



## ANNUAL REPORT

and Statement of Accounts

2020-2021



## CONTENTS

| Message from the Co-Chair                                       | 4             | Our Fundraisers   | 2            |
|---|---------------|---|--------------|
| Our Ethos   | 6             | Advocacy  | 2            |
| The MWNUK Team  | 7             | APPG on Muslim Women  | 2            |
| MWNUK's Upcoming Changes Faeeza Vaid MBE Leaving Our New Office | <b>8</b><br>8 | Consultation Responses Letters Signed in Solidarity Policy Influencing Events | 2<br>2<br>2  |
| <b>Celebrations</b> Our New Award 10-year Anniversaries         | <b>9</b><br>9 | Campaigning Say Her Name Campaign Other Events                                | <b>3</b> . 3 |
| Small Charities Coalition Stars Award                           | 9             | Media Engagement  | 3            |
| Our Covid Response  | 10            | Engaging with Media<br>Media Mentions   | 3            |
| MWNUK Online  | 11            | Media Statements  | 3            |
| Data Dashboard  | 13            | Financial Statement and Accounts  | 3            |
| MWN Hub   | 14            | Recognition and Thanks  | 4            |
| MWN Helpline Counselling Support                                | <b>16</b> 20  | Tribute to Fawziyah Javed   | 4            |
| Casework Support  | 21            | How You Can Help MWNUK  | 4            |





## MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-CHAIRS

This year has been just as challenging as 2020 trying to adjust to the new normal while continuing to ensure safety and wellbeing for ourselves and our loved ones. Not surprisingly, the complexity of cases received on our helpline increased, which also resulted in a demand for counselling support. We would therefore like to thank our staff as well our the external counsellors for rising to the occasion and going above and beyond in their roles, especially while also managing caring responsibilities and the loss of loved ones. We are also grateful to our funders for providing us with the flexibility to be able to direct our resources to where they were most needed.

We are also pleased that the MWN Hub has reached its first anniversary and is proving to be a great source of knowledge for our members through blogs, podcasts and videos. Its success has been acknowledged by MWNUK winning the national Charity Governance Award for the third consecutive year, this time in the category of embracing digital. Other innovative ways to achieve equality and justice for Muslim women and girls has been the launch of the APPG on Muslim women, of which MWNUK is the Secretariat. This will allow us take our advocacy work to the next level. I would like to extend our thanks to all the Officers of the APPG for taking time out from their busy schedules to help further our work.

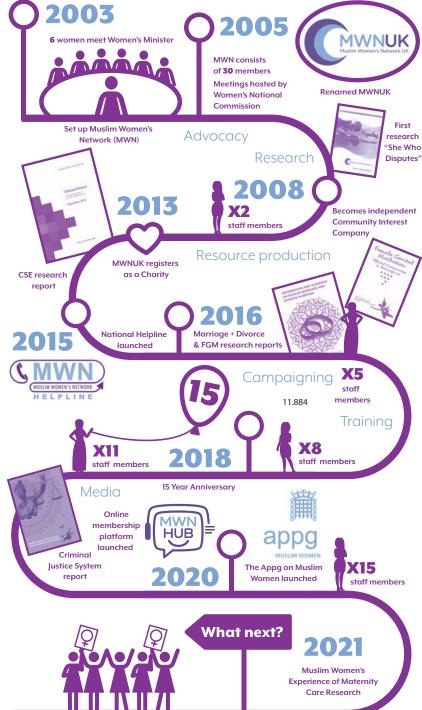
Faeeza Vaid will sadly be leaving us. She started as a volunteer 13 years ago before becoming a Co-ordinator followed by the Executive Director role. We would like to thank Faeeza for her contributions in the development of MWNUK during her time with us. We wish Faeeza success in the next phase of her career. We would also like to take this opportunity to remember Fawziyah Javed who had been a member for more than ten years. We were saddened to learn about her death, a bright light light extinguished too soon. During this very difficult time, we send our deepest condolences to her family, especially her mother Yasmin Javed, who has also been a long time supporter of MWNUK.

After 20 months of virtual meetings, we are looking forward to being able to connect with you face to face again in 2022.



## OUR JOURNEY\_





## **OUR ETHOS**

#### **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.



## WHAT WE DO

MWNUK is a national charity working to improve the social justice and equality for Muslim women and girls of all diverse ethnic backgrounds across the UK.

We find out about their experiences through research, the MWN Helpline and our membership. We identify policy and practice gaps and inform decision makers in government and other public bodies with the long-term aim of systematic change.

Our knowledge also informs our community campaigns, resources, and training so women and girls are better informed about their rights and how to access support and help.

Research - Helpline - Advocacy - Campaigning - Influencing

## THE MWNUK TEAM

#### **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)



Nazmin Akthar, Dr.Iram Sattar, Shaista Gohir OBE, and Sophie Garner at our AGM 2019

#### **Staff**

- Executive Director Faeeza Vaid MBE
- Executive Assistant Rizwana Bi
- Advocacy Officer Neelam Rose (from Sept 2021)



#### **MWN Hub Team**

- Online Membership Coordinator
   Zara Shabir (until Dec 2020)
- MWN Hub Manager Faris Gohir
- Editorial and Communications Manager Aaliyah Gohir
- Presenter and Producer Ayisha Karim
- Digital Content ManagerZeinab Abid
- ResearcherHadia Mansoor

#### **Helpline Team**

- Helpline Manager Shameem Hussain
- Helpline Support Workers
   Adeeba Begum
   Ayisha Karim
   Hadia Mansoor
   Shahna Aowlad
   Sumaira Mehmood
   Zaheda Vaid
   Zeinab Abid
   Nasseam Akhtar (from July 2021)
- Helpline Caseworkers
   Saima Pasha
   Shahna Aowlad (from Nov 2020)
- Helpline VolunteerSomia Jamil

## **MWNUK'S UPCOMING CHANGES**

### Faeeza Vaid MBE Leaving Executive Director Position

The MWNUK Board announced in October that Executive Director Faeeza Vaid MBE will be leaving her position at MWNUK in January 2022.

Faeeza first volunteered for MWNUK in 2008 and became Executive Director of MWNUK in 2011 proving herself as a standout leader with excellent operational and strategic management skills. Her role has involved a myriad of project and programme development, training and facilitation, and as a naturally talented public speaker, has promoted issues through speaking at events and in the media

Faeeza has played an integral role in MWNUK's journey and development and we have therefore invited her to join the Board in January 2022 to continue advancing social justice and women's equality.

Co-Chair Shaista Gohir OBE will be stepping off the Board to take on the role of Interim Executive Director while we plan our next organisational steps.

#### Shaista said:

"I have worked closely with Faeeza for more than 10 years and have witnessed first-hand that she has gone above and beyond to make MWNUK a success. She is not only a colleague but also a friend and I hope to continue working together on many exciting projects. On behalf of the MWNUK Board, I would like to thank her for her service and wish her every success in her future endeavours."

#### Faeeza said:

"It has been an immense honour working with exceptional individuals over the years. On reflection, we have achieved many milestones and have been at the forefront of transformative social change. Personally, I am sincerely grateful for the many opportunities and deep relationships I have had. I have learnt a lot and my life has been richer in so many ways.

My passion for tackling social inequalities remains and I hope to continue supporting MWNUK's work. I am also thrilled to be starting a new role in January as Programme Manager at The Active Wellbeing Society based in Birmingham.

So thank you MWNUK Family. And I look forward to keeping in touch."

#### **Our New Office**

From January 2022 the MWNUK team will be moving to a new location in Birmingham: First Floor, 1190- 1192 Stratford Road, Birmingham, B28 8AB

## **CELEBRATIONS**

#### **10 Year Anniversaries**

Faeeza Vaid celebrated 10 years as Executive Director this year, and Nazmin Akthar and Khursheed Wadia celebrated 10 years as Trustees.

Co-Chair Shaista Gohir said: "Part of MWNUK's success is a result of the passionate and committed individuals who have each brought a unique set of skills and constructive challenge to support our growth.

I would like to thank Nazmin, Khursheed and Faeeza for providing endless hours helping develop us into a highly reputable national charity. You have made immeasurable contributions, and I am grateful for having shared this journey of tackling inequality and injustice with you."

To celebrate, we shared short videos of various aspects of MWNUK's work and journey:

- Membership
- Research
- MWN Helpline
- Workshops
- Resource production
- Challenging stereotypes
- Advocacy
- Campaigning
- Biggest campaign impact

These videos can be found on our YouTube Channel: Muslim Women's Network UK



## **Charity Governance Award** (2021)

In May 2021, MWNUK was pleased to have won another national Charity Governance Award in the category of 'Transforming with Digital'. The judges were impressed by - in their words - our inspiring level of ambition and the way our trustees developed our digital strategy, assessed risks, and made investments - and were impressed by the support and openness of the board to learn and evolve.

We are thrilled with this hat trick, following ours wins in 2019 in the 'Improving Impact' category and in 2020 in the 'Embracing Opportunity & Harnessing Risk' category.

## **Small Charities Coalition Stars Award (2021)**

MWNUK'S Co-Chair Nazmin Akthar was selected by the Small Charities Coalition and Shaw Trust as one of the SSC Stars of 2021, in recognition of Nazmin and MWNUK's campaigning activities, seeking law reform to better protect victims of discrimination.

## **RESPONSES TO COVID**

The Covid-19 pandemic has continued to present MWNUK with challenges for both the Helpline users and team members. Still working from home, the team have successfully maintained a consistent level of service provision and have responded well to the changing needs of service users.

#### Webinar

In March 2021, MWNUK hosted an event on, 'Covid Vaccine Q&A Session' with other healthcare professionals Dr Farzana Hussain, Dr Iram Sattar and Dr Samira Hassan.

Participants were encouraged to have conversations and share resources to ensure more people make more informed decisions about the Covid-19 vaccine.

#### The panel reiterated:

- Covid Vaccines are Safe
- Covid Vaccines are Effective
- Covid Vaccines are Halal
- Covid Vaccines are Needed Now

### Covid Vaccine Q&A Session

WITH DR FARZANA HUSSAIN, DR IRAM SATTAR AND DR SAMIRA HASSAN





### Muslim Mental Health Alliance

In response to Covid-19 MWNUK has worked with the Muslim Council of Britain's 'Community Response Group on Mental Health' (renamed as the Muslim Mental Health Alliance) and other UK Muslim mental health organisations to better connect, share information and provide informative webinars on mental health issues. MWNUK participated in the following online webinars:

- What Every Muslim Needs to Know About Suicide Prevention (October 2020)
- The Good, The Bad & The Pandemic: Reflecting on 2020 and looking ahead to 2021 (December 2020)
- Muslim Mental Health in an Unequal World (October 2021)



## **MWNUK ONLINE**

MWNUK has a strong online presence with 3 websites (**mwnuk.co.uk**, **mwnhelpline.co.uk**, **mwnhub.com**) and active social media feeds which are used to keep members up to date, raise awareness of issues and campaign for change. MWNUK encourages you to explore, share and get more involved with its work.



## Award-winning and ground-breaking national charity. **WWW.mwnuk.co.uk**

MWNUK's information-rich organisational website includes our resources, research, reports, media statements, and examples of our training, advocacy, and campaign work.

The site is frequently accessed, and resources are regularly downloaded.

Our online resource 'Information on Muslim Marriage in the UK' has continued to be the most downloaded resource. Over the past year it has seen a 14% increase on the MWNUK website and a 54% increase on the MWN Helpline website.

In total, this resource has been downloaded 33,606 times.



| TYPE OF MWNUK RESOURCE | TOTAL DOWNLOADS (UNTIL SEPT 2021) | TOTAL DOWNLOADS (UNTIL SEPT 2020) |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Research Reports       | 23,176                            | 18,898                            |
| Information Booklets   | 77,643                            | 50,522                            |
| Consultation Responses | 35,643                            | 25,647                            |
| Media Statments        | 59,012                            | 49,645                            |
| Evaluation reports     | 2,133                             | 2,085                             |
| Annual/Other Reports   | 12,190                            | 8,827                             |
| Total                  | 209,797                           | 151,447                           |

#### **Covid Vaccine Resources**

This year MWNUK's contributions included actively producing information resources on the Covid vaccine to challenge some of the myths and hesitancy around them, especially within Muslim communities. Faeeza Vaid and trustee Dr. Iram Sattar produced these videos in English, Urdu, and Bengali. And Faeeza created a 'It's Now Your Turn' video in which individuals who had had the vaccine let people know and encouraged others to take the vaccine.

To date, on MWN TV's YouTube channel the videos have been watched thousands of times. The videos were shared on both MWNUK's and MWN Hub's social media platforms and to various stakeholder mailing lists.

The World at One at BBC Radio 4 shared audio clips from the information videos as part of its programme on BAME take up of vaccine on February 8th, 2021.

Here is some feedback received from individuals, organisations, health professionals and politicians who actively shared the videos:

'Great videos, definitely needed to educate and keep our communities updated. Will definitely pass it on.'

'Have had good feedback on the video...
especially for it being in multiple languages.'

'They are very good - and will circulate'
President of Mosque in Birmingham.

'Thanks Iram.. really good, having lots of positive feedback from people I have sent to. These are so brilliant! I feel proud to work with you.'



- Covid-19 Information Video (English full) 6.3K views
- Covid-19 Information Video (English short) 374 views
- Covid-19 Information Video (Urdu) -3.7K views
- Covid-19 Information Audio (Bengali) 2.8K views
- Covid-19 It's Now Your Turn 262 views



#### **Our Social Media Accounts**



Facebook

@Muslim Women's Network UK 6,861 followers\* @MWNUK Member 740 friends\*



YouTube

Muslim Women's Network UK 313 subscribers\* Our videos have been viewed over 72,000 times in total\*



Twitter

@MuslimWomenUK
7,589 followers\*



Instagram @muslimwomensnetworkuk

2,955 followers\*

\*All statistics as of September 2021



### **DATA DASHBOARD**

MWNUK actively shares anonymised data from the MWN Helpline so that Muslim women's and girls' experiences are better understood. The data can be used by a wide range of stakeholders such as policy makers, public services, academics, media, students, funders and other third sector organisations, but you will need to register on the dashboard to access the information



Register here to access our data dashboard:

www.mwnuk.co.uk/muslim-women-helpline-dashboard.php

## **MWN HUB**

#### www.mwnhub.com



The MWN Hub is the charity's online member platform which was launched in October 2020, and has had almost 50,000 page views in the last year. The site has also had 20,089 total page users (75% are returning visitors and 25% are new visitors)

active members

92.2% 96%

are female

are from the UK



#### The MWN Hub provides a space for members to:

- Talk to other members via forum discussions (we're developing functionality to create your own groups too!)
- Watch and share videos on a range of topics on our MWN TV channel (we can help with editing)
- **Read** and write blogs on a range of issues, from experts as well as those with lived experiences
- **Listen** and share podcasts on a range of issues
- **Share** information about events, notices, jobs, not-for-profit activities and even share details of your business and services on the market place
- **Explore** and find out about the latest updates from MWNUK.

#### Covid-19 Vaccine Myths vs Facts



By Dr. Iram Sattar (MWNUK Trustee and Safeguarding Lead)

#### **READ: Articles**

The 'Read' section of the MWN Hub website has articles on a range of issues and interests. For example, Dr. Iram Sattar wrote a blog 'Busting Covid-19 Vaccine Myths' explaining the importance of getting vaccinated and addressing some of the misinformation about the vaccines. The article was viewed 2,762 times.

Other popular articles are:

British Muslim Female Film and TV Directors

2,153 views

Catfishing on Muslim marriage platforms

1,453 views

#### MWN Hub social media



Instagram
<a href="mailto:amwnhub">amwnhub</a>
364 followers\*



YouTube
MWN TV
144 subscribers\*

MWN TV videos have been viewed over **17, 000 times** in total\*

#### Videos include:

- Islamic Feminism with amina wadud
- Let's Talk: Breast Cancer
- Muslim Women Breaking Their Silence



Soundcloud MWN Hub 8 followers\*

#### Most popular podcasts are:

- The Skin Deep Series In Conversation with Reema Zaman (Part 1)
- Let's Talk Surgical & Chemical MenopauseOur Stories
- The Skin Deep Series In Conversation with The So-Called Feminist (Part 1)

\*All statistics as of September 2021

## **MWN HELPLINE**

### www.mwnhelpline.co.uk

The new MWN Helpline website includes information on a range of issues including mental health and feelings, sexual abuse, tech abuse, domestic abuse, faith and spirituality, and divorce.



0800 999 5786 (free from landlines and mobile phones)



07415 206 936



info@mwnhelpline.co.uk



www.mwnhelpline.co.uk

#### Open Monday - Friday (10am-4pm)

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

You can contact the helpline whether you are in a crisis situation and need immediate help or just want information and advice. **You can call 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

... and anything else



#### In an emergency call 999

To contact your local or any other police force call 101

## MWN HELPLINE STATISTICS (Jan-Dec 2020)

The MWN Helpline is a specialist faith and culturally sensitive service run by a professional and highly trained team, who assess the needs of each service user. Support ranges from providing information, finding emergency accommodation, assessing safeguarding and taking the necessary next steps, to liaising with other frontline services and finding support options.

Available nationally, service users may contact the helpline via telephone, email, webchat, and text. Our highly trained and professional staff and volunteers all ensure we deliver a confidential and non-judgmental service to each service user.



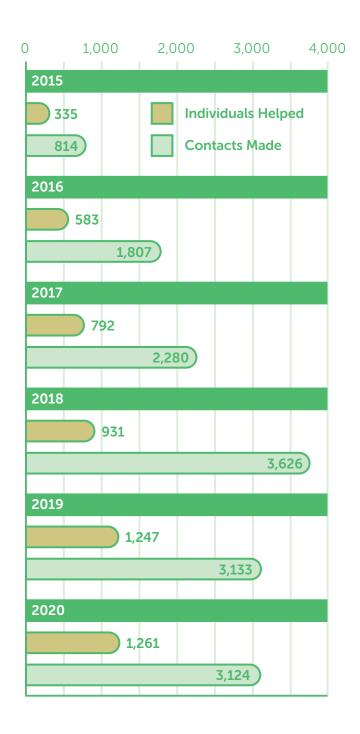
While 87% of service users speak English, the helpline's bi-lingual staff can also provide advice in Urdu, Punjabi, Mirpuri, Potwari, Hindko, and Bengali more easily. When additional languages are needed, an interpretation service is used.

### Making More Use of Text Based Contact Methods

The team recognised that the Covid restrictions meant that some service users were often unable to find the privacy that they needed to talk to a member of the team. Previously they may have been able to make a call whilst taking a child to school or going to the shops but during the pandemic they were isolated in their homes, often with the person who was abusive towards them. While a phone call is often the more effective and efficient way to provide support to a service user, MWN Helpline has always also provided support via text, email, and webchat.

Use of these modes increased during 2020 to **35%** of contacts from **21%** in 2019. This shift in approach meant that many service users could make contact outside of the Helpline opening times and make contact when it was safer for them to do so, and thereafter expect a response during the opening hours.

The chart on the right 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 (2020)**

The MWN Helpline is accessed across the UK with 1 in 2 service users (where location is known) living in London (211 service users) and West Midlands (321 service users).

This year has seen a slight growth in service users from the East of England and from the North East and a slight reduction from the North West.

1 in 25 contacts are made by service users who are living outside of the UK.

The total number of service users where location was not recorded was **198** (15.7%).



| Other Locations        | Number | Percentage |
|------------------------|--------|------------|
| East of England        | 105    | 10%        |
| Yorkshire / Humberside | 83     | 8%         |
| North West             | 78     | 7%         |
| South East             | 77     | 7%         |
| South West             | 52     | 5%         |
| Outside of UK          | 43     | 4%         |
| East Midlands          | 40     | 4%         |
| North East             | 28     | 3%         |
| Scotland               | 15     | 1%         |
| Wales                  | 7      | 1%         |
| Northern Ireland       | 3      | >1%        |

### Languages Used (2020)

While most staff and volunteers on the MWN Helpline are bilingual, the majority of service users prefered conversing in **English (87.3%)**, followed by **Urdu (7.8%)**, **Bengali (2.5%)**, **Punjabi/Mirpuri (1.2%)** and **Arabic (0.9%)** 

#### **Testimonial**

"I would like to say a big thanks to Sammi at MWN Helpline...for assisting me recently with supporting a victim of domestic abuse and potential honour based abuse.

The victim was very isolated by way of controlling and coercive behaviour from her husband, she neither spoke nor understood English. She had fled a violent domestic abuse incident with her two small children and was taken to emergency accommodation by police. By making her safe she was further isolated from her culture and all that she knew, and this had such an effect on her willingness to engage. There was great frustration on her part and mine in using telephone interpreters, often information would be lost in the translation. By having support from Sammi and the victim was able to speak in her language without interpreter was very helpful. I had not used MWN before but shall recommend to other colleagues".

## COUNSELLING SUPPORT

The MWN Helpline is able to refer service users to our in-house counselling service which offers free one-to-one counselling sessions. The counsellors are BACP registered and experienced in supporting individuals with complex issues, such as:

- Bereavement
- Domestic Abuse
- Forced Marriage and Honour Based Abuse
- Historical child abuse
- Marital/relationship issues
- Self-confidence issues
- Navigating various identities

Adopting a holistic approach and maintaining the highest standards of professionalism, space is given to explore faith and culture if needed.

When you contact the MWN Helpline for an initial assessment, you are matched with a counsellor who can most support your individual needs.

- In 2020, referrals for counselling support almost doubled compared to 2019.
- In 2019, 221 counselling sessions were delivered, and in 2020 410 counselling sessions were delivered

### **CASE STUDY**

A referral was received from a Senior Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) working for a third sector organisation in London. As the case required a faith and culturally sensitive approach, it was referred to the MWN Helpline.

Riffa had experienced domestic abuse from her mother-in-law, father-in-law, and her husband, particularly coercive control. She wanted to speak with someone who would understand her faith and culture, particularly as she had left her marital home and was trying to figure out her next steps.

The MWN Helpline provided her with information and advice, the IDVA continued to support Riffa practically withimplementing a safety plan, and we referred Riffa to our in-house counsellor.

She received 8 sessions and was able to make life-changing choices more confidently.



## CASEWORK SUPPORT

To provide more in-depth support following engagement with the MWN Helpline, the team includes 2 part-time Case Workers who provide short-term specialist advice and support to survivors of abusive situations and those with multiple complex needs. This involves carrying out risk and needs assessments, safety planning, and individual support planning with survivors as well as advocating on their behalf with external agencies.

Caseworkers can speak the following languages: Urdu, Punjabi, Mirpuri and Sylheti Bengali.

The caseworkers are experienced in supporting individuals with complex issues, such as:

- Domestic Abuse
- Mental health and feelings
- Money and finance
- Self-confidence issues
- Navigating intersectional identities

Between 01 November 2020 - 31 September 2021 MWN Helpline received **1472** cases. From these **58** (4%) were assigned to case workers.

The top five issues caseworkers dealt with are\*:

- 1. Domestic Abuse 25 cases (43%)
- 2. Housing / Homelessness 22 cases (38%)
- 3. Mental Health & Feelings 14 cases (24%)
- 4. Money / Finance 13 cases (22%)
- 5. Children / Custody 11 cases (19%)

### **CASE STUDY**

Naila\* had a long history of domestic abuse and after her husband tried to strangle her, she reported him to the police. As she did not want to give a statement, he was released without charge. Her friend suggested she call the MWN Helpline for advice.

As Naila's first language was Sylheti Bengali, a Bengali speaking Case Worker supported her by:

- giving immediate safety advice
- making a police report
- contacting the National Centre for Domestic Violence to secure an injunction against the perpetrator
- found her suitable accommodation

"The MWN Helpline staff did a fantastic job in supporting me. I am now separated from husband, and I feel more confident, safe, and secure.

The MWN Helpline staff were very kind and supportive and helped me to find out about procedures that I did not know about before."

Not real name

<sup>\*</sup> this adds up to more than 100% because dealing with multiple issues

## HARDSHIP FUND SUPPORT



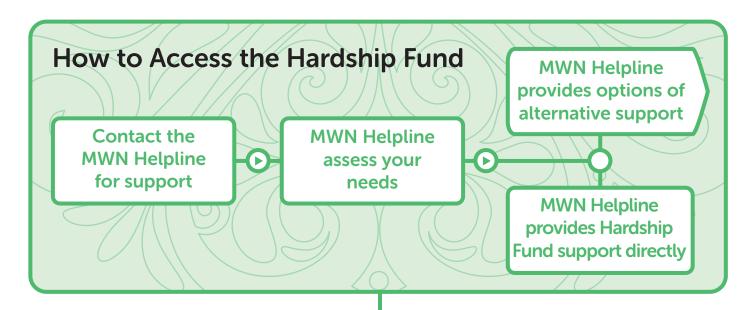
MWNUK continues to run the 'MWN Hardship Fund' which is used to support, where possible, those in crisis situations and in need of immediate financial support.

The MWN Helpline team assesses each application and can quickly ensure hardship provision is made available where needed. Support includes providing hygiene packs, food, clothing, and travel vouchers to facilitate travel to emergency accommodation.

## **CASE STUDY**

MWNUK understands how Muslim prisoners may face difficulties with practicing their faith in prison and may be estranged from their families. During Ramadan 2021 MWNUK sponsored 'Himaya Haven', a Birmingham based organization who specialise in supporting families of loved ones who are in custody or prison, to deliver 15 Ramadan packs for women in prison via the Hardship fund.





## **CASE STUDY**

Hannah\* had a number of complex long term health conditions. She had been a victim of domestic abuse (financial, emotional, verbal, physical and coercive control) from her mum for many years. It started off as emotional/financial abuse with her mum using the benefits she received on herself only, but the abuse escalated to physical abuse particularly when her mum was drunk.

Hannah disclosed she fled her family home after being physically assaulted by her mum. She was given temporary accommodation by the Council and was waiting to see her keyworker to access further support. Hannah did not have a separate bank account, and her benefits had been temporarily stopped while her mum was investigated for mismanaging the funds.

\* Not real name

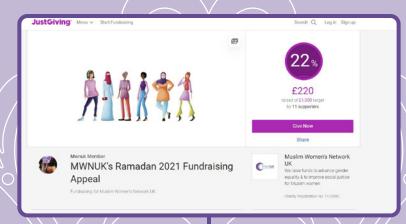
### How We Helped

While Hannah's social worker supported with getting her access to her benefits, MWNUK provided Hannah with £100 for her immediate needs for basic essential, food, clothes, and travel

## **OUR FUNDRAISERS**

MWNUK is super proud of our fundraisers who have supported us and the work we do to empower Muslim women and girls. They are able to choose to fundraise to support our core activities such as the helpline service, resource production and outreach activities, or fundraise specifically for the MWN Hardship Fund.

We also have long-term donors who regularly donate to help us with our work. They have individually donated hundreds and thousands of pounds over the years. Thank you for your generosity and commitment to our cause.



A massive

## "THANK YOU"

to all our Fundraisers and Donors!

# ADVOCACY APPG ON MUSLIM WOMEN

MWNUK's advocacy work involves channeling views of Muslim women and girls to decision makers such as government and other public bodies. Importantly since October 2020, we are the Secretariat of the APPG on Muslim Women, which is co-chaired by Naz Shah MP (Labour) and Caroline Nokes MP (Conservatives).

Our first inquiry 'Muslim Women's Experiences of Maternity Care' is well underway, and the report is due to be published in early 2022. This research was highlighted on the 15 December 2020 as part of oral evidence taken before the Health and Social Care Committee, on Safety of Maternity Services in England, HC 677; Eleventh Report of the Joint Committee on Human Rights, Black people, racism and human rights, HC 559.

Women Smashing Concrete Ceilings - Conversation with Professor Farah Bhatti OBE (Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon) (March 2021)

The APPG on Muslim Women hosted an International Women's Day event; 'Women Smashing Concrete Ceilings' with Professor Farah Bhatti OBE.

Farah spoke about her career as a surgeon, some of the barriers she faced, and how she's continued to challenge.

Farah importantly raised that she may be the "first" to achieve a number of positions in her field, but she absolutely does not want to be the last and spoke about 'sending the lift down' to others wanting to follow the same path.

#### Other advocacy activities this year have included:

- 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, event details and photographs may be found on our website.

### **CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

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

#### Consultation Paper on Intimate Image Abuse, Law Comission

#### Written Response, June 2021

Muslim Women's Network UK have submitted written evidence to the Law Commission's Consultation Paper on Intimate Image Abuse, having previously attended two roundtable meetings with the Law Commission and other stakeholders to provide our thoughts and opinions on the proposals.

In our evidence, we have welcomed the proposals but asked that the definition of 'intimate images' is broad enough so as to be able to take into account the cultural factors which may be involved as what is deemed 'intimate' may vary from victim to victim and community to community. Given the very serious risks of forced marriage and honour-based abuse which could be involved, it is important to

take into account the intersectional experiences of victims so that they can truly be helped and protected.

We have also made the point that there is always an element of harm to mental health involved in cases where intimate images may have been created without consent and therefore just because someone may not then share or threaten to share these images, does not mean that harm has not been caused.

We have also shared our support for an additional offence where the intent is to make a gain, because this is a very real issue that is exploited in particular by grooming gangs.



## Other consultation responses included:

- Mental Health Act Reform
  The Department of Health and Social Care
  Written Response
  April 2021
- Women's Health Strategy
   Department of Health and Social Care
   Written Response
   June 2021

## LETTERS SIGNED IN SOLIDARITY

Below is a list of letters signed by MWNUK is solidarity with others seeking to advance the rights of women and girls.

#### December 2020

End female genital mutilation/ cutting (FGM/C) and child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) — Orchid Project

Calling on the leaders of the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Gender-based Violence (GBV) to commit to ending female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and child, early and forced marriage (CEFM).

#### February 2021

Open Letter to the BBC on Zara Mohammed's mistreatment on Woman's Hour – gal-dem

After Emma Barnett's recent interview with Secretary General Zara Mohammed from the Muslim Council of Britain, the BBC needs to address its engagement with and representation of Muslim women.

#### March 2021

Religious Leaders back 'National Day of Reflection' – Marie Curie

Religious leaders from across different faiths have asked the public to join them in a national day to remember those who have died from any cause during the pandemic – being held on Tues 23 March - and to show support for everyone who has been bereaved

#### **April 2021**

Open Letter to Prime Minister Boris Johnson to Reject the Race Report – Runnymede Trust

The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities published its report last week, which concluded that the UK does not have a systemic problem with racism. Several charity leaders have urged the prime minister to withdraw last week's report on racism in the UK through an open letter coordinated by Runnymede.

#### **April 2021**

A joint statement from social sector leaders on the right to campaign - ACEVO

In a debate in parliament yesterday Sir John Hayes (Conservative) said that he and 20 other members of the House had written to the Charity Commission to complain about the Runnymede Trust's response to the report by the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities.

#### May 2021

Safeguard Futures Ban Child Marriage - IKWRO

We urge the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson to prioritise this change in law to end child marriage and secure the safe futures of girls affected by this in this country.



### **POLICY INFLUENCING EVENTS**

Law Commission Roundtable on Intimate Image Abuse Consultation Victim Survivors and Victim Support Groups Roundtable Event

(April 2021)

MWNUK's Co-Chair Nazmin Akthar attended the Law Commission's roundtable meeting and shared her views around proposed law reforms to tackle intimate image-based abuse.

We are especially keen to ensure that the definition of "intimate" covers a broad range of scenarios so that religious/cultural factors can be taken into account, and ensure the law recognises that reasons for sharing intimate images may not always be for sexual gratification.



Where resource has allowed, MWNUK has actively attended a range of stakeholder meetings. MWN Helpline Manager Shameem Hussain and Advocacy Officer Neelam Rose have attended the following meetings, and shared the MWN Helpline data, patterns and trends.

 National Police Chiefs' Council meeting on Honour based Abuse, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation.

(January 2021)

Stakeholders discussed the national policing strategy for England, Wales and Northern Ireland – eradicating honour based abuse, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

 Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) (March 2021)

Following the murder of Sarah Everard AC Louisa Rolfe OBE, Commissioner of the National Policing Lead for Domestic Abuse held a meeting with female leads who work in VAWG

#### Birmingham Against FGM Meeting (April 2021)

Stakeholders shared learnings and positive approaches working on changing attitudes to female genital mutilation.

## Domestic Homicide Project Stakeholder (April 2021)

This sub-group of the National Domestic Abuse Stakeholder Meetings was set up as a recognition that there was no statutory body looking into domestic homicide. Police forces from across the country were asked to report on the any case which met the 'domestic homicide definition' and report the number of domestic homicides recorded, number of children involved and suspected suicide cases as a result of domestic abuse.

## ■ Tell MAMA - Advisory Board Meetings (June 2021)

Stakeholders discussed the nation-wide and local picture of hate crime. For example, Islamophobia and Hate Crime has increased 400% during the pandemic and this abuse has moved to online abuse.

## National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) Police Regional Leads Stakeholders for Domestic Abuse (September 2021)

The focus of these meetings being around the pandemic and its impact on the criminal justice system. For example, decrease of reporting, increase in back log of cases yet to be heard in court (which has been the case for over a decade due to cut backs), absence of emergency accommodation available to victims.



## Other Ongoing Contributions to advance equality and social justice for women and girls.

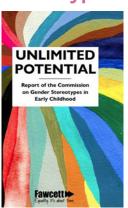
#### Fawcett Society Commission on Pay and Progression of Women of Colour

Fawcett worked in partnership with the Runnymede Trust to deliver a project exploring the pay and progression of women of colour. The report highlighted that whilst Women of Colour are severely underrepresented in management and senior leadership positions, the structural oppressions and systemic disadvantages leading to their underrepresentation, begins well before they even enter the workplace. Co-Chair Shaista Gohir sits on this Advisory Group.

## Member of UK Civil Society Women's Alliance (UKCSWA) - chaired by NAWO

The CSW Alliance is the result of a UK grass-roots movement to set up a mechanism for NGOs to relate to one another and to government around the UN's annual Commission on the Status of Women meetings. MWNUK is a member and Co-Chair Nazmin Akthar attends UKCSWA meetings.

#### Member of the Fawcett Society Commission on gender stereotypes in early childhood.



Fawcett established this expert Commission on Gender Stereotypes in Early Childhood to build a new consensus on the impact gender stereotypes have and how, together, we can end them. Co-Chair Nazmin Akthar sat on this Advisory Group until December 2020 when the final report was launched.

#### Member of End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW)

EVAW is a UK-wide coalition campaigning for strategic approaches to all forms of violence against women and girls in the UK. MWNUK joined the membership in November 2020 to work towards a world free from the threat and reality of violence against women and girls.



#### Centre for Social Justice's 'Child Sexual Abuse & Exploitation Commission (November 2020)

Co-Chair Shaista Gohir was one of the experts on Centre for Social Justice's 'Child Sexual Abuse & Exploitation Commission', which was chaired by Sajid Javid MP.

As a result of this Commission, in March 2021, the Centre for Social Justice launched the report: "Unsafe Children: Driving up our Country's Response to Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation."



#### Child Sexual Abuse and **Exploitation Commission**



We will be shining a light on the nature of abuse and exploitation in our country and arming the Government with actionable ideas capable of turning the tide against these terrible crimes.

Meet our commissioners:



#### Sajid Javid MP (Chair)



#### **Charlie Webster**



#### Sarah Champion MP



Maggie Oliver



#### Sheila Taylor MBE



#### **Donald Findlater**



#### Simon Bailey QPM



**Nazir Afzal OBE** 



#### **Shaista Gohir OBE**



Susie Hargreaves OBE



Tink Palmer MBE



**Dez Holmes** 

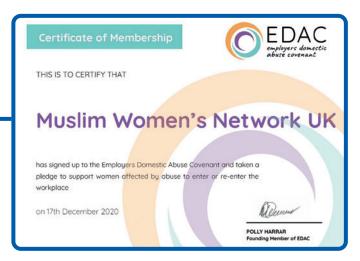


#### Peter Wanless CB

CSI

## **CAMPAIGNING**

MWNUK has 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, actively disseminated our resources and engaged with the media.



## **Employers Domestic Abuse Covenant** (December 2020)

MWNUK has signed up to the Employers Domestic Abuse Covenant and taken a pledge to support women affected by abuse to enter or re-enter the workplace.



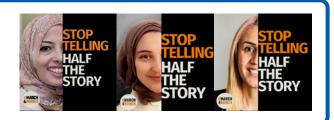
#### Centenary Action Group (ongoing)

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 has been active members since 2018, and Executive Director Faeeza Vaid has been on its steering group since May 2020. Their current campaigns include:

- Enact 106: calling on the government to enact Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010 to require political parties to publish candidate diversity data
- This is not working; demanding an end to workplace harassment, including in parliament and political parties, and asking the UK government to take action.
- End online abuse; fighting to end online abuse against women in politics and public life.
- Virtual Parliament: Urging the ongoing use of 'virtual parliament' measures used during the pandemic, to encourage more diversity in political life.

### **CARE International (March 2021)**

We joined CARE International's 2021 campaign on #StopTellingHalfTheStory, a call for more women leaders; until there are more women in leadership roles, we're only telling half the story.



## SAY HER NAME CAMPAIGN

In November 2021, MWNUK launched #SayHerName Remembrance page on the MWNUK website, in memory of women from racialised minority communities who are femicide victims, most of whom are domestic abuse victims.

MWNUK has chosen to list only women from racialised minority communities as there is already 'Dead Women Counting,' which names all women of all backgrounds. The reason for separately listing these women is to also emphasise the extent of the problem within different minority communities so it can act as a catalyst for more action so it's not dismissed as an issue that 'just occurs elsewhere'. Most of the women have been killed (or allegedly killed for ongoing cases) by a male partner or family member or a person known to them.

In fact, in some years, it appears that the domestic homicide rates are higher women from racialised minority communities. Questions therefore arise as to whether there is sufficient support for domestic abuse victims, if police responses are satisfactory and whether there is sufficient awareness of the extent of domestic abuse within minority communities.

The list is not exhaustive as the names are based on information found online.

Please email **contact@mwnuk.co.uk** if we have missed anyone.



www.mwnuk.co.uk/say-her-name

### OTHER EVENTS

Where resource allows, the MWNUK team actively attends events, speaks at other events, and holds events. This year's highlights included:

## Everyone's Battle, Everyone's Business: Tackling Inequality in Birmingham (November 2020)

Faeeza Vaid MBE joined Councillor John Cotton (Cabinet Member for Social Cohesion and Equalities) and Brian Carr (Chief Executive of BVSC) to discuss and review Birmingham City Council's Report 'Everyone's Battle, Everyone's Business: Tackling Inequality in Birmingham'.

Faeeza highlighted the lived experiences of Muslim women who have experienced inequalities, social injustice, and multiple forms of discrimination. She also raised how any Diversity and Inclusion efforts must be more than a tick-box exercise, and truly include diverse voices from the outset.





#### Keeping the Faith: What Survivors from Faith Communities Want us to Know (November 2020)



Understanding the needs of victims is key to ending violence against women and girls as without support and safeguarding, there cannot be prevention and protection.

Therefore we were very pleased to speak at this #16Days focused event, held by the Faith & VAWG Coalition, and share details of the holistic approach we take on the MWN Helpline to help Muslim women facing or at risk of abuse.

Faeeza Vaid MBE also made the broader point about promoting diversity and inclusivity, as we feel this goes hand in hand with ending abuse - how can you effect change if you're not hearing from those affected?

As Faeeza said, "We need to look at not only who is not at the table when it is set but who is involved in setting the table. A diverse group of people should be there to set the table from the onset."

## Ethics of ihsan: Beauty and Goodness in the Muslim Family

(January 2021)

Faeeza Vaid MBE joined a super interesting panel discussion on the topic of 'Ethics of ihsan: Beauty and Goodness in the Muslim Family', hosted by Musawah (www.musawah.org).

The webinar featured the work of Amira Abou-Taleb (University of Helsinki) and was moderated by Sarah Marsso (Musawah). Amira's work urges us to centralise 'ihsan' in all our relationships, in order to build a society based on care and support.

Faeeza juxtaposed this by highlighting the lived realities of so many who are experiencing the opposite of 'ihsan'. The panel also discussed how we take 'ihsan' from theory into practice.



# Sangini's 50th Bangladesh Independence Day Celebration (March 2021)

MWNUK's Co-Chair Nazmin Akthar gave the keynote speech in which she urged all to the respect the gift of independence that has been granted to all Bangladeshis and use our own independence to celebrate the role models in the Bangladeshi community to inspire others - and also challenge bad behaviours.



#### **Engaging Muslim Communities**

(May 2021)

MWNUK's Trustee, Dr Iram Sattar was invited by South West London Area Manager at Place2Be to talk about how to engage with Muslim communities on mental health issues.

#### Mind the gap: How can the Women's Health Strategy achieve **gender parity?**(June 2021)

MWNUK's Co-Chair Shaista Gohir OBF was on the panel on, 'How can the Women's Health Strategy achieve gender parity?' The panel discussed the landmark Women's Health Strategy, as the Government's consultation on the subject comes to a close. The panel of experts discussed the potential for the Government's proposals to achieve true gender parity in healthcare.







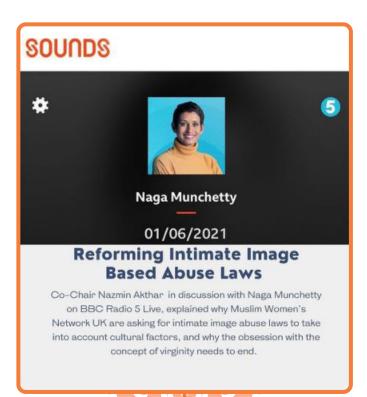
#### The Srijoni Exhibition Artists Talk and Q&A (June 2021)

MWNUK's co-chair Nazmin Akthar moderated Sangini's event on 'The Srijoni Exhibition Artists' Talk and Q&A'. The event explored the cultural impact and the inspiration behind the work of the women involved.

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

## 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:



## BBC Radio 4 - World at One (February 2021)

08/02/2021

BBC Radio 4 discussed the worryingly low rates of Covid vaccine uptake within BAME communities and shared clips of our MWN Hub videos, created by our trustee Dr Iram Sattar to tackle all the misinformation being shared about vaccines.

#### BBC Radio 5 Live (June 2021)

MWNUK's Co-Chair Nazmin Akthar was on BBC 5 Live speaking to Naga Munchetty about the laws and community issues around intimate image-based abuse.

This is an area of law which needs urgent reform, with provisions in place that protect and support all victims. We hope you will join us in our campaign to close the loopholes, especially for Muslim women and girls for whom the consequences of intimate image abuse can be deadly.

## MEDIA MENTIONS

Below is a list of articles in which MWNUK has been mentioned or commented in:

#### 26.11.2020

#### Refinerv29

For Muslim Women, Finding A Therapist Is Hard – But There Is Hope

#### 02.12.2020

#### inews

I can see my community's mental health is suffering in the Covid pandemic – Muslims need more support

#### 30.01.2021

#### **Asian Image**

Grooming Gangs: Will race always be a factor?

#### 31.01.2021

#### Hillingdon & Uxbridge Times

Grooming Gangs: Will race always be a factor?

#### 01.02.2021

#### VICE

Black and Asian Community Leaders Are Battling Vaccine Conspiracy Theories?

#### 05.02.2021

#### MiddleEastEye

BBC Trojan Horse report: Failing to put right shocking falsehood.

#### 07.02.2021

#### BirminghamLive

I dreaded the whistle' - Gang allegedly abused girl at Walsall Arboretum and in backstreets

#### 07.02.2021

#### BirminghamLive

Police 'failed Walsall grooming gang victim after losing 30hrs of interview tapes'

#### 04.03.2021

#### The Conversation

Women in mosques: fixating on the number of female imams overlooks the progress that has been made

#### 06/03/2021

#### **BBC News**

BAME sexual abuse: 'Failures' of victims to be investigated

#### 06/03/2021

#### **Glasgow Times**

MP Patrick Grady and Stephen Fry back International Women's Day

#### 11/03/2021

#### inews

Proposals to make misogyny a hate crime wins cross-party support

#### 28/05/2021

#### **UK Fundraising**

Green's Windmill Trust wins Charity Governance Award for best pandemic response

#### 01/05/2021

#### **BBC Radio 5 Live**

Muslim Women's Network UK / Nazmin Akthar 'He recorded me collapsed on the bed drunk'

#### 08/09/2021

#### **Yorkshire Post**

Tributes paid to 'empathetic and intelligent' Yorkshire woman after death at Arthur's Seat

#### 26/09/2021

#### The Guardian

'White feminists' are under attack from other women. There can only be one winner - men.

### **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:

**1/3/2021** 

Amendments to the Domestic Abuse Bill 03/06/2020

**8/4/2021** 

MWNUK Response to the Report of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities

**19/5/2021** 

Palestinian and Israeli women should be integral to any peace process

**2/6/2021** 

Conservative Party Discrimination Inquiry: Concrete steps needed to tackle anti-Muslim attitudes now

(+)16

136,808

# FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND ACCOUNTS

|  | 2021 (£) | 2020 (£) |
|--|----------|----------|
| INCOME                                   | ·        |          |
| Voluntary Income (grants and donations)* | 336,667  | 238,668  |
| Activities Generating Funds              | 5,000    | 5,787    |
| Investment Income (Interest Receivable)  | 0        | 0        |
| Total Income                             | 341,667  | 244,455  |
| EVENDITUE                                |          |          |
| EXPENDITURE                              |          |          |
| Cost of Running Charitable Activities    | 299,911  | 230,331  |
| Total Expenditure                        | 299,911  | 230,331  |
| RESERVES                                 |          |          |
| Retained Surplus for the Financial Year  | 41,756   | 14,124   |
| Total Reserves Brought Forward           | 95,036   | 80,913   |

#### **Independent Auditors**

Adjustment / Rounding error

**Total Reserves Carried Forward\*\*** 

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

-1

95,036

<sup>\*</sup> Of the £336,667 voluntary income, £25,868 is donations of which £18,815 is restricted.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Of the £136,808 reserves, £52,940 is restricted and £83,868 is unrestricted.



## **RECOGNITION AND THANKS**

MWNUK are grateful to our funders for their continued support and this year we would like to share our special thanks for the support, guidance and flexibility that our funders have shown during this pandemic. This year our funders included:























And others

## **THANK YOU!**



# Tribute to Fawziyah Javed

In September 2020, MWNUK was heartbroken to learn about the death of Fawziyah Javed.

Fawziyah and her mum Yasmin became MWNUK members more than ten years ago, while Fawziyah was still a student. She was generous with her time and travelled to our events whether in Birmingham or London. We had the privilege of getting to know Fawziyah better when she volunteered and worked for us remotely during the early stages of our growth when we had very limited resources.

#### Co-Chair of MWNUK, Shaista Gohir OBE said:

"Fawziyah was an empathetic and intelligent young woman who pursued her passion for social justice through her charity work, which also included supporting MWNUK. My thoughts and prayers are with her mother Yasmin, who is such a lovely, thoughtful, and kind woman. I pray Allah gives her the strength to endure this great pain of losing her only child. Fawziyah will remain in our hearts and memory forever. May Allah grant her the highest rank in Jannah."

#### MWNUK Executive Director Faeeza Vaid MBE also shared:

"I remember meeting Fawziyah and being immediately impressed. As I got to know her, I learned she was a deeply caring individual, determined to make a difference in this world. She was smart and vivacious and pursued her dream of becoming a Lawyer. My heart breaks to know she is no longer with us. And my thoughts and duas go out to her beautiful mum."

## Support Us

There are many different ways you can support MWNUK so we can continue to help women and girls, and achieve an equal and just society.

#### **Make a Donation**

As a registered national charity (1155092) your donations go a long way. You can:

- Donate by via PayPal Go to www.mwnuk.co.uk and click DONATE.
- Donate by Cheque
   Make cheque payable to:
   Muslim Women's Network UK
   First Floor
   1190- 1192 Stratford Road
   Birmingham
   B28 8AB

#### **Fundraise**

There are many way you could fundraise for MWNUK, the MWN Helpline, or the Hardship Fund:

#### **Organise an Event**

You could raise funds by organising a local charity dinner, bake sale, or show.

#### Do a Sponsored Activity

You could try something new, have fun and carry out a range of activities and such as marathons, funs runs, cycle races, mountain climbing, sky diving etc. and get people to sponsor you!

#### **Spread the Word**

Help spread the word about our work:

- MWNUK
- The MWN Helpline
- The MWN Hub

### You can raise awareness through:

- Sharing and using our work
- Disseminating our resources
- Inviting others to join in
- Connecting and sharing on Social Media

If you are interested please email **contact@mwnuk.co.uk** 

#### Volunteer

Charities like ours really appreciate volunteers; from supporting at one-off events, short-term projects, or supporting on the MWN Helpline.

It's also a great way to meet new people, develop your skills and be a part of an amazing team.



#### Some fundraising tips to help you:

- Understand your 'why' Why are you fundraising?
- Set a target How much do you want to raise? And how will the money be used?
- Set a timescale
   People often need targets especially if you're fundraising as a group, when do you want to do the activity by?
- Who else do you need?
   Are you fundraising yourself or do you need volunteers?
- Go for it!

  There's no time like the present!
- Remember: every little helps.



We wish you all the best of health and prosperity.





Information • Advice • Support

Available Monday-Friday 10am-4pm

- **0800 999 5786** (free)
- **Ф** 07415 206 936
- info@mwnhelpline.co.uk
- www.mwnhelpline.co.uk



Research • Advocay • Campaiging

1190-1192 Stratford Road, Birmingham B28 8AB

- **\** 0121 236 9000
- contact@mwnuk.co.uk
- www.mwnuk.co.uk



Contribute • Explore • Network

See our new member platform

- www.mwnhub.com

Muslim Women's Network UK (2021)

Charity Number: 1155092

Company Limited by Guarantee Number: 06597997