

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

CONNECTING VOICES FOR CHANGE



Muslim Women's Network UK (2015) Charity Number: 1155092

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FOREWORD FROM CHAIR

This has been another landmark year for the Muslim Women's Network UK (MWNUK). We remain focused on our aim of gathering evidence about the experiences of Muslim women and girls on key issues affecting them and using the information to improve their rights through advocacy and campaigning.

A move in June 2014 to a more centrally located office space in Birmingham, and the launch of the Muslim Women's Network Helpline in January 2015 has seen us expand our staff and welcome dedicated volunteers to help us deliver our mission. Shaila Pervez who began volunteering last November recently joined the staff team as Helpline Support Worker.

By continuing to expand the project work we do on issues affecting Muslim women in Britain, we have successfully increased our funding support to three times the amount as compared to last year. Such project work has allowed us to demonstrate clearly the wealth of our experience and knowledge as an organisation, and also how our work can make real positive impact on the lives of Muslim women in Britain. Such immediate tangible outcomes balance our long-term efforts at being a pioneering organisation which is not afraid to uncover and tackle uncomfortable truths fearlessly, honestly and independently by taking action, which is always in the interests of Muslim women and girls.



We know that building a dynamic network of individuals and organisations requires the fostering of relationships over time, and effective processes. We have done the groundwork and successfully expanded to over 700 registered members, and have built strong partnerships with inspirational network members. Going forward, we will seek to better develop local, regional and national networks to build a stronger critical mass off voices.

As a small national charity, our achievements are only made possible by the commitment and time spent above and beyond the calls of duty of Board, staff and volunteers. Our recent nomination for the National Diversity Awards 2015 under the 'Community Organisations for Gender' category is testament to our increasingly reputable national profile.

I look forward to continuing our collaborations to transform the lives and opportunities of Muslim women in the UK.

Shaista Gohir



MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

GOVERNANCE

The board of directors convenes face to face meetings quarterly, and electronic meetings are held regularly, at least 7 times a year. Trustees are recruited in accordance with s33-38 of our Articles of Association. The selection is based on integrity and specific expertise required by the charity. The Chair and Executive Director are responsible for the trustee induction process. New trustees are provided with induction materials and induction sessions take place with the Board and Executive Director. In accordance with our policies and procedures all Board, staff and volunteers have had DBS checks.

The trustees ensure that: the charity's assets and resources are used only for the purposes of the charity; the charity is run in accordance with its governing document; and that charity law and all other laws and regulations that affect its activities are complied with. The ED reports to the board of directors and is responsible for the day-to-day management of the charity and the implementation of strategy and policies. Project managers report directly to the ED.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Charity Board Members

Shaista Gohir MBE (Chair)
Nazmin Akthar (Vice Chair)
Dr Iram Sattar (Treasurer)
Mussurut Zia (General Secretary)
Robina Iqbal
Dr. Khursheed Wadia

Executive Director

Faeeza Vaid - no voting powers

Project Manager

Shahin Ashraf MBE – no voting powers

Helpline Support Worker

Shaila Pervez- no voting powers



MWNUK is a registered charity (charity number 1155092)

ABOUT MWNUK

MWNUK (www.mwnuk.co.uk) is a UK wide network of women and men that shares knowledge, connects the voices, and promotes the needs of diverse Muslim women. MWNUK's vision is a society where Muslim women have an effective voice and opportunity to exercise their rights to contribute equally. We gather evidence about the lived experiences of Muslim women and girls on key issues affecting them through research and enquiries we receive on the Muslim Women's Network Helpline, and use the information to improve their rights through advocacy and campaigning.

MWNUK works within a framework of human rights, justice and Islamic feminism. We are member focused, inclusive and accountable in all that we do. We are committed to gender equality and value diversity. We are independent from all established political, governmental and religious institutions. We recognise that networks provide a mechanism for sharing knowledge, raising the profile of individuals, organisations and issues, and influencing policy and attitudes, and for building a critical mass of voices.

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The board of directors confirm that they have complied with the duty in the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit. MWNUK's activities, which include project management, service delivery, research and advocacy and campaigning, all provide public benefits. Public benefit is also demonstrated throughout this report.

CHARITABLE OBJECTS

The charity's objects are:

- (1) The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit, in particular by advancing education and raising awareness in equality and diversity, and promoting activities to foster understanding between people from diverse backgrounds.
- (2) To promote social inclusion for the public benefit by working with people who are socially excluded on the grounds of their sex, ethnic origin, religion, belief or creed (in particular, women in the Muslim community) to relieve the needs of such people and assist them to achieve their potential and integrate into society, in particular by:
- a. Providing forums that encourages and enables members of the Muslim community to participate more effectively with the wider community;
- b. Increasing, or coordinating, opportunities for members of the Muslim community to engage with service providers, to enable those providers to adapt services to better meet the needs of that community.
- (3) The promotion of religious and racial harmony for the benefit of the public by promoting knowledge and mutual understanding and respect of the beliefs and practices of different religious and racial groups.

PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

PRINCIPLES

In May 2015 we conducted a strategic review of our core values, and developed 5 principles that underpin our work and are at the heart of everything we do:

Principle 1

We are an Islamic feminist movement that uses the Quran's spirit of equality and justice to challenge human interpretations (based on culture and tradition) that discriminate against women and girls, to achieve equal rights and opportunities for all.

Principle 2

We uncover and tackle uncomfortable truths fearlessly, honestly and independently by taking action, which is always in the interests of Muslim women and girls.

Principle 3

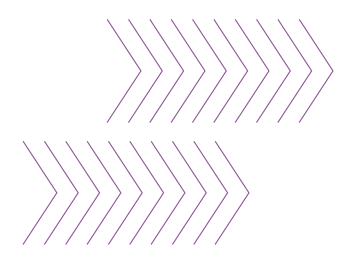
We are informed by the voices of Muslim women and girls by gathering evidence of their lived experiences.

Principle 4

We bring about real change through innovative thinking and doing, which positively affects the treatment of Muslim women and girls, resulting in a better society for all.

Principle 5

We demonstrate our inclusivity and nonjudgmental stance throughout our policies, procedures and our work.



PRIORITIES

We also reviewed MWNUK's strategic priorities in May 2015, taking into account network member priorities and enquiries received through the Muslim Women's Network Helpline. It was felt that the following priority areas will continue to be our focus.

- **1)** Sharing understandings of gender in Islam from a human rights perspective.
- **2)** Sharing knowledge of gender equality in UK family laws, marriage and divorce
- **3)** Changing attitudes to abuse against women and girls
- 4) Changing attitudes to mental health
- 5) Changing attitudes to women's leadership
- **6)** Supporting actions to address Islamophobia and discrimination

MEMBERSHIP

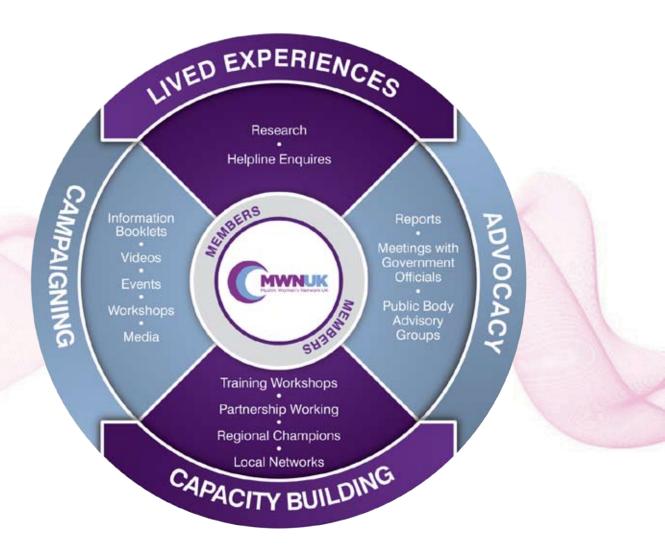


Muslim Women's Network UK (MWNUK) is the only national Muslim women's organisation in the UK with over 700 members with a collective reach of tens of thousands of Muslim women.

Our members are mainly Muslim women living in the UK while our non-Muslim members work with or on behalf of Muslim women and girls or are simple interested in supporting their rights. Our membership is diverse in in terms of ethnicity, age, religious background (including religious sect), lifestyles, sexual orientation, geographic location and different employment sectors. Members also include men who wish to support and champion women's rights. They are academics and students; voluntary sector and support services workers; health and legal professionals; experts in women's rights, diversity policy, disability and asylum; law enforcement officers and local government officials. Each of our members, whether individuals or organisations, are connected to other networks and audiences, thus multiplying our reach to thousands of women.

Membership is open to all those who support the aims of MWNUK. In addition to members we have over 345 individuals and agencies signed up to our mailing list. The majority of members have found us through our website (www.mwnuk.co.uk), but as the profile of MWNUK increases more individuals are joining through word of mouth.





MWNUK works to improve the social justice and equality for Muslim women and girls. We find out about the experiences of Muslim women and girls through research and our helpline enquiries. We identify policy and practice gaps and use this information to inform decision makers in government (including at Ministerial level) and other public bodies. Our knowledge about the issues faced by Muslim women and girls also inform our community campaigns. We also develop resources and training so women and girls are better informed about their rights and how to access support and help.

Our specific projects can be found in the Our Work Section of the website and include:

- > Muslim Women's Network Helpline
- > Research
- > Resource Production
- > Events
- > International
- > Advocacy
- > Campaigns
- > Workshops
- > Role Models

OVERARCHING ACTIVITIES

A range of MWNUK's activities cut across and contribute to all our priorities

MWNUK WEBSITE > ww.mwnuk.co.uk

MWNUK are proud to present an updated organisation website that clearly presents a vast array of information about MWNUK; who we are, our consultation reports, factsheets, newsletters and videos produced by MWNUK, and a gallery. It also provides members with the platform to publicise their work and events, and to keep abreast of Network news, and global news impacting Muslim women.

Consultation Reports

The 'reports' section of the website includes governmental consultation responses submitted by MWNUK. Below are the reports from May 2014 to date. All MWNUK reports to date have been downloaded 10,735 times in total.

Online Factsheets

The 'factsheet' section of the website contains factsheets on key topics affecting Muslim women. There had been 5978 factsheet downloads by July 2015.

Newsletters

e-newsletters are sent out monthly to members, mailing lists and supporters. They provide information and updates on MWNUK activities and those of member or partner agencies, and include relevant news and opportunities.



SOCIAL MEDIA



Facebook and twitter

are used as a forum for those wishing to discuss and be kept up to date using social media. We have a growing Facebook and Twitter following; our Facebook profile @MWNUK Member has 595 friends; and our Twitter account @MuslimWomenUK had 1681 followers up until July 2015.

Youtube

MWNUK's new Youtube channel is 'Muslim Women's Network UK'. In the past 16 months we have produced 6 empowering and informative videos which are available on our channel. Our videos in have been viewed over 15,000 times in total.

ENGAGING WITH MEDIA



MWNUK is regularly asked to comment and contribute to mainstream, international and niche broadcast and print media, on a range of issues affecting Muslim communities in Britain. Between April 2014 and July 2015 MWNUK's contributions included in:

- Mainstream print media; the Guardian, the Telegraph, the Independent and the Sunday Times Magazine.
- Mainstream broadcast media; BBC News, BBC Breakfast, BBC World News, ITV News, Channel 4 News and Sky News, and many BBC Radio channels.
- Niche broadcast media; Islam Channel, British Muslim TV, Brit Asia TV, Channel S, Noor TV, GEO News, and Awaaz Community Radio.

Recently, MWNUK has regularly commented on the radicalisation of British Muslim women, in light of those travelling to countries like Syria. And also on the issue of Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence, following our project work on this and the criminalisation of forced marriage in June 2014. Full details of media contributions can be found on the MWNUK website.

PRESS STATEMENTS

MWNUK actively respond publicly to topical issues and events where possible. Below is a list of press statements, all available to download from our website.

April 2014: Islamic Wills & The Rule of Law in UK

June 2014: Muslim Women's Network UK Welcomes Criminalising Forced Marriage

July 2014: Trojan Horse: Those who have failed

children should be held accountable

Aug 2014: Gaza Solidarity Letter

Aug 2014; IS is Not Islamic – UK Muslim Women Condemn IS

Aug 2014: Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham

Jan 2015: Response to Charlie Hebdo Killings

Jan 2015: New National Helpline Aimed at

Helping Muslim Women and Girls

Feb 2015: MWNUK Statement on Call for Sex-

Selective Abortion Amendment

Apr 2015: Galloway insinuations about Forced

Marriage Victims Irresponsible

July 2015: MWNUK Remembers 7/7

July 2015: MWNUK Remembers Srebenica

July 2015: Reaction to Prime Minister's Speech

on Tackling Extremism

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

MWNUK have actively worked in partnership with network members to deliver events (see events section). We also continue to strategically build linkages nationally with other organisations. For example, in June 2015 Executive Director Faeeza Vaid joined the National Alliance of Women's Organisation's (www.nawo.org.uk) Board of Directors.



On the 14th January 2015, MWNUK launched a bespoke national specialist faith and culturally sensitive helpline that is confidential and nonjudgmental, which offers information, support, guidance and referrals for those who are suffering from or at risk of abuse or facing problems on a range of issues. Requests for support and information are received via telephone (0800 999 5786/ 0303 999 5786), the website chat facility, and email during helpline operating hours. Although our reach is primarily Muslim women, the helpline accepts calls from and supports women of any faith or no faith. MWNUK has also supported men who are concerned about women and girls, and those in need of support themselves.

The helpline has its own website (www.mwnhelpline.co.uk) which provides information, downloadable resources, videos and an online directory of some support services available on a range of issues. It also provides for the anonymous reporting of anti-Muslim attacks or discrimination in the 'Islamophobia and discrimination' section. MWNUK has seen a steady increase in the calls we receive on the helpline. Up until the end of June 2015, we had dealt with 172 number of cases.

MWNUK have received cases on forced marriage, marriage and divorce, rape, trafficking, sexual abuse, domestic violence, homelessness, and many others. It is clear to us that often callers face a multiple issues concurrently. For example, mental health issues often goes hand in hand with the aforementioned list.

RESEARCH

As well as finding out about the experiences of women and girls through our helpline enquiries, we also carry out more in depth research on certain issues. The findings then inform our advocacy and campaigning work and the types of resources we produce.

Latest Research: Female Genital Research

(Birmingham Only)

Conducted: 2014 – 2015

Funder: Rosa

(Report to be published in September 2015)

The aim of this research was to better understand the issue of female genital mutilation (FGM) locally. We wanted to find out about attitudes but also more about who are the most influential on determining whether FGM is carried out, where it is carried out, and if women and girls are wanting support and what kind of support. We also want to find out what they think should be done to tackle issue e.g. What MWNUK and statutory bodies should be doing etc? Through the engagement, we also wanted to try and identify community champions on this issue.

RESOURCE PRODUCTION

We produce a range of resources to help raise awareness. Examples of resources include:

- Reports
- Information Booklets
- Posters
- Exhibitions (go to 'Role Models' section)
- Videos

More detail about these resources are available on our website.



> October 2014- Jasmin's Story: Victim of CSE (Original Video)

This video highlights a real life case study from our ground breaking report Unheard Voices: Sexual Exploitation of Asian Girls and Young Women.

> October 2014- Jasmin's Story: Victim of CSE (Edited Video)

This video highlights a real life case study, and has been sensitively edited for use in schools, particularly to younger years.

> October 2014- Unheard Voices: Sexual Exploitation of Girls and Young Women (Booklet)

This information booklet provides information on what exploitation is, the warning signs, vulnerabilities, case studies, barriers to reporting, how victims are breaking free and support that is available.

> January 2015- Women: Media, Sexism and Online Abuse (Video)

We partnered with the Government Equalities Office to hold a consultation event to find out how women were being affected by online and media sexism. Key highlights from the event have been captured on video.

> May 2015- Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence Booklet

This booklet provides information on definitions case studies, statistics, warning signs, safety advice, impact of the abuse, what the law says, and about the help available.

> June 2015- Forced Marriage Animation (Video)

This video is an animation particularly aimed at youth explaining that help and support is available, what the law and faith say about this issue and tells of Aisha's story.

> MWN Helpline Material

In order to promote our national faith and culturally sensitive service, we have produced a trifold business card and a helpline poster. These are available upon request to promote locally.

> MWNUK Promotional Material

MWNUK produced a new organisational promotional video which explains more about who we are and our work. Our organisational promotional pamphlet highlights our aims, what we do and how to join us and become a member. These are available upon request.

ADVOCACY

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

- By responding to government and public body consultations, which involves collecting views from our members and submitting a report that includes concerns and recommendations
- Holding workshops and collecting views that are then included in a report which is then shared with decision makers
- Attending government and other public round table meetings with Ministers, government and public body officials.

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

June 2014
Religious Leaders Unite Against FGM
(Home Office)
Roundtable Meeting

June 2014
Barriers to Complaining About Public Services
(Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman)
Focus Groups

July 2014
Meeting with the Minister for
Women
Roundtable Discussion

September 2014 FGM Consultation to inform Policing (College of Policing) Consultation

October 2014
Strengthening the Law on Domestic Abuse
(Home Office)
Consultation

October 2014
Developing Social Care Guidlelines for FGM
(National Institute for Clinical Excellence - NICE)
Roundtable Meeting

October 2014
Discrimination based on Religion or Belief (Equality and Human Rights Commission)
Consultation

November 2014
Pre-CSW National Consultation
Consultation

December 2014 A Level / GCSE Reform of Religious Studies (Govt Dept of Education) Letter

December 2014
Reporting Police Discrimination
(Independent Police Complaints Commission)
Focus Group



January 2015

Women: Media, Sexism and Online Abuse (Government Equalities Office - DCMS)

Consultation Event

January 2015
Mandatory Reporting of FGM
(Home Office)
Consultation

January 2015

Women: Media, Sexism and Online Abuse (Government Equalities Office - DCMS)

Consultation Event

March 2015 CSE Summit at 10 Downing Street (Prime Minister) Summit

May 2015 Anti Muslim Attitudes (EU Fundamental Rights Agency) Consultation May 2015

Learning Disabilities, Autism & Mental Health (Department for Health)

Consultation

2014-2016 (2 year Inquiry)

Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse the Family Office of the Children's Commissioner Inquiry

Ongoing

NSPCC Natonal Muslim Advisory Group on

Safeguarding Children

(NSPCC)

Ongoing

Muslim Marriage Group (Ministry of Justice)

CAMPAIGNING

We were awarded funding by the Barrow Cadbury Trust to deliver 6 event to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation mainly in Asian / Muslim communities (including to front line professionals). The aim was to particularly raise awareness of our report, Unheard Voices: Sexual Exploitation of Asian Girls and Young Women. The events were held in:

- Birmingham (20th October 2014)
 In partnership with the 7 local authorities (especially Birmingham City Council) in the West Midlands and West Midlands Police
- Bradford (31st October 2014)
 In partnership with QED-UK and Just West
 Yorkshire
- Rotherham (6th November 2014) In partnership with Apna Haq
- Blackburn (2nd March 2015)
 In partnership with Practical Solutions
- London (10th March 2015)
 In partnership with Maryam Centre (East London Mosque)
- Newcastle (16th March 2015)
 In partnership with Women Interfaith Network

We received funding from the government's Department of Local Government and Communities to hold a series of awareness raising events. The following events were held:

- Rotherham (20th May 2015) In partnership with Apna Haq
- Manchester (21st May 2015)
 In partnership with Awaaz Women's Group /
 ITC Centre
- Rochdale (7th June 2015)
 In partnership with Light of Islam Academy and Rochdale Council of Mosques
- Nottingham (11th June 2015) In partnership with Nottingham Muslim Women's Network
- Bradford (13th June 2015)
 In partnership with Sharing Voices Bradford



WORKSHOPS

By raising awareness of different issues affecting Muslim women in the UK, MWNUK actively provide information and resources to effectively campaign on issues at local, regional and national level. All our training is highly interactive, informative and practical. Below are some of the sessions we have carried out.

> October 2013:

Mental Health Awareness Raising Workshop (London)

> July 2014:

Civic Participation in Schools (Birmingham)

> July 2014:

FGM Awareness Raising in Schools (Birmingham)

> Sept 2014:

FGM Awareness Raising to School Staff

> Nov 2014 -Mar 2015:

Violence Against Women and Girls (Birmingham)

> Jan 2015:

Forced Marriage and FGM Awareness Raising in Schools (Birmingham)









MWNUK regularly hold our own events and Board and staff receive diverse requests to speak at events by a diverse range of organisations which included:

JUN 2014	Speaker on panel at Mediation and Arbitration Conference	JAN 2015	Speaker at Muslim Engagement event
JUN 2014	Speaker on Faith Leaders panel at Sexual Violence in Conflict Summit	MAR 2015	Delivery partner on the first conference Summit on FGM in Birmingham
JUN 2014	Hosted panel discussion at Muslim Women's Activism Conference	MAR	Speaker on panel at DCLG
2011		2015	Integration Roadshow
JUL	Speaker on Faith Leaders panel at		
2014	the first Girls Summit	MAR	Speaker on panel at Musawah
		2015	Global Seminar
NOV	Speaker at multiple events for '16 Days of Activism Against Violence		

PROMOTING ROLE MODELS

Muslim women across UK, including many of MWNUK members make an impact in a wide range of work. It is important that their contributions are recognised and MWNUK endeavours to promote Muslim women at every opportunity. It was great to see MWNUK's Project Manager Shahin Ashraf and network member Adeeba Malik both receive a MBE in the New Year's Honours List 2015. They were both nominated Chair Shaista Gohir for their services to interfaith and community cohesion.

Against Women & Girls (VAWG)'

MWNUK continues to support and capacity-build individuals and organisations. For example, the Nottingham Muslim Women's Network.

Our Muslim Women Role Model and Big Sister exhibitions continue to be borrowed by partner organisations. We also developed our resources by producing a role model workshop resource, which was used by a women's project in Bristol. It is hoped that this project will now produce a 'Bristol Big Sisters' role model exhibition display, and they will be working with MWNUK to develop this.

INTERNATIONAL

MWNUK believes that it is important to share knowledge, experience, best practice and opinions with Muslim women from different contexts. MWNUK has therefore been involved in a number of international initiatives and any travel expenses have been covered by the host organisation.

MUSAWAH > ONGOING

MWNUK has been involved with 'Musawah' (www.musawah.org), the global movement for equality and justice in the Muslim family, since its inception. It also calls for: non-discrimination, justice and dignity as the basis of all human relations; full and equal citizenship for every individual; and marriage and family relations based on principles of equality and justice, with men and women sharing equal rights and responsibilities.

Shaista Gohir is on the 15 member International Advisory Group for Musawah. Faeeza Vaid is on Musawah's 'Young Women's Caucus'. And General Secretary Mussurut Zia researched and produced a report on UK Muslim women's life stories, as part of Musawah's Global Life Stories Project, which is a part of the Knowledge Building Initiatve on 'Qiwamah' and 'Wilayah'.

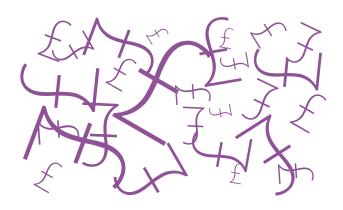


We are now promoting and selling their book, 'Men in Charge? Rethinking Authority in Muslim Legal Tradition.' This is book is based on feminist research that critically engages with the assumption of and challenges male authority from within the Muslim legal tradition. You can find out more about Musawah on their website www.musawah.org

ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL MEDIATION CONFERENCE > ROMANIA > 2015

MWNUK were partners of the MBBI 7th Annual International Mediation Congress held 23-26 April 2015 in Bucharest, Romania. Vice-chair Nazmin Akthar Sheikh presented a workshop on the experiences of British Muslim women in accessing divorce through Shariah Councils.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND ACCOUNTS



The overall income from April 2013 to March 2014 was £35,041. The main funder was Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust with small private donations. The overall income for April 2014- March 2015 was: £94, 769.

MWNUK would like to thank all those who have supported our work. Funders included the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, Henry Smith Charity, Awards 4 All, Barrow Cadbury, ROSA, West Midlands Police, Garden Court Chambers, FORWARD / Maria Marina, Department of Local Government and Communities. We also received private donations and generated income through providing services connected to our charitable objectives such as facilitating workshops and conducting focus groups, and through fundraising. The majority of expenditure was on core costs and project costs. A summary of these accounts is provided below and full sets of accounts are available upon request.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES > YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

Income	2015 (£)	2014 (£)
Voluntary Income (grants and donations)*	77,570	34,157
Activities generating funds	16635	-
Income from resources / charitable activities	490	858
Investment income (interest receivable)	74	26
Total income	94,769	35,041
Expenditure		
Cost of running charitable activities	82,830	33,215
Governance costs	15	3
Other resources expended	100	-
Total Expenditure	82,945	33,218
Retained Surplus for the Financial Year	11,824	1,823
Total Reserves Brought Forward	9,328	7,503
Total Reserves Carried Forward	21,152	9,326

^{*} Note: of the £77,570 voluntary income, £3,232 was donations and the remainder was grants



