



ANNUAL REPORT

AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

2015/2016

Muslim Women's Network UK (2016)

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Charity Number: 1155092

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CONTENTS

01)	Foreword from Chair	01
02)	Management and Governance	02
03)	About MWNUK	03
04)	Principles and Priorities	04
05)	Membership	05
06)	What We Do	06
07)	Overarching Activities	07
08)	Engaging with Media	09
09)	MWN Helpline	10
10)	MWNUK's Survivors' Fund	12
11)	Counselling Support Pilot	13
12)	Research	14
13)	Resource Production	15
14)	Advocacy	17
15)	Campaigning	19
16)	Workshops	20
17)	Events and Outreach	21
18)	Promoting Role Models	22
19)	International	23
20)	Financial Statement and Accounts	24



FOREWORD FROM CHAIR

Since our last Annual Report, we have successfully received more grant funding and donations. This has allowed us to conduct research, delivered campaigns and training, produce resources and help women and girls in crisis. For example, we have produced in depth reports on female genital mutilation and on Muslim marriage and divorce in Britain. After successfully completing our first pilot year of our helpline where we helped more than 300 women and girls on 39 different issues, we secured further funding to increase operating hours. Due to a demand from our helpline callers, we also set up a successful pilot counselling service where we provided counselling to 37 clients most of whom had experienced domestic abuse, child sexual abuse, rape and sexual violence. We have also produced a number of awareness raising resources such as campaign videos and information booklets on forced marriage, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation.

We have partnered with other organisations including faith leaders and delivered campaigns to raise awareness of forced marriage and female genital mutilation in schools and also to communities. We have continued with our advocacy work and meeting with government officials and Ministers and submitting reports in response to government consultations which have included on female genital mutilation, employment, mental health, out of school educational settings and gendered online abuse.

We are grateful to all of our donors and partners, their support is valuable. With their help we are able to not only able to assist some of the most vulnerable in our society but also be their voice and highlight their lived realities to policy makers and challenge attitudes.

Shaista Gohir OBE
Chair of MWNUK



MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

GOVERNANCE

The board of directors convenes face to face meetings quarterly, and electronic meetings are held regularly. Trustees are recruited in accordance with 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 Executive Director 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 Executive Director.

**MWNUK is a registered charity
(charity number 1155092)**

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Charity Board Members

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

Staff (no voting powers)

Executive Director
Faeeza Vaid

Project Manager

Shahin Ashraf MBE

Administrator

Sabina Haq

Helpline Support Workers

Nazia Fazal
Shaila Pervez
Iqra Sattar
Hannah Yafai

Outreach Worker

Zaheda Vaid

Independent Auditors

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



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, campaigning, training and resource production.

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

We have five core principles that underpin our work and are at the heart of everything we do:

- > Women's rights
- > Overcoming barriers
- > Multiple lived experiences
- > Effective change
- > Non-judgemental

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 non-judgmental stance throughout our policies, procedures and our work.

PRIORITIES

Taking into account network member priorities and enquiries received through the Muslim Women's Network Helpline, 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.





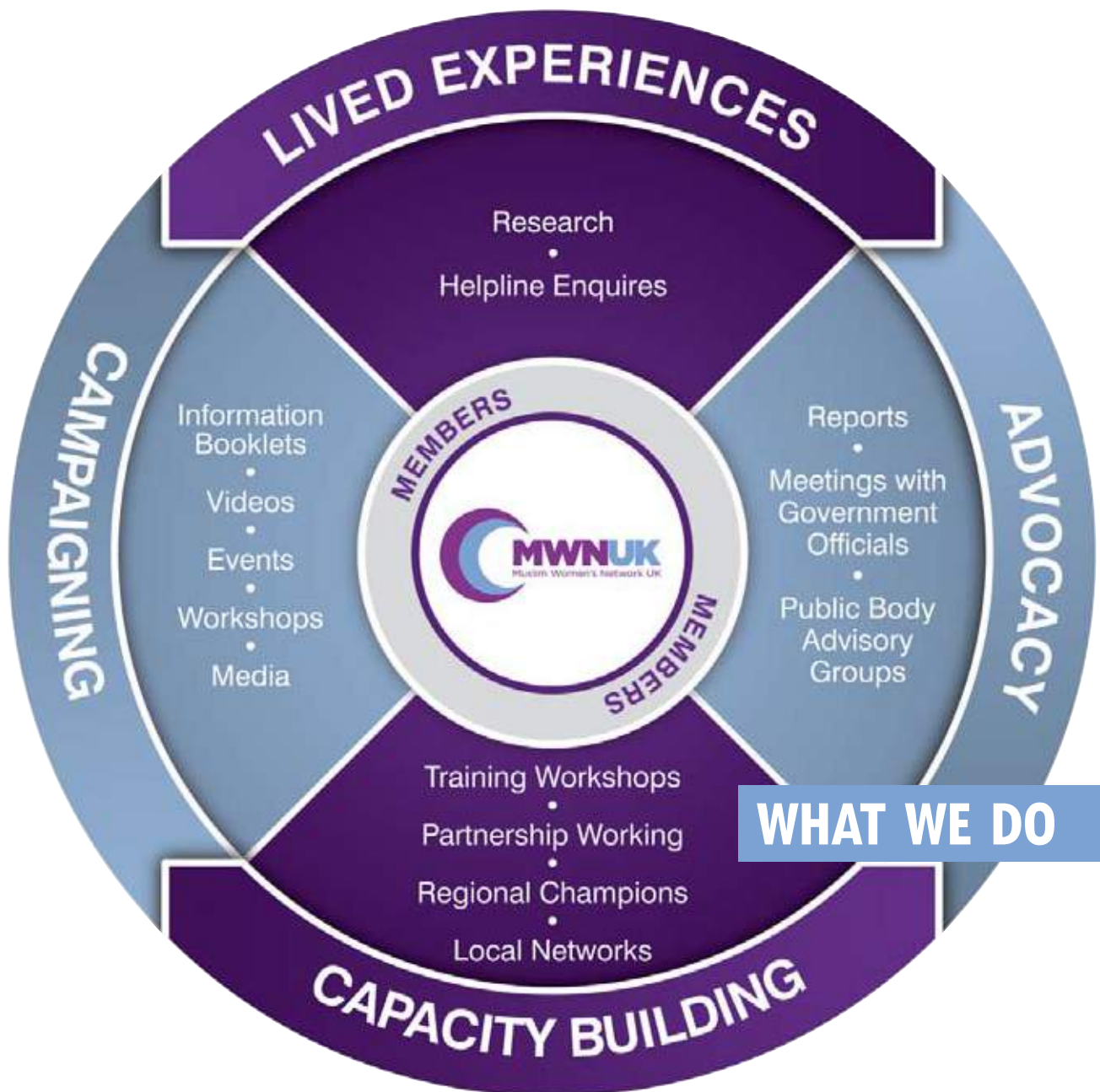
MEMBERSHIP

Muslim Women's Network UK (MWNUK) is the only national Muslim women's organisation in the UK with over 750 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 simply interested in supporting their rights. Our membership is diverse 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 400 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.





MWN UK 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

MWNUK 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."



OVERARCHING ACTIVITIES

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

MWNUK WEBSITE

MWNUK's website 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.

For example, the 'reports' section of the website includes governmental consultation response reports submitted by MWNUK. Below are the reports from August 2015 to date.

- > Consultation on Statutory Multi-Agency Guidance for FGM by Nazmin Akthar
September 2015
- > Out of School Education Settings by Shaista Gohir
January 2016
- > Employment opportunities for Muslims in the UK inquiry by Nazmin Akthar- Sheikh
February 2016

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 649 friends; and our Twitter account [@MuslimWomenUK](#) had over 4000 followers up until September 2016.

Youtube

MWNUK's new Youtube channel is 'Muslim Women's Network UK'. We have produced a number of empowering and informative videos which are available on our channel. Our videos in have been viewed over 25,000 times in total.

Instagram

MWNUK's new Instagram account is 'MuslimWomensNetworkUK.'

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

Sep 2015: MWNUK Urges British Values in Response to Refugee Crisis

Nov 2015: Paris and Beirut Terrorist Attacks – We Must Stand Against Hatred

Jan 2016: Public Complaint Letter regarding Muhammad Afzal (Birmingham Central Mosque)

Feb 2016: Letter to PM (Main Barriers to Muslim Women Participation in Britain)

Feb 2016: Systematic Misogyny Displayed by Some Muslim Male Labour Councillors

Mar 2016: Murder of Asad Shah – Standing Against Bigotry within Muslim Communities

June 2016: Istanbul Airport Attacks – We Must Stand Against Hatred

July 2016: Dhaka and Baghdad Terrorist Attacks- Terrorism Has No Place in Islam

Aug 2016: Banning of Burkinis on Beaches- Standing Against Patriarchy in All its Forms

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;

> We have sat on the Board of National Alliance of Women's Organisations. And continue to build relationships with the European Network Against Racism and other UK based advocacy groups.

> MWNUK partnered with Forward to deliver their schools engagement project on FGM which was funded by the Department of Education. MWNUK were responsible for delivery in Birmingham.

> MWNUK partnered with other organisations across the UK to awareness raising events on Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation. This included partnering with a faith organisation to deliver 2 events in Luton and Birmingham to raise awareness of Forced Marriage amongst Muslim men in these communities.

> MWNUK have also acted as an intermediary funding partner for a smaller organization; the Inclusive Muslim Initiative based in London who actively work on LGBT issues.

> MWNUK have also partnered with West Midlands Police to raise awareness of key issues affecting Muslim women.





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, including the triple discrimination faced by Muslim women in the workplace, and the Burkini ban introduced in France. Over the last year MWNUK's contributions included:

- > Mainstream print media; the Guardian, the Telegraph, the Independent and the Sunday Times Magazine. As well as other online publications; the Huffington Post, New Statesman, HR Magazine, Asian Today.
- > Mainstream broadcast media; BBC News and ITV News- and their local News teams, Newsnight, Victoria Derbyshire Programme, Channel 4 News and Sky News, and many BBC Radio channels.
- > Niche broadcast media; TV One UK, Noor TV, GEO News.



MISOGYNY IN MOSQUES & THE LABOUR PARTY

As part of the advocacy and campaign work we do, in early 2016 MWNUK highlighted the misogynistic attitudes of three senior trustees we had met from Birmingham Central Mosque (see advocacy section). The story opened up a wider debate about mosques and the influence of local Muslim councillors and the systematic blocking of Muslim women entering Politics, particularly the Labour party.

The story was covered nationally by both print and broadcast media, and reached international audiences. Instrumentally, it was featured in two BBC Newsnight programmes, and has been shortlisted for the 'TV Report of the Year' award by the Asian Media Awards



MWN HELPLINE



On the 14th January 2015, MWNUK launched a bespoke national specialist faith and culturally sensitive helpline that is confidential and non-judgmental, which offers information, support, guidance and referrals for those who are suffering from or at risk of abuse or facing problems.

Within 18 months the MWN Helpline has extended from 3 half-day sessions per week to now open **Mondays to Fridays** between **10am-4pm**. During the first year of operation the Helpline team have handled **814 contacts** from over **335** different individuals (beneficiaries) over this first year, with a very small team of employees and volunteers operating the helpline for a limited time each week.

TO ACCESS THE HELPLINE:

Call us: 0800 999 5786
(Free to call from landlines and mobiles).

Text us: 07415 206 936

Email: info@mwnhelpline.co.uk

Chat: When you access our website www.mwnhelpline.co.uk there is a webchat facility available.

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.

These contacts during the first year of operation have covered 39 different issues. The five most frequent issues raised by beneficiaries were:

- Marriage
- Divorce
- Domestic Violence
- Mental Health/Feelings
- Forced Marriage

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. An independent evaluation was conducted after the first year, and its report can be found under the 'reports' section of the MWNUK website.

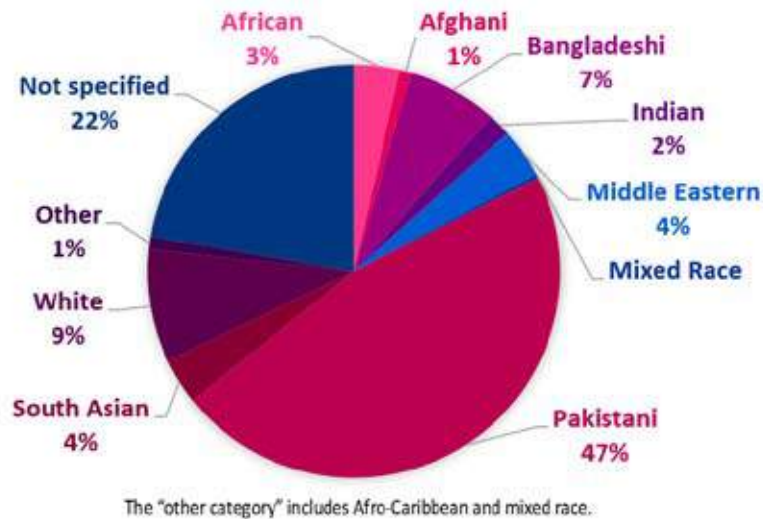
STATISTICS OF HELPLINE BENEFICIARIES

> Age and Gender of Beneficiaries

91% of calls were from women, 7% from men and 2% were unknown gender. Almost 50% of the calls are made by people aged between 22 and 40 years.

> Ethnic Background of Beneficiaries

Where ethnicity is recorded the largest group within this are from a Pakistani origin (47%). There are a significant number of beneficiaries where ethnic background has not been stated (22%).



> Faith of Beneficiaries

82% of beneficiaries were Muslim. Some beneficiaries who were not Muslim choose to make contact because the Helpline is delivered by a different faith:

"I don't want to speak to my own community about this because I know they will judge me"

> Location of Beneficiaries

MWNUK Helpline is a national service which is available for anyone in the UK. The highest numbers of beneficiaries, 33%, were from the Midlands. A significant number of beneficiaries came from the London area (16%)





MWNUK'S SURVIVORS' FUND

The MWN Helpline's approach is to provide information and advice, and then refer callers on to specialist support services. However sometimes, such support is not available quick enough and therefore MWNUK have set up a Survivors' Fund, which will be used to support those in most need in crisis situations.

The Survivor's Fund is a pot of money held in trust for survivors who have accessed the MWN Helpline. We assess the needs of all individuals accessing the funds and quickly ensure emergency provision is made available. To safeguard abuse of this fund, MWNUK will only provide cash if necessary. Instead we will provide supermarket vouchers or travel vouchers

SAMEERA'S STORY

Sameera had been living with her in-laws for over 10 years. She was physically and sexually abused by her husband. Her in-laws also beat her and closely controlled her finances and where she was allowed to go. She could not speak English and did not know where to get help. A trusted family member spoke to the MWN Helpline on her behalf.

HOW WE HELPED

Our bilingual Helpline Worker then spoke to Sameera directly in Urdu. With a fuller understanding of her situation, her case was reported to the Police and she was found safe accommodation in a refuge in another city.

We knew that Sameera would receive recourse once her applications were processed. But when Sameera stepped off her train with her 3 children into a new city, she only had the items she could carry. The MWNUK team worked quickly to secure a private donation to cover her emergency needs; i.e. food, hygiene pack, nappies. And then collected donations of spareclothes for Sameera and the children, and some toys to help the children adjust.

Sameera told us months later:

"You (MWNUK) gave me the wings to fly.... I can't thank you enough for your support."



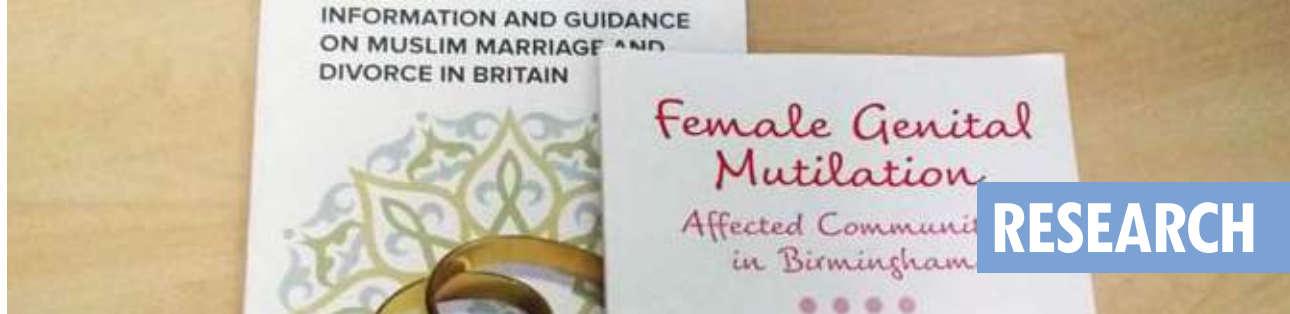
COUNSELLING SUPPORT PILOT

Having identified the need for counselling support for women, MWNUK set up a pilot culturally sensitive service for 5 months (Dec 2015 to April 2016). This was funded by the West Midlands Police Crime Commissioner. This service has been evaluated independently.

Some key findings included:

- > 49 clients were referred to the service and 37 clients attended counselling sessions (36 women and 1 man)
- > 269 free hours of counselling were provided but 29 sessions of these could not be delivered due to non attendance
- > Of the counselling sessions delivered, this amounted to 6.4 sessions per client
- > 91% of the clients felt that a faith and culturally service was important to them
- > 86% of the clients were of Muslim backgrounds
- > 69% of clients had not had counselling previously
- > 62% of clients were of Pakistani background
- > 76% of clients were unemployed or on benefits
- > Most referrals were from the MWN Helpline (45%) and third sector organisations (45%)
- > Majority of the sessions (78%) were delivered in English but 11% were in Urdu and 11% in Punjabi / Mirpuri
- > Most clients were in their 20s and 30s

The report can be downloaded on the report section of the MWNUK website.



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. Our latest research published in 2016:

Female Genital Mutilation – Affected Communities in Birmingham (June 2010)

MWNUK conducted this research through one to one interviews, a focus group, questionnaires and workshops, with survivors of FGM, women from FGM-practicing communities who did not have FGM, men from FGM-practicing communities, and school pupils, in Birmingham.

The report includes valuable insights on:

- Procedures for FGM
- Consequences of FGM
- Reasons for FGM
- Role of Religion
- Social Attitudes

MWNUK are confident that this publication will increase the understanding of female genital mutilation (FGM) in Birmingham, and understand the impact on survivors and what support and service provision is needed for them or those at risk. The report makes a number of recommendations for improving community campaigns, professional training, and reporting concerns. It has been disseminated to frontline professionals in health services, and the Police, as well as government officials, academics, and women’s rights organisations. The UK Border Agency has also included this report in their training to all staff.

Information and Guidance on Muslim Marriage and Divorce (January 2016)

This publication is aimed at Muslim women in Britain so they are better informed about their rights and practices relating to marriage and divorce. Copies of this report has been disseminated to family law professionals, politicians, government officials, academics, students, religious authorities (mosques, Shariah Councils and scholars) and women’s rights organisations. It has also been reviewed as part of the Independent Review into the Application of Shariah Law in England and Wales.

This resource includes real case studies received by MWNUK, and covers common questions posed to us, for example, whether the permission of parents is required for marriage (guardianship), to polygamy and marrying outside of their faith.

It also covers legally valid and invalid marriages as well as the barriers that Muslim women face when they are trying to get divorced.

The chapters include:

- > Muslim Marriages
- > The Model Muslim Marriage Contract
- > Legally Valid and Invalid Marriage
- > Shariah Councils
- > Grounds for Divorce
- > Divorce in Islam
- > Procedure for Islamic Divorce
- > Procedure for Civil Divorce
- > Recognition of Foreign Divorce
- > Annulment of a Marriage
- > Cost of Divorce
- > Preventing Discrimination Against Women in
- > Marriage and Divorce – Potential Solutions
- > Conclusion and Key Recommendations



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

- > Information Booklets
- > Reports
- > Videos

More details about these resources are available on our website

BOOKLETS

> June 2016 - MWNUK Pamphlet (New and Updated)

We updated our organisational pamphlet which contains information about our aims, principles, the work we do, how to become a member and support our work.

> June 2016 - Social Media Tips

In a digital world we know how important engagement on social media is, and therefore produced some encouraging guidelines for those new to social media..

> March 2016 - Say No to Forced Marriage

This booklet provides information on definitions of Forced Marriage safety advice and provides counter-arguments to some common reasons often used to justify forced marriage. This booklet was developed following a series of workshops, and was reviewed by over 100 young people.

> March 2016 - Say NO to Female Genital Mutilation

The booklet provides information on definitions, case studies, statistics, spotting signs, consequences, what the law says, what religion (and particularly Islam) says and about the help available.

VIDEOS

> August 2016 - CSE Video- 'What Kind of Man Do You Want to Be?'

This video challenges the attitudes of some Asian men in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation, and features Humza Arshad (Diary of a Bad Man) speaking out against this issue.

> June 2016- Orlando Vigil in London

After the appalling actions of one individual, many across the world were left shocked and devastated. A vigil for the Orlando victims was held on Monday 13th June, showing a powerful moment of solidarity in London. A MWNUK member attended, and MWNUK captured her thoughts and echoed solidarity in this video.

> April 2016- Child Sexual Exploitation Presentation- Urdu

A Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) presentation in Urdu by Shaista Gohir, Chair of Muslim Women's Network UK. It explains the process of grooming, spotting the signs, vulnerabilities exploited, the impact on victims and about getting help. The presentation also includes English subtitles. It is a useful resource for awareness raising for South Asian women..

> March 2016- Forced Marriage Presentation- Urdu

A forced marriage presentation in Urdu by Shaista Gohir, Chair of Muslim Women's Network UK. It explains reasons used to justify it, consequences, what the law and religion says and about getting help. The presentation also includes English subtitles. It is a useful resource for awareness raising for South Asian women.

> March 2016- FGM is Everyone's Business

A short educational film highlighting voices of a survivor of female genital mutilation and views from the police, health professional, faith leader, men against FGM and activists.

> December 2015 - Men Against FGM – Poem

This video features an English / Arabic poem condemning female genital mutilation. It was written by a Yemeni male and recited by a Yemeni male student following a series of campaigning workshops delivered at the school challenging the practice of FGM.

> November 2015- Say No to ISIS

This short animation video challenges the reasons often used by those who may consider joining ISIS. And firmly states ISIS have no place in Islam.



FGM is everyone's business



What kind of man do you want to be?



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.



<p>August 2015 Gendered Online Abuse (Government Equalities Office) Roundtable Discussion</p>	<p>September 2015 Statutory Multi-Agency Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation (Home Office) Consultation Response</p>
<p>October 2015 The National Commission on Forced Marriage (Home Office) Oral Evidence Session</p>	<p>October 2015 Louise Casey Review into Improving the Integration of Britain's Minorities Inquiry Response Oral Evidence Session</p>
<p>January 2016 Out of School Education Settings (Department of Education) Consultation Response</p>	<p>January 2016 Community Engagement Forum (10 Downing Street) Roundtable Discussion</p>
<p>February 2016 Women & Equalities Committee Consultation Consultation Response</p>	<p>March 2016 The Labour Party's Internal Inquiry into Barriers Facing BME Women in Engaging in the Labour Party - Oral Evidence Session</p>
<p>April 2016 Women & Equalities Committee Inquiry Oral Evidence Session</p>	<p>April 2016 Inquiry by Citizen's Commission on 'Islam, Participation and Public Life.' Oral Evidence Session</p>
<p>June 2016 Meeting with Senior Policy Advisors (10 Downing Street) Meeting</p>	<p>July 2016 Tackling Hate Crimes following Brexit (DCLG) Roundtable Discussion</p>
<p>August 2016 Independent Review into the Application of Sharia Law in England and Wales. Oral Evidence Session</p>	<p>2014-2016 (2 year Inquiry) Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse the Family Office of the Children's Commissioner Meetings</p>
<p>Ongoing NSPCC National Muslim Advisory Group on Safeguarding Children (NSPCC) Meetings</p>	<p>Ongoing National Inquiry into CSE in the Family Environment by the Children's Commission Meetings</p>
<p>Ongoing Preventing Violence Against Vulnerable People in the West Midlands Meetings</p>	<p>Ongoing West Midlands FGM Taskforce</p>
<p>Ongoing Forced Marriage Unit Taskforce</p>	



CAMPAIGNING

Letters of Concern and Complaint (2016)

In January 2016, MWNUK issued a public letter of complaint to Birmingham Central Mosque regarding the misogynistic attitudes expressed by three senior trustees at a meeting in December 2015, in which the issues of forced marriage and domestic violence were dismissed.

The full letter can be downloaded on our website. The story opened up a wider debate about mosques and the influence of local Muslim councillors and the systematic blocking of Muslim women entering Politics, particularly the Labour party.

MWNUK then wrote to the Prime Minister, Leader of the Labour Party and the Charity Commission highlighting serious concerns around women's equality and engagement.

The story was covered nationally by both print and broadcast media, and reached international audiences. Instrumentally, it was featured in two BBC Newsnight programmes, and has been shortlisted for the 'TV Report of the Year' award by the Asian Media Awards.

Our findings of discrimination were backed by many, including the many Muslim females who had tried to become councillors or were councillors. The Charity Commission subsequently investigated Birmingham Central Mosque and identified a number of governance issues which now must be addressed by them.

Forced Marriage Awareness Raising Events (2016)

We received funding from the government's Foreign and Commonwealth Office to hold awareness raising events in partnership with faith institutions to challenge attitudes within hard to reach traditional communities about forced marriage by producing resource in Urdu and partnering with faith leaders / institutions to hold events to strengthen the message that forced marriage is not condoned by any major religion and is against the law.. The following events were held:

- > Birmingham (19th March 2016)- In partnership with St. Albans Academy
- > Luton (20th March 2016)- In partnership with the Al Quba Trust
- > Birmingham (2nd April 2016)- In partnership with the Al Quba Trust

Through this project we also developed a resource to support young people so that they are able to better challenge forced marriage when they are pressured by their families (and increase confidence to have these conversations) and raise awareness of this resource particularly in schools.

FGM Awareness Raising Events (2016)

In April 2016 MWNUK launched our 'Female Genital Mutilation- Affected Communities in Birmingham' research report at a community event in Birmingham. Thereafter, having received further funding from Rosa, we were able to partner with 2 organisations to deliver 2 FGM Awareness Raising Events:

- > Middlesbrough (25th May 2016)- In partnership with the Halo Project
- > Slough (28th May 2016)- In partnership with Jeena International



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, and staff are regularly hired to deliver training sessions.

In partnership with the organisation Forward, MWNUK received funding from the Department of Education to deliver awareness raising sessions on FGM to schools in Birmingham. By engaging with 12 schools, MWNUK delivered the follow sessions:

**STAFF TRAINING
SESSIONS DELIVERED**

9

**STAFF
REACHED**

535

**STUDENT AWARENESS
SESSIONS**

59

**STUDENTS
REACHED**

1323

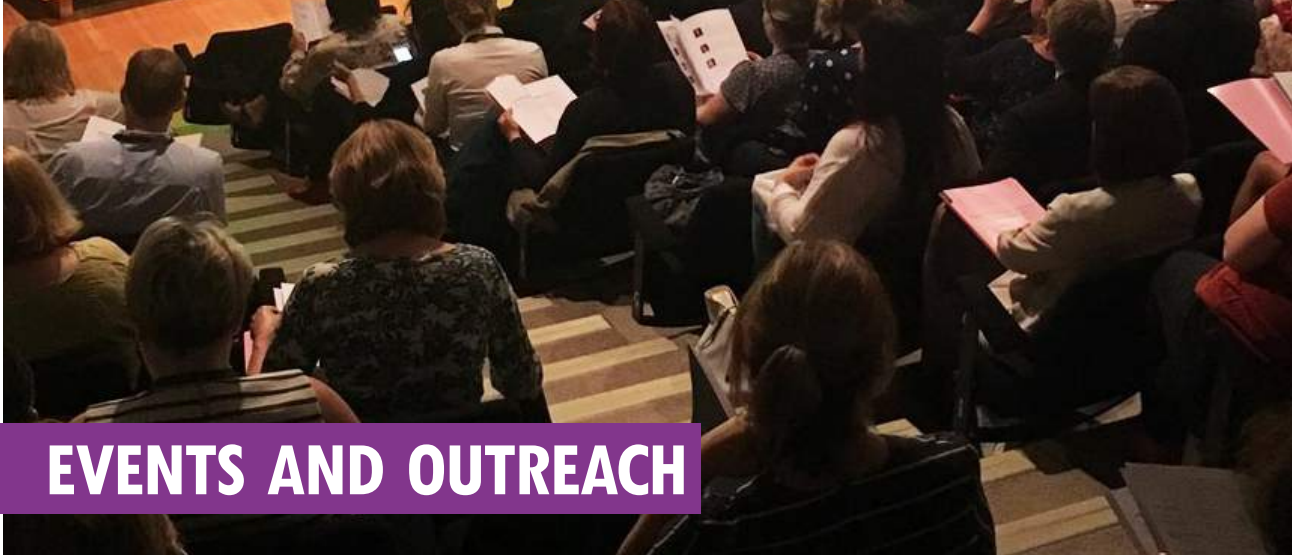
**OUTREACH
SESSIONS**

10

**PARENT
SESSIONS**

6





EVENTS AND OUTREACH

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:

- > Speaker at WEN Wales Conference- Challenging Negative Stereotypes of Muslim Women (September 2016)
- > Speaker at NSPCC National Conference- How Safe Are Our Children? (July 2016)
- > Speaker at ENAR Symposium- Muslim Women, Forgotten Women- Understanding the Gender Dimension of Islamophobia (Brussels) (May 2016)
- > Speaker at Ark St. Albans Academy Conference 'Tackling Forced Marriage' - Muslim Women's Realities and Third Sector Support Available (March 2016)
- > Panelist at City circle discussion on Zero Tolerance to FGM (February 2016)
- > Speaker at event by the Association of Muslim Lawyers in collaboration with the Association of Jewish Lawyers. (January 2016)

OUTREACH

As part of the Outreach work we do, we also regularly participate strategically in other community events to raise awareness of MWNUK and the MWN Helpline, where possible. For example:

- > Chandos Primary School Community Engagement Event (April 2016)
- > Big John's Birmingham Mela (July 2016)





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.

Honours Awards

MWNUK Member Zlakha Ahmed from Apna Haq received a MBE in the New Year's Honours List 2016. Chair Shaista Gohir nominated Zlakha for her decades of frontline service support of BME women.

MWNUK were also extremely proud that Shaista herself received an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours in June 2016. This is in addition to her MBE which she received in 2008.

#AndMuslim Role Model Campaign

With in kind support from the Home Office, MWNUK have created a digital campaign called #AndMuslim to promote the diversity of the female Muslim community in Britain. The short videos are used to challenge often associated negative stereotypes of Muslim women which often results in Islamophobic and discriminatory sentiments and crimes. It is also hoped to raise inspirations.

Local Development

MWNUK continues to support the development of local projects and organisations. Our Muslim Women Role Model and Big Sister exhibitions were replicated locally in Bristol. The 'Bristol Big Sisters' role model exhibition display toured Bristol and culminated in a city-wide conference





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. Faeza Vaid is on Musawah's 'Young Women's Caucus'.

We are now promoting and selling their book, 'Men in Charge? Rethinking Authority in Muslim Legal Tradition.' This 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



MUSLIM VOICES EXCHANGE PROGRAMME > INDONESIA / MALAYSIA > 2016

MWNUK Chair was part of a small delegation arranged by the Home Office to visit Indonesia and Malaysia to exchange learning with counter-extremism practitioners and community leaders to be able to build international best practice and establish sustainable working partnerships. The visit took place in February 2016. The delegation from these countries also visited MWNUK offices in March 2016.



FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND ACCOUNTS

MWNUK would like to thank all those who have supported our work. This year funders included the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, the Arcus Foundation, Awards 4 All, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FORWARD / Maria Marina, Henry Smith Charity, ROSA, the Tudor Trust, West Midlands Police, West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner. 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 2016

Income	2016 (£)	2015 (£)
Voluntary Income (grants and donations)*	158,777	77,570
Activities generating funds	4,206	16635
Income from resources / charitable activities	0	490
Investment income (interest receivable)	89	74
Total income	163,072	94,769
Expenditure		
Cost of running charitable activities	152,446	82,830
Governance costs	18	15
Other resources expended	100	100
Total Expenditure	152,464	82,945
Retained Surplus for the Financial Year	10,608	11,824
Total Reserves Brought Forward	21,152	9,328
Total Reserves Carried Forward	31,760	21,152

*Note: of the £158, 777 voluntary income, £1915 was donations and the remainder was grants

MUSLIM WOMENS NETWORK UK

> OUR MISSION

A UK network of women and men to share knowledge, connect the voices, and promote the needs of diverse Muslim women.

> OUR VISION

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

> 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.

> CONTACT US

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