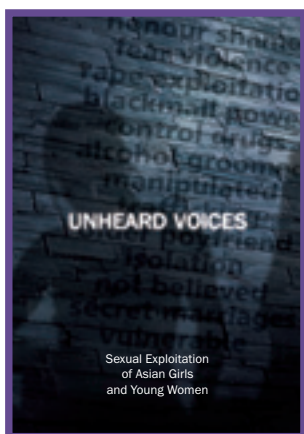
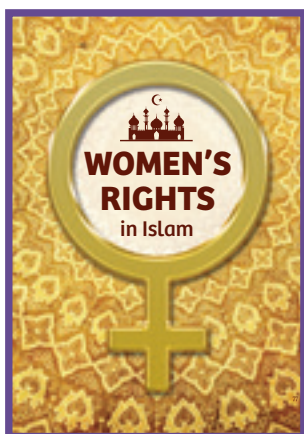
64%

There was a **404%** increase in viewing figures for our Introductory Helpline video.



A total of 2221 resources

were distributed including activist packs, Helpline posters and cards and Helpline pens.



Case Study: Supporting Muslim Women in the Criminal Justice System

One of our outreach workers made a connection at a networking event with a senior prison officer. The prison officer was impressed with MWNUK's resource materials and following her conversation with the outreach worker, she requested resource packs to place into 12 prison libraries.

This connection ensured that vulnerable women, isolated within the prison system, had better access to information and ensured that this sector was better aware of the needs of Muslim women.

ADVOCACY

Our advocacy work involves channelling views of Muslim women and girls to decision makers such as government and other public bodies. We do this in the following ways:

- Gathering viewpoints and data and responding to government and public body consultations
- Writing letters to policy influencers on key issues
- Attending and contributing to roundtable meetings, steering groups and taskforces with Ministers, government and public body officials
- Holding workshops and collecting views that are then included in a report and shared with decision makers

All reports submitted, workshop details and photographs may be found on our website.

This year MWNUK responded to various consultations on issues affecting Muslim women and Muslim communities more broadly, including:

Preventing & Tackling Forced Marriage Home Office Consultation January 2019

The Home Office were exploring how to increase reporting of forced marriage, deter potential perpetrators and improve protections for victims. They also wanted to know whether mandatory reporting will help or make the situation worse for forced marriage victims. Therefore, they suggested two options:

1. The possibility of introducing a new legal duty requiring professionals to report cases (e.g. when informed by a victim that they have been forced into a marriage, where it is suspected, or those who may be at risk). It is hoped that more cases being identified will mean more cases are investigated, resulting in an increase in the number of perpetrators prosecuted for this crime.
2. Updating the guidance it published in 2014.

Our response included the following points:

- For under 18s, due to safeguarding reasons, there is already a requirement for forced marriage cases to be automatically reported and so, whilst reports should be made, this will not change the status quo. However, from our experience on the helpline, we believe that mandatory reporting of over 18s will deter them from asking for help. We believe it is important to ensure victims are able to seek help and professionals only report to the police if they consent.
- We supported Pauline Latham MP's private bill on raising the age of marriage from 16 to 18 in the UK, which will also help reduce risk of forced marriage.

Online Harms

Home Office and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Consultation July 2019

MWNUK submitted a response to the Online Harms White Paper, which seeks to tackle online activity and content that harms users and the wider public.

We responded from the perspective of both a charity that works with victims of online abuse (including sexual exploitation, bullying, harassment and revenge porn) and a company that is likely to become subject to the proposed new duty of care.

We agreed with the introduction of a regulatory framework but the proposals alone will not be enough. It is important to view online abuse in the wider context of misogyny and inequalities, which means limits in the law and failings in the criminal justice system must be addressed. For instance:

- We raised the recommendations from our recent report, "Muslim Women's Experiences of the Criminal Justice System" - including the need to extend revenge porn laws so that they apply to threats to share and to audio recordings.
- Sentencing Guidelines need to be updated so that the use of threats and blackmail where the perpetrator knows that acting on such threats is likely to create or escalate the risk of honour-based violence for the victim, is treated as an aggravating factor.
- We also made the point that education for all individuals is key to empowerment, and that funding needs to be made available for charities who support victims of abuse.
- The regulator, which is expected to be introduced, also has the unique opportunity to uncover trends and patterns from annual reports and disseminate that information so that government, police etc. know what steps need to be taken and where resources need to be directed.

Other consultation responses included:

- **Women and Work Inquiry - How to Recruit Women for the 21st Century**
The Women and Work All Party Parliamentary Group
Written Response
November 2018
- **Relationships and Sex Education Consultation**
Department of Education
Written Response
November 2018
- **Divorce Law Reforms**
Ministry of Justice
Letter raising key issues relating to proposals
January 2019
- **Ethnic Pay Reporting Consultation**
Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy
Written Response
January 2019
- **Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**
72nd Session Review
Written Briefing Paper and Oral Evidence
February 2019
- **Commission on Gender Stereotypes in Early Childhood**
Fawcett Society
Written and Oral Evidence
July 2019

CAMPAIGNING

MWNUK have actively worked in partnership with other organisations seeking to achieve equality and justice for women and girls. We have partnered at events, co-delivered projects and actively disseminated our resources.

Partnership Events

#March4Women

International Women's Day Event

March 2019

At an uplifting event made up of speeches and entertainment, to bring attention to this year's theme of fighting harassment in the workplace, our then Interim Executive Director Shaista Gohir OBE took part in a panel discussion hosted by Woman's Hour presenter Jane Garvey. Shaista and the other panellists (Leyla Hussein and Gina Martin) spoke about challenging the law on gender equality issues throughout their careers. There were speeches from many inspirational women, including Annie Lennox, Helena Bonham Carter and Helen Pankhurst, and music from Beverley Knight, Imelda May and the Urban Voices Collective.



Shaista Gohir OBE at this year's March4Women Event, pictured with Meera Syal and Helena Bonham Carter (March 2019)

#ThisIsNotWorking

Lobby Action Day

March 2019

As part of our International Women's day activities we marched, along with our partners at Care International UK, Centenary Action and the Fawcett Society, to lobby MPs to take action to end workplace harassment.



The MWNUK Team with marchers and speakers at the #ThisNotWorking Lobby Action Day (March 2019)

Iftar Together

May 2019

Hope Not Hate, MWNUK, and various other partners held an interfaith Iftar event, hosted by Sikhs for Muslims, celebrating the theme of ‘Same Difference.’ It highlighted the fact that there is more that binds us than divides us and that love and respect is paramount.

Outreach Worker Zaheda Vaid at ‘Iftar Together’ Event



Partnership Projects



Muslims in the Criminal Justice System Conference

June 2019

At this event hosted by the Barrow Cadbury Trust, who funded the research for MWNUK’s report ‘Muslim Women’s Experiences of the Criminal Justice System,’ our Co-Chair Shaista Gohir OBE spoke about the specific challenges (e.g. language barriers, lack of cultural awareness) faced by Muslim women encountering the criminal justice system. The report, which was informed by the experiences of women who access the MWN Helpline, was launched at the event and Shaista also took part in a panel discussion. Other speakers included Maqsood Ahmed OBE (Director of Muslim Hands), Zubeda Limbada (Director of Connect Futures) and Minister Edward Argar MP (Under Secretary for Justice).



Shaista Gohir OBE and panellists at the ‘Muslims in the Criminal Justice System’ Conference (July 2019)



Centenary Action Group

Ongoing

The Centenary Action Group (CAG) is a cross-party campaigning coalition of activists, politicians and women’s rights organisations working together to eradicate the barriers to women’s political participation. MWNUK have been active members since 2018.

Centenary Action Group Meeting Attendees (November 2018)

Campaigning Impacts



FCO Policy Change

Forced Marriage Repatriation Fees

Following MWNUK's campaigning in 2016, the Foreign Office had amended its repatriation policy so that all British 16 and 17-year-olds who got into difficulty abroad no longer had to reimburse the government the costs of their journey home.

However, the policy remained in place for people aged 18 and over. MWNUK were elated when the policy was changed further in January 2019, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) finally abolished its policy of charging any victims of forced marriage the costs of their repatriation.



Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 72nd Session Committee

The CEDAW is the international human rights treaty that focuses specifically on equality between women and men in all areas of life. It is often referred to as the 'women's bill of rights.' The UK ratified CEDAW in 1986. Every five years government compliance with the CEDAW is assessed. Charities and NGOs, including MWNUK, travelled to Geneva in February to participate in this United Nations review of the UK's record on women rights.

Our then Chair Nazmin Akthar addressed a panel of CEDAW experts on issues faced by BAME women (including minority women of faith and those with insecure immigration status) who continue to face intersectional discrimination, violence and abuse. One particular issue raised by MWNUK was the need to make the Divorce (Religious Marriages) Act 2002 applicable to Muslims so that Muslim women could be empowered to leave marriages which had broken down, without having to rely on sharia councils.

We have continued discussions with the Ministry of Justice and government officials and departments regarding our recommendations for law reform.

Engaging with Media

Over the years MWNUK has regularly been asked to comment and contribute to mainstream, international and niche broadcast and print media, on a range of issues affecting Muslim communities in Britain. This year, this included governmental policy change for victims of forced marriage who have been taken abroad and advocating for Muslim women in positive response to the APPG on British Muslims' working definition of Islamophobia.



Shaista Gohir OBE discussing our campaign work on forced marriage policy on Sky News (January 2019)

Media Statements

MWNUK actively respond publicly to topical issues where possible. All our media statements are available to download from our website. This year, this included:

- 20/11/2018
Serious Safeguarding Concerns relating to Salma Foodbank
- 27/12/2018
MWNUK is in favour of the proposed definition of Islamophobia by the APPG on British Muslims
- 2/1/2019
MWNUK Renews Call to Abolish FCO Forced Marriage Repatriation Fees
- 30/1/2019
MWNUK welcomes Independent Review of Prevent Strategy and urges that the panel is truly independent

- 31/1/2019
We acknowledge the positive intentions behind World Hijab Day but cannot ignore its negative impact
- 15/3/2019
Terror Attack on New Zealand Mosques - We must all stand against anti Muslim hatred



Co-Chair Nazmin Akthar on Channel 5 TV's 'Mohila Ongon' show talking about women and Islamophobia (December 2018)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019

	2019 (£)	2018 (£)
INCOME		
Voluntary Income (grants and donations)*	315,839	287,565
Activities Generating Funds	423	467
Investment Income (Interest Receivable)	0	0
Total Income	316,262	288,032

EXPENDITURE		
Cost of Running Charitable Activities	289,683	275,859
Total Expenditure	289,683	275,859

RESERVES		
Retained Surplus for the Financial Year	26,579	12,173
Prior Period Adjustment	-3	154
Total Reserves Brought Forward	54,837	42,510
Total Reserves Carried Forward	81,413	54,837

**Of the £287,565 voluntary income, £7,663 is donations of which £5,816 is restricted.*

Independent Auditors

RUS Chartered Accountants
(Registered Auditors and Tax Advisors)
1190A - 1192 Stratford Road
Hall Green
Birmingham
B28 8AB

RECOGNITION AND THANKS

Thank You

MWNUK would like to thank all those who have supported our work. This year funders included:



FINAL WORD

MWNUK are committed to creating a society where Muslim women can have an effective voice and the opportunity to exercise their rights to contribute equally.

As ever, we would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all our supporters, including the members of the Board of MWNUK, the hard working staff who go above and beyond, volunteers, network members and of course, our funders and generous donors.



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