

Review of MWNUK Helpline Service  
January to December 2019



Centre for Facilitation

March 2020

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# MUSLIM WOMEN'S NETWORK UK

Muslim Women's Network UK (MWNUK) is a national Muslim women's charity working on social justice and equality for Muslim women and girls. MWNUK conducts research, operates a helpline, delivers campaigns, runs training sessions, comments in the media and produces resources. It does advocacy work through reports and by engaging with government officials and other public bodies. Further information about the work of MWNUK can be found on the website [www.mwnuk.co.uk](http://www.mwnuk.co.uk).

## REMIT OF REPORT

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This report is the fifth annual evaluation review of the operation of the MWNUK Helpline. Reports for previous years are available on the [Muslim Women's website](#). This report reflects and builds on the experiences of the previous years of operation as the Helpline Service enters its fifth year and is operating as an established Helpline provider.

This report has been written by Centre for Facilitation, an independent company. Throughout the report we have used stories of callers to the Helpline, changing names and some details to ensure anonymity whilst giving a sense of the range of people that the Helpline has supported in 2019.

## Making a Difference to Muslim Women

"I'm so grateful for all your support and your kindness for me. I feel a little strong after that, I have someone who can genuinely help me."

"I am really grateful for all the support; I now feel like myself again"

"This service is amazing, and I am so grateful to Muslim Women's Helpline. You sisters have made me feel worthy of help"

## SUMMARY

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The Helpline Service was established as direct response to research by MWNUK which showed that a:

*“worrying numbers of women and girls were slipping through the net as agencies – such as social services and the police- grappled with the difficulties reaching out to victims because of cultural sensitivities – those same points of faith, which are exploited by their abusers to ensure their victims’ silence.” - Daily Telegraph, 14/01/2015*

The aim of the Helpline was to make sure that the voices of Muslim girls and women were listened to and data about the lived experiences of Muslim women was collected, collated and shared. Over the 5 years the Helpline Service has grown from a part time service responding to 68 contacts monthly to a dynamic service, responding to over **261** contacts every month and offering support and information on a range of **42** different issues that affect Muslim women in the UK.

- Every month the Helpline is contacted **261** times and provide direct help and support to **104** individual service users every month.
- There has been a **34%** growth in individual service users supported in 2019 compared to 2018.
- 401 of the calls (**32%**) were about domestic abuse issues and **31%** relate to mental health issues
- As a result of the intervention **51%** of all service users are better informed about the range of support available to help them to improve their life chances. **46%** feel that they have been able to talk through their problems and that they have been listened to, improving mental health and resilience.
- **77%** of the calls made to the Helpline are by individuals seeking advice and support for their own issues.
- **28%** of the calls are from the Midlands and **22%** of calls are from London
- There has been a growth in text-based services with **31%** of initial contacts being by text, email or web-based messenger

MWNUK Helpline has been funded during 2019 with the kind support of The Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund, and Comic Relief.

# SUMMARY OF MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

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## 1. FURTHER DEVELOP SKILLS IN TEXT BASED SERVICES

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It is anticipated that the demand for text-based contact will continue to grow and the team should build on the training and support that is provided to enable these methods of contact to be as rich and supportive as voice-based contacts.

## 2. CONTINUE TO DEVELOP THE INTERNAL TRAINING PROGRAMME

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Consideration to be given about how to further enhance existing training on sensitive topics so that attitudes can be openly discussed, probed and, where necessary, can be challenged. Top up training to be provided for those issues that are most frequently handled.

## 3. IMPROVE DEMOGRAPHIC DATA CAPTURE

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The management team to conduct regular audits to identify any missing data, including dormant cases and work with the Helpline staff to improve data capture and case closure.

## 4. PROMOTE THE DASHBOARD DATA RESOURCE

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Develop relationships with researchers at local Universities to explore potential joint projects to make more use of the data collected over the last five years.

## 5. ENCOURAGE GREATER UPTAKE AMONGST BANGLADESH COMMUNITY

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Increase awareness amongst Bangladesh Community of the availability of a Bengali speaker on the Helpline to encourage people to make contact

## 6. REVIEW THE HELPLINE PROCEDURES

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Review all procedures and update so that they reflect Best Practice and learning from the first five years of the Helpline

# SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF THE HELPLINE SERVICE

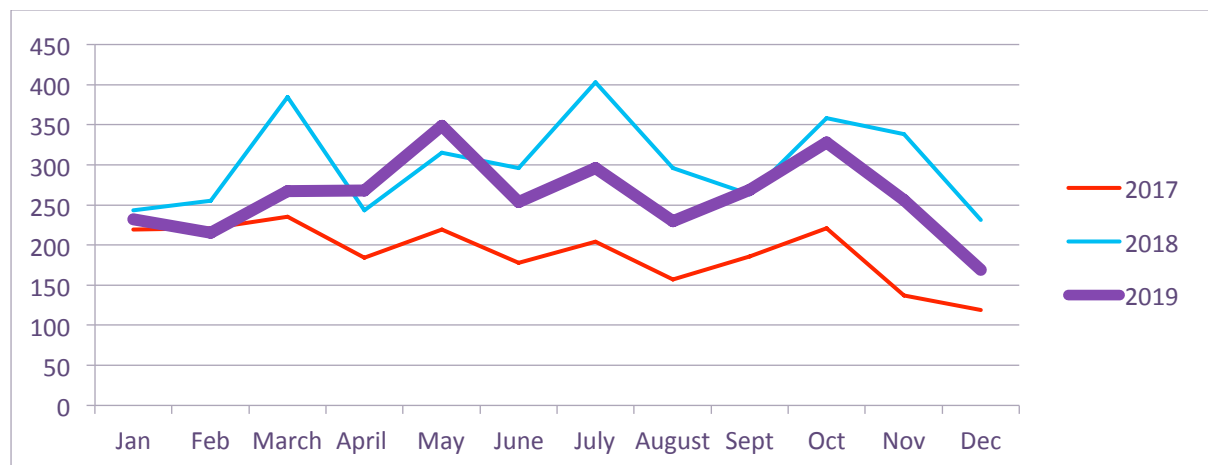
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All calls to the Helpline are logged and any actions taken are recorded on a database This is the first full year of operation using the new Database system introduced in January 2019. The new system has improved the ease of recording data in a consistent manner whilst still holding a complete set of historical data

## Volume of Calls

**3133 contacts** were logged during 2019. These figures will include repeat calls from clients in different sessions. The total contacts are slightly down on 2018 when 3626 contacts were recorded however the total number of service users has increased. It is likely that this change reflects the improvement to the record keeping method. In an audit of calls in the first quarter of 2019 it was noticed that there was some double counting of initial contacts. This has been addressed and it now only possible to record initial contacts once so we can be assured that the number of contacts recorded is more accurate and the data has integrity.

In 2019 there were, on average, **261** contacts made with the Helpline each month. There are however some months where the amount of contacts is significantly above this average. These peaks in service demand are not consistent. In 2018 there were spikes in demand in March and July. In 2019 the spikes are in May and October. During May there was a significant promotional campaign during Ramadan. There is also a significant peak in October 2019 but there is no known reason for this spike in enquiries.



This graph charts the total number of contacts made and received by the Helpline over the last 3 years. This data provides an overview of service activity, but it can provide a distorted view of the amount of people who are helped by the service because this data field will capture multiple and often short repeated contacts made by the same person, even if these calls are not answered.

Data integrity is very important to MWNUK Helpline and the evaluation reports have always captured both the total number of calls as well as the total number of individual services users making use of the Helpline service.

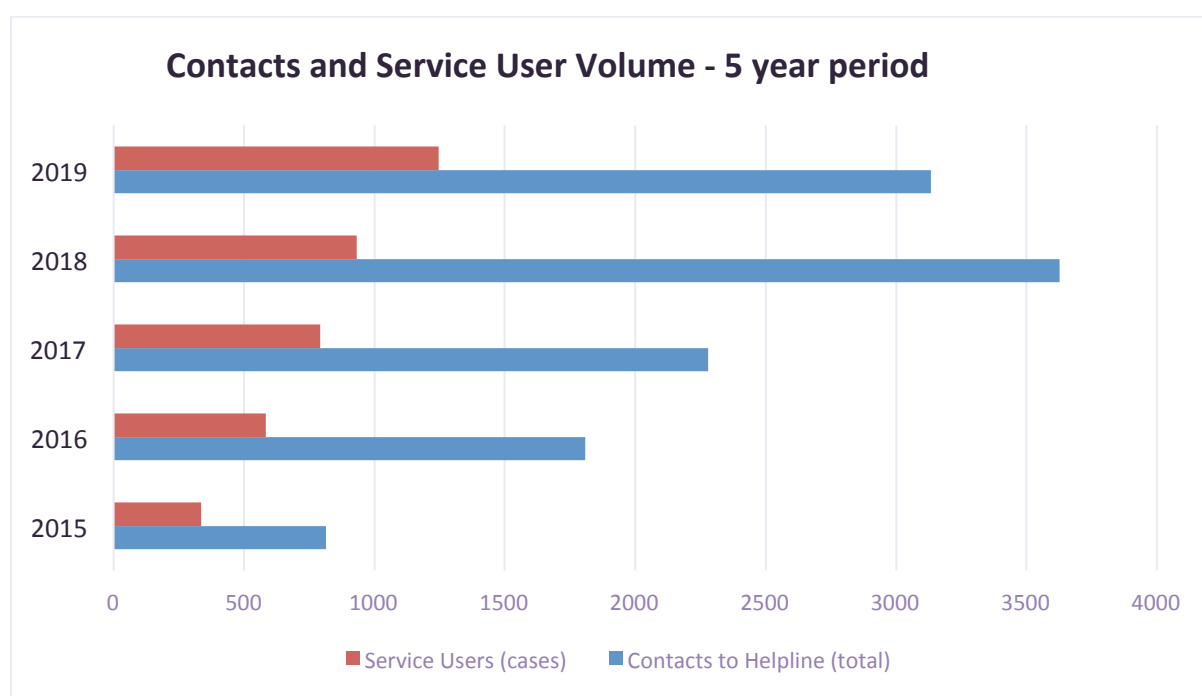
In 2019 there has been a large increase in the number of service users supported with a growth from **931** cases in 2018 to **1247** in 2019. This represents a **34%** growth in the numbers of individuals supported by the Helpline. The monthly average is **104** individual cases handled each month by a staff team of 2.1 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) – although some months the staff levels have been below this level.

### Average monthly service users

2015	28
2016	49
2017	66
2018	78
2019	104

## Overall Increase in Contacts/Individuals Supported

From the establishment of the Helpline in 2015 to the current year there has been a **272%** increase in the number of individual service users supported by the Helpline team and an overall **285%** increase in the volume of contacts made to the Helpline (this includes phone calls, instant messaging and emails)



## Method of Initial Contact

Most initial contacts to the Helpline are speech based **68%** (calls to the landline or mobile phone). In 2019 there was a significant shift towards text-based contact, with **31%** of the contacts using text-based methods, including SMS, Webchat and Email and 1% were other methods: drop in visits or letter.

These figures do indicate a slight shift in preferences for method of initial contact, with a **13%** reduction in speech-based calls from 2018 when 79% of initial contacts were made using speech-based methods. This apparent shift towards text based initial contact is expected given the wider societal trends towards text-based services, particularly with the younger generation. The Helpline has already established methods of text-based contact including webchat, SMS and email and has develop protocols and guidance for staff using these methods of contact.

## Text Based Contacts Analysis

Further analysis of the data about text-based contacts tells us that **94%** of contacts (where the data has been collected) are made by women.

**53%** of these contacts are under 25.

The text-based contact is most popular with service users based in London with **22%** of the contacts from this area, compared to just **12%** for the West Midlands. This form of contact is also popular with people based outside the UK – **15%** of contacts.

The issues raised in text-based contacts are similar to the overall pattern across all service users.

**30%** of the contacts were about mental health feelings.

**29%** were about domestic abuse

**16%** were about marriage.

The current webchat system means that only one webchat can be active at one time so it is possible that someone might be trying to access the chat whilst it is busy. Operating the chat takes more resources than the phone chat because there are often long gaps between responses and the worker is unsure whether the service user is still wanting to have the conversation. The team have learnt that it is really important when using the chat to ask more open questions to encourage the dialogue to continue and that the service user will often hint at their situation rather than directly explain it so the worker needs to be sensitive to what is being written and what else might be going on.



There has been training during 2019 for handling text-based contacts –emails and webchats and the management team recognise that this will be an area that will need further training to develop and strengthen the skills in this communication method.

## Analysis of Contacts

**77%** of calls to the Helpline are initiated by the individual seeking help for themselves.

**10%** of the recorded contacts are from members of the public seeking help on behalf of a neighbour, friend, family member or work colleague. This can often be due to concerns about someone and advice is sought about how to support them.

**8%** of the recorded contacts are made by professionals or 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations seeking advice or a referral for an individual service user.

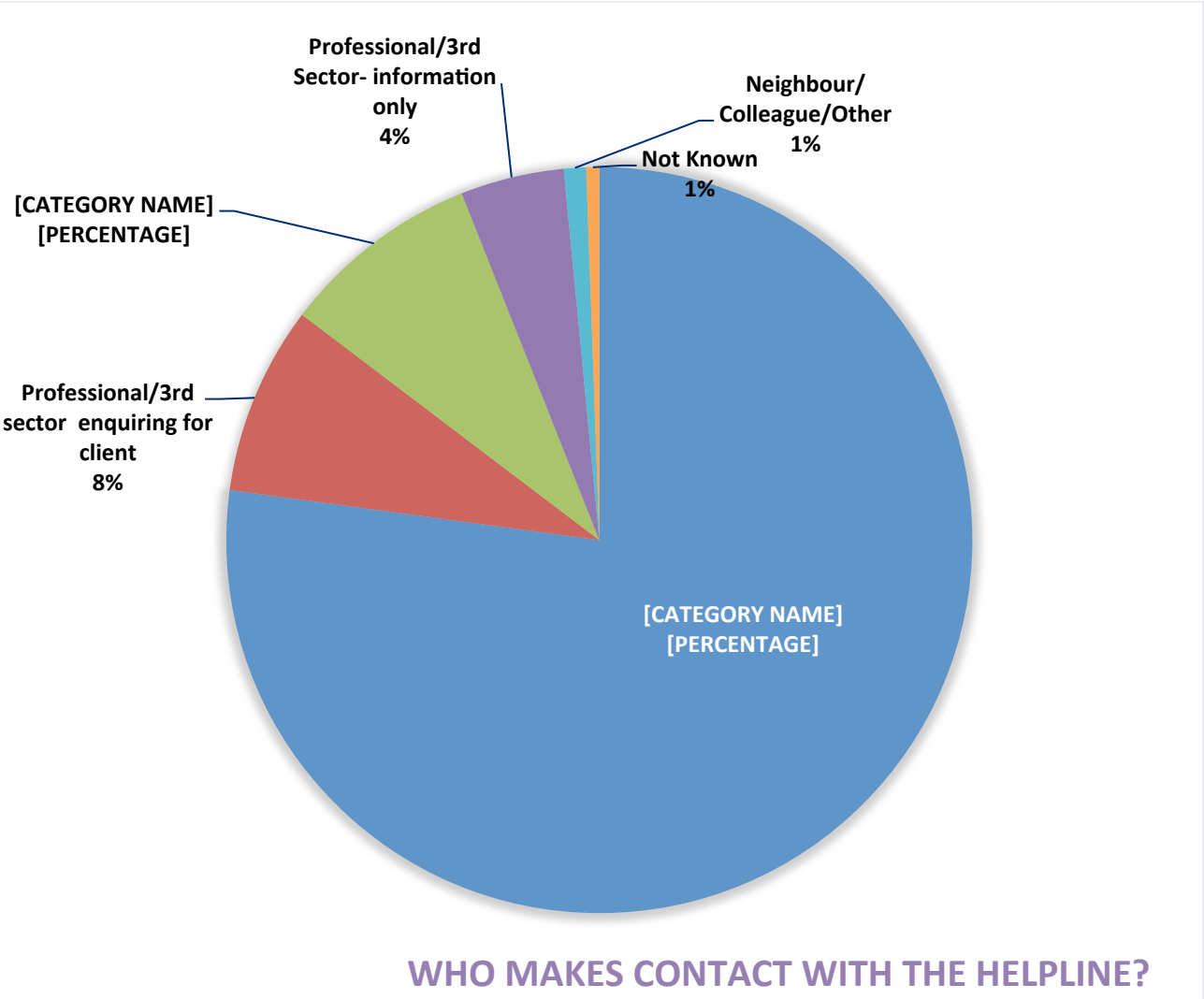
The high level of self-referral indicates that the Helpline has successfully targeted its marketing efforts so that individuals who are seeking help feel able to make direct contact rather than approach an intermediary to make contact for them.

Professionals includes teachers, health professionals, police, social workers, solicitors and the probation service. The Third Sector organisations have included women’s charities that deal with domestic and sexual abuse including refuges and Women’s Aid and organisations with a wider remit such as Citizens Advice, Red Cross, BAME women’s groups, Refugee Action, Counselling Services and Housing Associations.

Most of the calls made to the Helpline will go beyond a simple transactional call. Individuals will usually need to explain their situation in some detail so that the correct response can be provided. In some cases, a referral call from another agency can initiate a complex and detailed investigation into the situation and it can take many months to find a resolution for the service user. The case study profile of [Shafana](#) demonstrates that the initial contact can require many hours of support over a longer period to reach a resolution

*“The team were like mothers to me. I felt as if I had found a shelter and nothing can harm me now” – Shafana*

Only a small number of contacts (**4%**) were from organisations seeking generalised advice that is not related to individuals.



## SECTION 2: WHO BENEFITS FROM THE HELPLINE?

### Gender of Service Users

**94%** of service users are women, **5%** are men and **1%** service users had no gender specified or gender was specified as “other”.

Although the Helpline is targeted at Muslim Women male service users make use of the service often because they are seeking a safe space where they feel able to share their concerns without judgement.

### Age of Service Users

The reach of the Helpline extends across all age groups from under 16 to over 60.

The age demographic is one of the hardest to elicit via indirect questioning and there has historically always been a higher number of “unknowns” in this data field. In 2019 the number of service user contacts with no data on age has reached **39.2%**, higher than in previous years. In 2020 the management team will need to monitor records so any missing data can be quickly spotted, and improvements made. However, it is recognised that this data is difficult to collect:

*“It is challenging to try and take the callers general information i.e. age, location because they want to go straight into the issue and then not want to disclose any personal information” Staff Survey*

The data in the table below compares the data from 2018 and 2019 based on the total number of cases **where age was known**. By using the “known” data we can compare the two years to give a more accurate reflection of the different age groups using the Helpline service

Ages of callers	2018 Adjusted percentage	2019 Adjusted Percentage
Under 16	1.0%	1.5%
16-18	5.3%	4.5%
19-21	8.5%	8.5%
22-25	12.5%	13.6%
26-30	17.6%	21%
31-40	33.6%	30.9%
41-50	17.1%	13.7%
51-60	3.2%	4.4%
Over 60	1.2%	2%
Total Cases (where age is known)	<b>601</b>	<b>757</b>

Rounding of % means the total is not always exactly 100%

Using these adjusted percentage, the proportion of young people (under 21) reached is **14.4%** which is comparable to the previous year’s known figure of 14.8%. This younger age group can be vulnerable to abuse through forced marriage, sexual grooming and honour-based violence and often find reporting issues more challenging so remain an important group for the Helpline to focus on.

There is a slight increase from 30.1% to **34.6%** in the proportion of people making contact from the 22-30 group compared to 2019.

## Faith Backgrounds

**98%** of clients (where faith was specified) were Muslim. The other faiths who were supported include people from Christian, Hindu and Sikh backgrounds. Faith was not recorded in just 4.6% of the calls which is a significant improvement on last year where 10% were unknown. Compared to other categories the team seem skilled at being able to pick up this information from the content or context of the call.

## Ethnic Background

According to the Muslim Council of Britain’s review of the 2011 Census data (<http://bit.ly/1Efl8zD>) the UK Muslim population is ethnically diverse, with **68%** classified as Asian, including people of Pakistani, Indian, Chinese and South Asian backgrounds. Overall, **8%** of the UK Muslim population is from a white ethnic background.

Ethnic background was recorded for 962 service users (**77.15%**) which is a slight increase on the known backgrounds in the 2018 report. For those service users where data is recorded, the breakdown of ethnic groups reflects the proportions outlined in the broad ethnic group categories used in the 2011 England and Wales Census study.

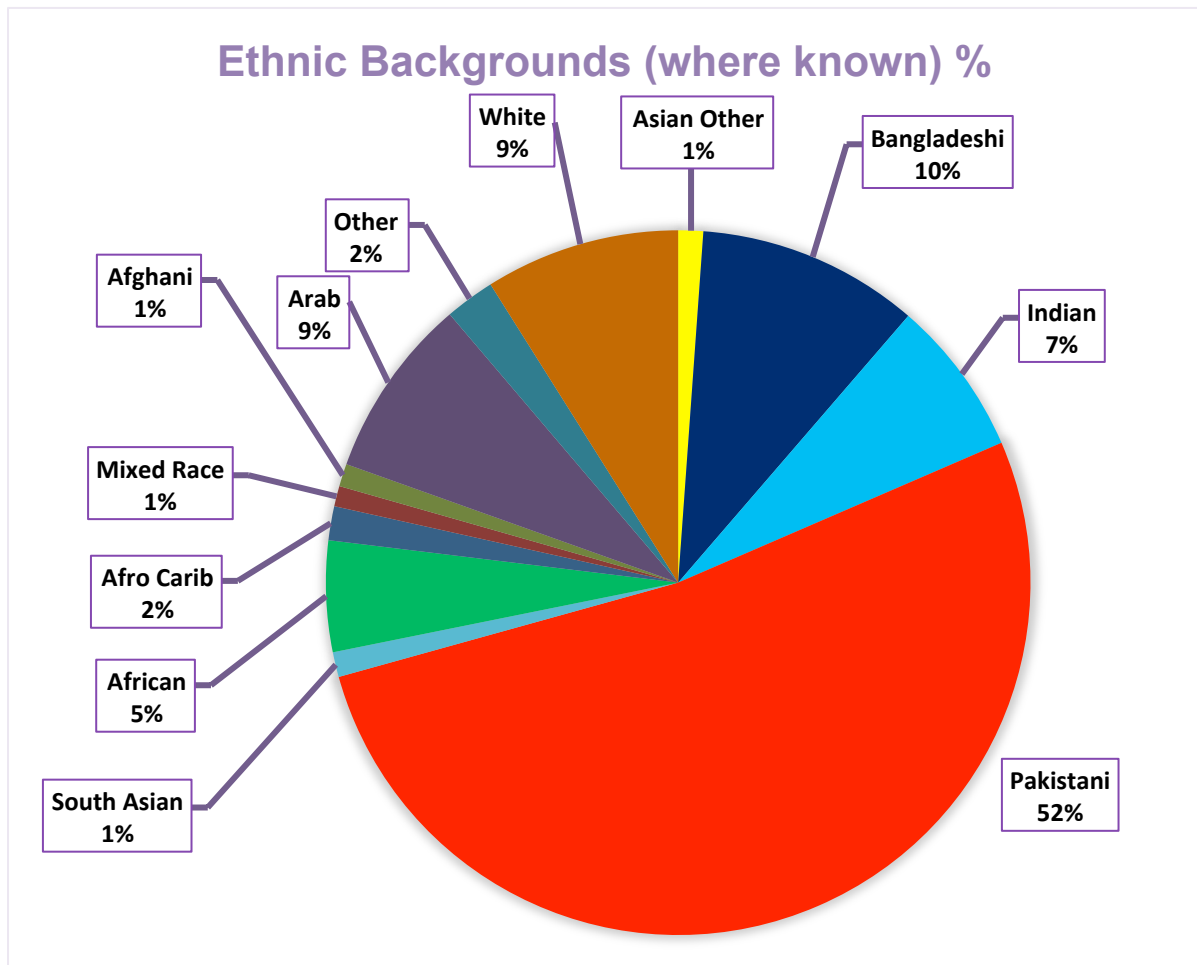
Looking at these figures there are no significant changes in ethnic diversity of service compared to 2018. The Helpline continues to mainly reach an Asian Muslim demographic which reflects the current makeup of the Muslim population within the UK.

	2011 Census	2018 Service Users	2019 Service Users
		ethnic background (where specified)	ethnic background (where specified)
<b>White</b>	<b>7.80%</b>	8%	8.9%
<b>Mixed</b>	<b>3.80%</b>	0.90%	0.9%
<b>Asian</b>	<b>67.60%</b>	71.60%	71.8%
<b>Black</b>	<b>10.10%</b>	7.10%	6.7%
<b>Other</b>	<b>10.70%</b>	12.80%	11.6%

The census categories are very broad and the data from the Helpline provides more detail on the breakdown of these categories, this is shown in the next chart.

The chart shows broad consistency with previous years with the largest ethnic group (**52%**) represented are of Pakistani origin, a slight increase from the 49.6% recorded in 2018.

The team have been focused on increasing the demographic data for each service user and there is a reduction from 27% unspecified in the 2018 to 23% this year. The chart below is based on the ethnic backgrounds where this was recorded (962 cases)



The Muslim Council of Great Britain has provided additional analysis of the broad ethnic groups from the 2011 Census and identified the proportion of Muslims in each ethnic group.

The most frequently specified ethnic group is Pakistani – mentioned in **52%** of calls where ethnic background is recorded. There has been a slight drop in service users from the Bangladeshi community and the Helpline could target this community in marketing materials, particularly since the Helpline have a Bengali speaker available to support members of this community.

At the time of the census almost **40%** of the Muslim population came from this ethnic group, so the higher proportion is in line with the expected level of representation.

ETHNICITY	2011 Census	2018 Helpline Service Users	2019 Helpline Service Users
	% of Muslim population from ethnic groups	% Ethnic background where specified	% Ethnic background where specified
Black African/Caribbean/Other	<b>10.1</b>	7.1	6.65
Other Asian (Afghani/S Asian/ Other Asian)	<b>7.2</b>	3.1	3.32
Bangladeshi	<b>14.9</b>	12.4	10.19
Indian	<b>7.3</b>	6.4	7.17
Arab	<b>6.6</b>	8.1	8.32
Mixed Race	<b>3.8</b>	0.9	0.94
Pakistani	<b>38</b>	49.6	52.18
White	<b>7.8</b>	8	8.94
Other	<b>4.1</b>	4.4	2.29

## Language Spoken

Most service users use English during their contact with the Helpline (**92.2%**). The remaining service users spoke the following languages in calls handled by team members.

<b>LANGUAGE USED</b>	<b>% service users 2018</b>	<b>% service users 2019</b>
<b>Arabic</b>	0%	<b>0.40%</b>
<b>Bengali</b>	1%	<b>0.88%</b>
<b>English</b>	93.6%	<b>92.22%</b>
<b>Punjabi /Mirpuri</b>	0.9%	<b>0.96%</b>
<b>Urdu</b>	4.3%	<b>5.21%</b>
<b>Other Language</b>	0.2%	<b>0.32%</b>

There is a slight increase compared to 2018 of the proportion of calls that are being handled in a different language which reflects the fluency in additional language of the team members.

Towards the end of 2019 clearer guidelines were provided for the staff team about this aspect of data recording. It was discovered that some staff were classifying the language of the person referring rather than the actual service user. Given that most cases are self-referred this should not make a significant statistical difference, although there may be a slight variation in the language numbers due to this change in recording method.

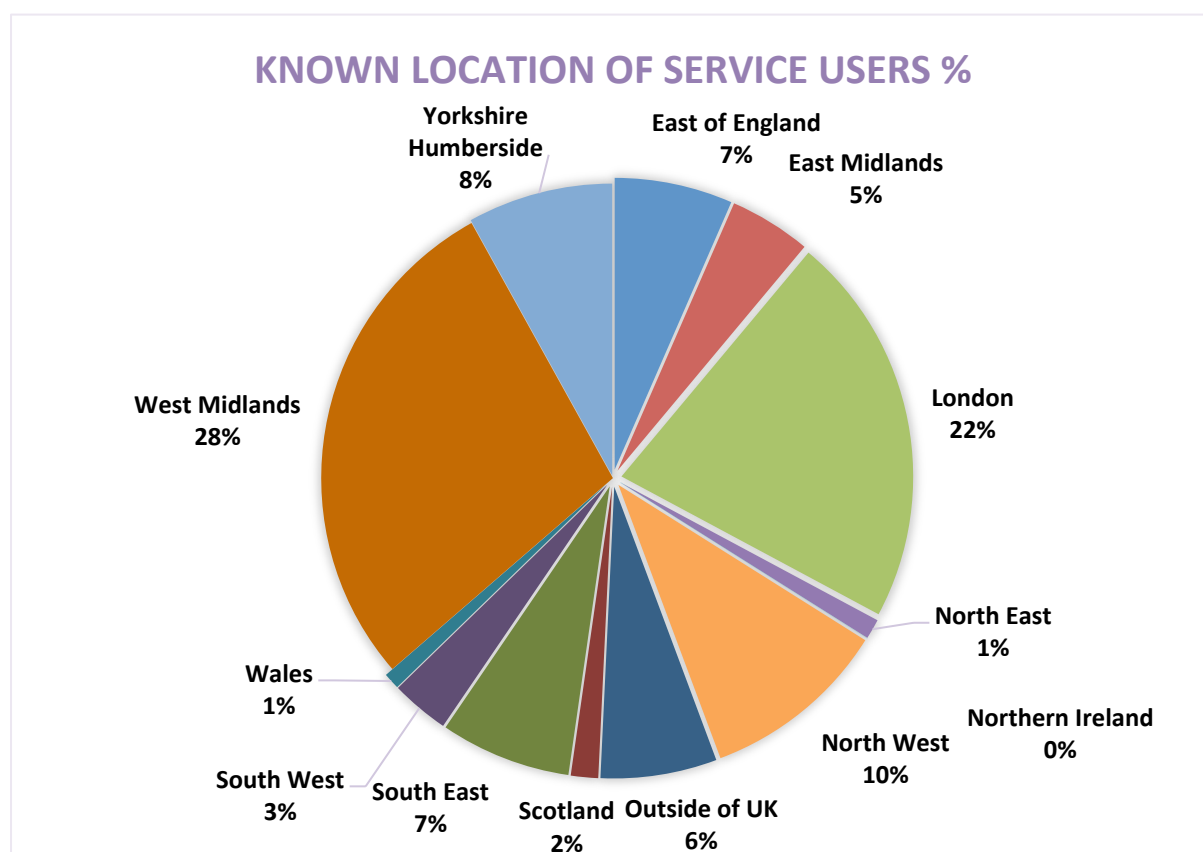
The team report that being able to speak languages other than English can help to build the deeper level of trust so that the worker can fully understand the needs and situation of the most vulnerable services users. Candidates with additional language skills are sought when the team recruit for new workers and these skills are tested at interview.

The Helpline have access to a national service “Language Line” which provides access to translators to support calls. There was an initial registration fee to join this service and the team pay for the service when it is needed. During 2019 the service was not used because the two service users referred to it disengaged with the Helpline when they were unable to get an immediate response to their query in their own language.

## Location of Service Users

**79.63%** of callers were recorded against a specific location in 2019, this is a slight reduction from the 81.7% with recorded location in 2018. Of these calls where the location was recorded, **50%** of these were from two locations: West Midlands either from the West Midlands (**28%**) or London (**22%**).

In 2018 these two areas of the country were generating **60%** of the calls and this was a similar proportion to the earlier years of operation when the regional base in the Midlands meant that inevitably the Helpline was more known in this region. Looking at the chart it is significant that this year there has been a change in the proportion of calls from other locations in the UK, this is a welcome sign that MWNUK is expanding its reach from its regional base to other areas in the UK.





The table below compares the known location of service users from the UK in 2019 compared with the last 2 years of the operation and against the census data. This helps to identify areas where there might be discrepancies between the proportion of Muslims located in an area and the calls from that area to the MWN Helpline service. Callers from outside the UK are excluded from the comparison with the relevant census data sets.

The data shows a slight increase in contacts in the East of England, South East and Yorkshire and Humberside. There appears to be no significant movement in the North West area which is surprising because there was a focus outreach activity in this area during 2019.

LOCATION RECORDED	2011 Census England and Wales	2017	2018	2019
	% of Muslims by location	% of Service Users by location		
<b>East of England</b>	<b>5.5</b>	2.41	3.3	<b>7.11</b>

<b>East Midlands</b>	<b>5.2</b>	3.54	4.7	<b>4.92</b>
<b>London</b>	<b>37.4</b>	30.71	28.6	<b>23.63</b>
<b>North East</b>	<b>1.7</b>	3.7	2	<b>1.20</b>
<b>North West</b>	<b>13.2</b>	10.77	11	<b>11.27</b>
<b>South East</b>	<b>7.5</b>	4.98	6.3	<b>7.88</b>
<b>South West</b>	<b>1.9</b>	2.09	1.5	<b>3.50</b>
<b>Wales</b>	<b>1.7</b>	1.45	0.6	<b>0.98</b>
<b>West Midlands</b>	<b>13.9</b>	33.6	32.3	<b>30.74</b>
<b>Yorkshire Humberside</b>	<b>12</b>	6.75	7.7	<b>8.75</b>
	<b>2011 Census Scotland % Muslims in Scotland</b>			
<b>Scotland</b>	1.45	0.9	0.8	1.6
<b>Northern Ireland – the NI census only records Muslims in the “other religion” category</b>	0.8%	0	0	0
	other religions which will include Muslims			

*These figures have been updated as the total previously incorrectly included calls from outside the UK which slightly distorted the comparison to the Census data sets*

## SECTION 3: IMPACT AND ISSUES

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The Helpline was established to provide a faith and culturally sensitive service that would be able to offer information, advice and signposting to other services. The service has two specified outcomes which relate to the service users:

**Outcome One:** Muslim women will have better life chances due to accessing the advice/information/support and by reporting/leaving abusive situations.

**Outcome Two:** The mental well-being of Muslim women will improve becoming healthier and more active due to accessing advice/support and counselling that will enable them to make choices that will improve the quality of their mental health and reduce the likelihood of self-harm.

Each call made to the Helpline is mapped against these outcomes and the related indicators (see [Appendix Two](#) for the full summary) **71%** of the impacts on service users that were recorded in 2019 align to **Outcome One**. This outcome is primary about signposting and helping service users make choices including leaving abusive situations.

**Outcome Two** is a longer-term impact measure and often this is only recorded where the Helpline has more than one contact with the service user and is able to form a deeper relationship and understand their needs. The figures for 2019 are very similar to the previous year for this indicator with **29%** of the impact indicators relating to this outcome two.

**Outcome Three** has a focus on communicating the collective experience of Muslim women who use the Helpline Service with the desired outcome that:

*“Stakeholders will become better informed about abuses faced by Muslim women through shared learning from the helpline, enabling collective working to build stronger communities”*

This outcome is about giving a wider voice to the lived experienced by ensuring that the evaluation report (and other related reports) is circulated and shared and that stakeholders can also access Helpline Data from the Dashboard.

### Measuring the Impact

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of recording the impact that the Helpline has made onto the lives of individuals making contact. The team record up to three impacts on the case recording system for each service user at the end of the intervention, whether this is a short transactional type call, a longer in-depth call or a series of interventions. For the longer types of interventions, the Helpline worker will ask the service user to share what she considers to be the main impacts of the intervention. Where appropriate follow up calls are made to a selection of service users a few months after the final contact to find out what

the longer-term impact has been on their lives. Examples of these follow up impact calls are included in the [Follow Up Case Studies](#)

The figures show the percentage of total service users where this impact was recorded. For many clients there will be several impacts that are reported and so the percentages will add up to more than 100.

Impact of the intervention on the Service User	2018 %	2019 %
Better Informed of support available	53.8	51%
Felt listened to	42.6	46%
More confident to deal with problems	18.9	29.3%
Better informed of their Islamic rights	18.0	21.7%
Better informed of legal rights	13.6	13.6%
Given help by other support services due to our referral	12.7	10.1%
Better informed of safety issues / advice	13.9	7.1%

*More detailed explanation of each statement and what it covers can be found in [Appendix 2](#).*

A similar pattern is found to previous years with over half of the service users benefiting from being more informed about the type of support available to them. This is significant because many will contact the Helpline at a point where they feel that they have no options and yet they want to make changes in their lives. The Helpline team have amassed a wealth of experience through their work on the Helpline and elsewhere and are able to assist service users to navigate their way through the labyrinth of legislation, policy and other third sector organisations to access the information and resources that they need to make changes in their lives.

The case study of [Ayan](#) is a typical example of a woman who phoned in distress, unsure of what action she could take to protect her children from the violent and extremist views held by her ex-husband. The practical advice offered by the Helpline workers ensured that her children were safe, and the school took a more pro-active approach to protecting Ayan and her children.

Another impact on many service users is that they felt listened to. Many services users feel marginalised in their families or in the wider community and so the importance of having their voice heard and having someone else really listen to them can significantly impact the subsequent quality of their life.

[Uzma](#) contacted the Helpline because she was concerned about her daughters' lack of compliance with her Islamic practices. The Helpline team were able to provide her with the opportunity to talk about her concerns, without judgement and they were able to help her to develop a more constructive relationship with her daughters with more acceptance of their rights to self-determination.

## Longer Term Impact

In 3 of these 15 case studies there has been a planned follow up activity by the Helpline manager conducting an impact review interview 1-3 months after the last recorded contact with the service user.

The follow up with [Shafana](#) (who was at risk of sexual exploitation) provided an opportunity for the team to hear about the complete transformation of her life since her contact with MWN team.

Shafana had been in a very vulnerable situation due to the abuse she had been experiencing. There were concerns about her mental health issues and incidents of self-harming meant that both her and her children were at risk of significant harm.

In the 7 months since the last contact with Shafana her life had been totally transformed and she was back in the workplace, her daughter was settled and healthy and she felt more resilient and able to deal with life.

*“The team were like mothers to me, I felt as if I had found a shelter and nothing can harm me now”*

Some of the calls to the Helpline are made by individuals on behalf of other family members and the contact with [Padida](#) was a typical example of this.

Padida had approached the Helpline due to concerns about the well-being of her brother who although an adult was suffering from the long-term impact of having survived child sexual exploitation in his early years. In the follow up contact with Padida, 8 months after the case closure, she expressed a sense of relief that the support from MWN had given her:

*“This service is really valuable; I would never have felt comfortable speaking to family and friends about the issues that my brother and I faced”*

Some case studies demonstrate that contact with the Helpline can continue over a long period of time.

The case study with [Zeenat](#) is a typical example of this, over the last two years she has made use of the Helpline to support her as she navigated through difficulties in her marriage to her separation and divorce. Having the Helpline to turn to at the points of key stress in this transition has been invaluable to her as she felt isolated in her community. The support has enabled her to take control of her life and emerge into a much

*“happier and safer place”*

## Range of Issues

During 2019 the Helpline team dealt with calls that covered **42** different issues. This is a significant difference between other Helpline services that can often be focused on a single issue. Further details about the range of issues covered can be found in [Appendix One](#)

At the close of the call the Helpline Worker will make a note about the reasons that this service user initially contacted the Helpline. This information is recorded as the primary reason and two additional issues can be also be recorded which helps to track some of the complexity of these calls.

Looking at the issues raised most frequently by service users these follow the pattern that was observed in previous years with domestic abuse, divorce and mental health being the most common themes in the calls. These are also the most frequently recorded primary reason for the call.

10 Most Frequent Issues	%
<b>Domestic Abuse</b>	32%
<b>Mental Health Feelings</b>	31%
<b>Divorce</b>	22%
<b>Housing / Homelessness</b>	16%
<b>Relationships</b>	16%
<b>Marriage</b>	15%
<b>Faith / Spirituality</b>	13%
<b>Isolation / Loneliness</b>	10%
<b>Money / Finance</b>	9%
<b>Immigration</b>	7%
Many service users will have 3 issues that need addressing in the call so the percentages will add up to more than 100%	

As previous reports have noted many calls to the Helpline are complex and multi-issued based, **76%** of service users needed support on two or more issues

**51%** wanted help on two issues

**25%** wanted support on three or more issues

**24%** had a single-issue focus for their contact.

## Time spent with Clients

In 2019 the Helpline directly supported **1247** individual service users, an average of **103** people a month. This is a significant increase from 2018 when **78** individuals were supported each month.

During 2019 a total of **1620** hours of support was provided which equates to about **1 hour and 15 mins** of support for each service user.

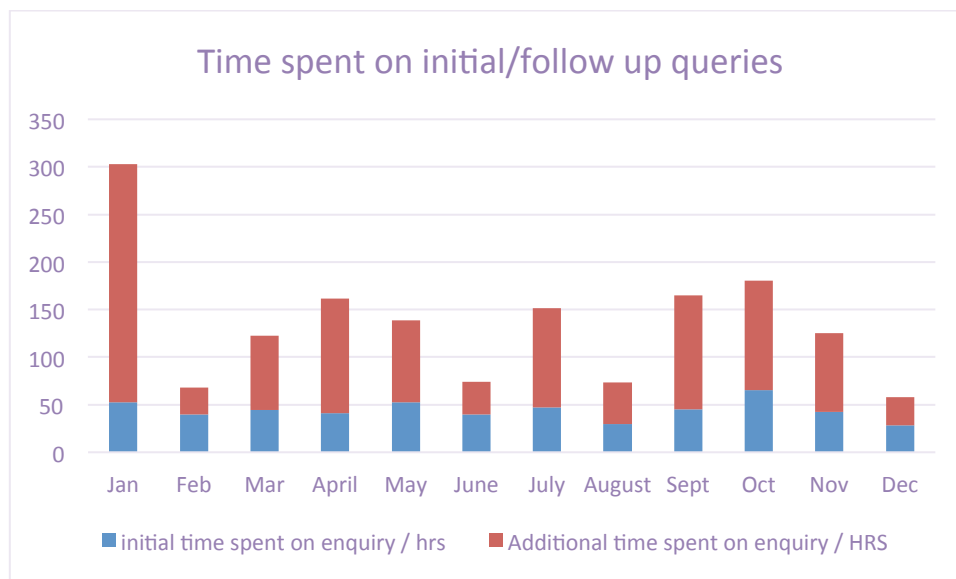
From the data was observed that the support for each service user had been increasing year on year and in 2018 over **2 hours** of support was provided for each service user. This was identified by the management team as an area for concern because it could indicate a move towards long term case handling which was outside of the original remit for the Helpline service.

During 2019 the Helpline management have focused on provided more efficient support and acting decisively to either close cases or to refer to other agencies. Having a consistent full-time manager in place has helped the team to feel more confident in their decision making to close cases.

One of the changes that the new Helpline manager has implemented over 2019 has been the use of “Welfare Check” calls. These calls were becoming routinely implemented for all calls to the Helpline, and some service users would be called 2-3 times after their initial contact to check on progress. The new policy is to only make follow up calls where it has been agreed with the service user or where there are significant concerns about their ongoing wellbeing. The aim to avoid creating dependency on the Helpline team and to encourage service users to live fully independent lives, but with the security of knowing that they can at any point call the Helpline again for additional support.

*“If a service user chooses not to engage with us then that is their situation and their freedom of choice, and it is important that we allow them that independence”*  
Helpline Manager

This chart shows the proportion of time spent each month by the team on initial and follow up queries. There is a noticeable shift in 2019 towards an increase in the proportion of time spent on initial calls compared to the follow up calls. This indicates that the team are now resolving issues more quickly so that there is no need for further follow up. This demonstrates the increase in organisational efficiency and productivity since the last Helpline evaluation review.



The table below with the monthly average of the calls shows this increase in hours spent on the initial calls and a decrease in the follow up time, with an overall reduction in time directly with service users from 190 hours to 135 hours in 2019.

This change in operational focus has enabled the team to handle the increase in numbers of service users, with the same FTE hours and will have helped ensure that the Helpline was able to remain open during the core operating hours – in previous years the Helpline had to close on occasion due to the volume of work and staff shortages.

Monthly average of hours	2018	2019
<b>Initial calls</b>	36 hours	44 hours
<b>Additional time -follow up calls</b>	154 hours	91 hours
<b>Total time spent on clients</b>	190 hours	135 hours
<b>Average time – individual</b>	2.45 hours	1.29 hours

The team have also been supported by the work of a caseworker (from January 2019 to April 2019 and referrals have been available to the MWN Counselling service. These have both helped to reduce the demand on the Helpline service to provide on-going support in complex cases.

## Practical Support

The Hardship Fund was established in 2016 to provide limited financial support on a discretionary basis to adults and children who contacted the Helpline and were in vulnerable situations.

The Hardship Fund has been invaluable in providing to support to service users who are in desperate need. In the case studies there are two examples which demonstrate how this fund can help provide safety from harm in extreme situations that some service users are in.

1. In the case study of [Ambreen](#), the Hardship Fund provided her with a safe space to recover from the physical and mental impact of having a termination
2. For [Aashi](#) the Hardship Fund offered some valuable breathing space that enabled her to find a way through the complex issues that she was facing.

*“I have received a hardship fund from Muslim Women’s Helpline I thank you so much for this payment and because of you I can eat and bathe with no worries. This service is amazing, and I am so grateful to Muslim Women’s Helpline. You sisters made me feel worthy of help.”*

Many women who have benefitted from the MWN Helpline service have been online to donate. In the example above from Aashi, she made contact 6 months after the money had been provided and offered to donate back because she was now in a secure place again and wanted other women to have this financial life-line that she had been given by the Hardship Fund.

## Counselling Services

Additional funding from Reaching Communities Big Lottery Funds was provided for 5 years from 2017 for counselling, providing £5,000 a year for faith specific counselling for callers and £500 towards providing support counselling for Helpline workers, where required. From 2019 Comic Relief have also provided funding for the counselling service worth £2,500 annually for 3 years for both service users and to support monthly group supervision/support sessions for the team facilitated by one of the counsellors.

During 2019 there were **68** referrals made from the Helpline service to the Counselling team, an additional 4 service users were offered counselling provision but were unable or unwilling to take up this opportunity. **31%** of the referrals attended 6 or more sessions and **40%** had between 1 – 5 sessions. **29%** either cancelled or did not show up to their first booked session.

On average there have been 6-8 counselling places available each month. There is a waiting list for the service, and this is “closed” once the wait time will be longer than 18 weeks which helps to manage the expectations of service users about the likelihood of access to the service. The lack of capacity at times for the counselling service can cause concerns from the Helpline team:

*“The amount of mental health issues we are getting through is quite challenging especially when they need counselling and we can’t offer it because we are full. Denying these people help is really tough” Staff Survey*



## SECTION 4: IMPACT CASE STUDIES

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These case studies are from a selection of the calls made in 2019 and reflect the wide variety of issues that are covered in the calls to the Helpline. All names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the service users.

### RAPE AND ABORTION: AMBREEN

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Ambreen contacted MWN Helpline in distress. She was raped and was pregnant. The rape had been reported to the police and Ambreen was waiting for an update. Having discovered she was pregnant Ambreen arranged an abortion. Her family have not been supportive, and this meant that Ambreen needed somewhere safe to stay away from her home whilst she recovered from the abortion.

MWN helpline found a hotel near her and paid for two nights. Ambreen was grateful and thanked MWN for the support which enabled her to recover both physically and mentally before returning to her home.

### HONOUR BASED VIOLENCE & FAITH

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Ayan, a Somali woman contacted the helpline. She had split up with the father of her children and was concerned about the violent and extremist views held by her ex-partner. She was very distressed when she called the Helpline because her 12-year-old daughter was threatened with a knife by her father. The father insisted his daughter wear a hijab and whilst dropping her off to school, he produced a knife and threatened his daughter to make her comply with his requirements.

MWN Helpline supported Ayan in making a police report and helped to put safeguarding measures in place, the police managed to locate father and arrest him. MWN helpline contacted the school, as they had failed to escalate the safeguarding concerns previously. As a result of the intervention the father was no longer permitted to pick/ drop off his daughter at the school.

### DISCRIMINATION

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Maryam is a 16-year-old Pakistani who wears the Hijab. She called because both her and her sister were experiencing verbal abuse from strangers on the streets calling her a 'terrorist' and to 'go and join Isis'. She has been experiencing this for the last few months and it was making her feel anxious and unsafe. Maryam feels she has been targeted by people in her locality due to her faith.

Her parents had reported the abuse to the police however, due to Maryam not been able to identify the alleged perpetrator, no further action could be taken.

The impact of this abuse has been that Maryam feels unable to wear the Hijab in public areas because she feels unsafe and anxious. However, removing the Hijab has an impact on

her internal well-being, as she believes strongly that wearing the Hijab is an article of faith and removing it makes her feel guilty. She felt caught in this internal battle with her desire for both safety and to be able to live out her faith. She rang the Helpline to seek support from people who would understand her feelings and experiences.

The Helpline were able to provide some practical advice and information to Maryam from the MWN Discrimination booklet, as well as providing safety advice and counselling referral.

#### COUNSELLING - PORN ADDICTION

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Aisha contacted the helpline to talk about something deeply personal which she had felt unable to share with other people.

Aisha confided in the helpline that she was addicted to watching pornographic films and believed she was addicted to sex and she needed help and advice to overcome this. Aisha had several sexual relationships in the past and was currently in a relationship with a younger man and was watching porn every day.

She felt a conflict between her sexual activities and her faith and needed a safe and confidential place to talk about her issues. Aisha was referred to MWN Counselling, so she has a safe place to discuss her addiction and strategies to overcome this. She was also referred to sexual advice association.

#### COUNSELLING - RAPE/DOMESTIC ABUSE/MENTAL HEALTH

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Rifat contacted MWN helpline to talk about the trauma she had suffered in her marriage. Over the 16 years of her marriage she has suffered constant sexual, physical and verbal abuse from her husband, often escalating from verbal abuse to violent rape which leaves her with bruising and bleeding.

Rifat has received NHS counselling however she needed a service that would understand her faith and be more culturally sensitive to her situation. Rifat is still married to her husband and her husband has acknowledged that he has mistreated her in the past. He now claims that he will change and wants to make amends. This has left Rifat upset and confused as she feels it's too late and she cannot get over the trauma and abuse she suffered for all these years. She knows she no longer loves or trusts her husband, but she feels trapped in the marriage because they have three children and two of the children have special needs. The confusion and hurt has made Rifat very angry and she knows she needs help to talk through her emotions and in managing her anger.

A referral was made to MWN Counselling to help Rifat explore the complexities of her feelings.

#### SEXUAL VIOLENCE MENTAL HEALTH AND MONEY ISSUES

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Aashi contacted the MWN Helpline as she is in fear that her ex-partner may locate her and sexually harass her. A Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) has been established to share information and discuss her needs and a non-molestation order was already in place

Aashi has mental health issues which means she is unable to work, and she has now support from her family. She is now dependent on benefits which are insufficient to cover her needs. She has had to pawn items to cover the cost of food and is now at the point where she has reached a financial and emotional rock bottom.

Aashi contacted the Helpline because she recognised that she needed support because she was lonely and isolated, and she wanted to be able to join a support group of other Muslim women in her area to help reduce her feelings of isolation. It was also clear that she would need some financial help for essential items including food and her fuel bill to help her situation to feel less overwhelming. An application was made to the Hardship fund and financial support was provided to support Aashi through this crisis period

### *Testimony from Aashi*

*“I have received a payment from Muslim Women’s Helpline Hardship Fund. I thank you so much for this payment and because of you I can eat and bathe with no worries. This service is amazing, and I am so grateful to Muslim Women’s Helpline. You sisters made me feel worthy of help. Thank you...the (helpline advisor) was so supportive and is continuing to support me. Jazzakallah!”*

6 months later Aashi contacted the team to thank them again for their support and offered to donate back into the fund as she was now in a much more secure place – both financially and mentally:

*“You helped me with £90 and I would like to pay you back so you can continue helping other sisters with your fantastic support”*

## SAFEGUARDING – ABORTION, PREGNANCY OUT OF WEDLOCK / HONOR BASED VIOLENCE

Mayesa was almost 24 weeks pregnant and rang the Helpline because she was in turmoil and in a fragile state, feeling isolated and lacking support. She had booked a termination for two days’ time and was not sure whether to go ahead or to keep the baby. She was near the legal time limit on terminations and knew that the decision had to be made quickly.

Mayesa was in a relationship with a man who was physically abusive and had threatened her with a knife. When Mayesa realised she was pregnant she discovered that he was already married, and he wanted nothing to do with her or the baby and his family members have also disassociated themselves with her.

Although Mayesa lives at home her relationship with her own family is difficult, particularly with her brothers. Her brothers have told her that she must either have an abortion or leave home.

MWN helpline provided emotional support, explored her feelings and explored different scenarios and consequences, which would assist Mayesa to make her own decision. MWN had concerns around honour-based violence due to pregnancy out of wedlock and the rejection of Mayesa by her ex-boyfriend and his family.

MWN monitored the case and continued with regular welfare checks and supported her to find somewhere safe to live.

## SAFEGUARDING – SUICIDE

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Ibtisamm is a young woman who called contacted MWN helpline as she was feeling suicidal and stated, ‘there is no point in living’. Ibtisamm grew up in care, following abuse from her parents and married at 17. She became pregnant and there were complications in the pregnancy.

Ibtisamm’s husband is 22 years older than her and has not been supportive about her pregnancy, telling her to that she should get an abortion, which Ibtisamm has booked but was not sure whether she would proceed. They have been married for a year and she has recently found out that he had 6 other wives and children. He is away from home a lot “travelling”. He told her previously that he was attracted to her because she was a virgin when they first met, and she confided in him and sought his advice.

Ibtisamm disclosed her previous suicide attempts and how fragile she is feeling. MWN Helpline followed safeguarding procedures and provided ongoing emotional support. However, Ibtisamm disengaged after the abortion and did not give the helpline further information on her husband personal details. She said that she felt he was a good man and explained how he had rung her to check that she was ok after abortion.

MWN helpline provided further safety advice, information about her legal and Islamic rights. Ibtisamm did not want any further support from MWN, although the team had concerns about the possible coercion and grooming in this relationship.

## DIVORCE

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Salmah contacted MWN helpline via email, requesting support and information on her legal and Islamic rights relating to divorce.

For the past 5 years Salmah’s husband has been unable to have a sexual relationship with her and has been sleeping in another bedroom. Salmah asked whether her marriage can be dissolved on these grounds. Salmah also wanted to know if she would be “living in sin” (if no longer husband and wife).

MWN Helpline provided advice on divorce and signposted Salmah to MWN Booklet on ‘marriage and divorce’ and directed her to the Islamic Fask divorce process (no-fault divorce). The team provided information on her legal rights, list of local shariah councils and advised Salmah to seek legal advice regarding about her assets.

## HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

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Kiran was living in private rented accommodation and had fallen into arrears with her rent by a month. She had come home from work one day and found all her belongings were outside in black bin bags. Kiran contacted the police however they were unable to intervene as this was a civil matter and told Kiran to seek legal advice.

Kiran had been “sofa surfing” for the last week and needed to find accommodation as she cannot stay at her friend’s house. Kiran does not have a good relationship with her family.

MWN referred Kiran to a local supported housing accommodation and was offered a place to stay which enabled her to move within a week of contacting the Helpline.

## FAITH / SPIRITUALITY

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Uzma is a practicing Muslim and mother of 2 daughters, aged 19 and 15. She contacted the helpline to talk about her concerns about her daughters who she feels are too westernised. They do not want to follow her Islamic beliefs and they are supported to make this choice by her husband who is also not a practicing Muslim.

Uzma asked for advice on how to manage this conflict. MWN provided emotional support and supported Uzma to understand that the 19-year-old is an adult, by law, and can choose her own lifestyle. This was a very sensitive conversation however MWN helpline informed Uzma that there is little she can do to change her daughter’s way of life.

The focus of the approach from the Helpline workers was to encourage Uzma to continue role modelling positive behaviour and to ensure that she does not create a distance between herself and her daughters. The Helpline encouraged Uzma to recognise the importance of being understanding towards her daughters needs and not turn away from them even if their life choices are not necessarily aligned with her own spiritual beliefs.

## IMMIGRATION

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MWN Helpline received an email from Nazia who disclosed that she came to the UK via a dependent visa with her brother when her mother entered the country on a spousal visa.

Although initially the family relationships were fine the situation has become more fraught. Nazia’s father owns a shop and he has been expecting every family member to contribute to the family by working long shifts in the shop most days.

His attitude towards the family members has become very aggressive and when they complain he threatens to divorce their mother and send them all back to Pakistan. Nazia contacted the Helpline for advice on her immigration status and whether her father is correct in his threat.

The Helpline workers listened to Nazia and empathised with her stressful situation. The direct advice was limited because MWN is not a legal service and so cannot provide advice

on immigration matters. The team advised her to seek advice from a registered immigration lawyer and signposted Nazia to Rights for Women and to her local Citizens Advice Bureau, who could help her to locate an appropriate source of legal advice.

## Follow Up Case Studies

Many of the calls to the Helpline are brief and transactional in nature. The service is not designed to handle long term case work and provides immediate support and signposting to enable service users to be able to find their way forward from their current situation. In 2018 the team began a process of follow up of the more complex cases to find out what the longer-term impact had been of the intervention made by the team and this work has continued into 2019 with the following three case studies demonstrating some of the reported impacts from these follow up interviews conducted by the Helpline manager.

### SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IMMIGRATION AND DIVORCE

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Shafana had been recommended to contact MWN Helpline through a barrister and her initial contact was about concerns about her immigration status because she was being sexually exploited in her marriage and wanted to seek a divorce. She had serious mental health issues and had self-harmed. At the time of her contact there was a caseworker employed by MWN, so she was able to explore the complex issues involved in Shafana's situation and to support her.

The follow up interview was conducted 7 months after the contact had ended to find out more about the overall impact of the work of the team.

Shafana was very positive "life is a lot better now". She said that feels more confident and is ready to face the challenges in life. When she had made initial contact with MWN she was feeling very depressed and had been considering ending her life as whenever she tried to seek help, she was rejected and treated badly from many places. She felt that she had lost all hope but the support from MWN has helped to restore her faith and given her a goal to her life. She now thinks positively about life and her future, is enjoying family life, has a social life and is in employment.

When asked about the difference that the support provided by MWN had made to her life she replied that MWN had helped to restore her faith and that she has stronger moral values than before. This has helped to give her more self-confidence to deal with difficulties in her life.

Shafana believes that the support from MWN has given her more resilience to cope with the stresses of life. She would like to become more involved in MWN campaigning about void marriages, to help support other women who may be suffering, and she had already recommended MWN to family and friends.

*"MWN should keep doing the right work, the team were like mothers to me. I felt as if I had found a shelter and nothing can harm me now"- Testimony*

Padida contacted the Helpline on behalf of her brother. He was an adult survivor of child sexual exploitation with mental health issues. Padida was concerned about his well-being and needed advice and support. The case was open for 2 weeks. The follow up contact was made 8 months later.

Padida was in a very positive state when the follow up call was made; she had gone back to University and was developing a mental health service for young Muslims. Her brother was working and in frequent contact and appreciates the support of his sister

One of the issues that had concerned Padida when she had contacted the Helpline was the advice that she was receiving from Islamic sources was not always consistent with what she felt was appropriate. The advice from the team about different Islamic interpretations was very helpful and she is now taking time to read the Quran so that she is less reliant on other people's interpretations.

*“This service is really valuable; I would never have felt comfortable speaking to family and friends about the issues that my brother and I faced”- Testimony*

What she really appreciated was being able to get a neutral input to the problem because the Helpline workers were not emotionally involved in her life. She said that she also valued having advice that was from an Islamic perspective as this helped make it relevant to her needs.

Padida was very enthusiastic about the service and has already recommended it to other friends and family members. She would like to be more involved with the service and possibly exploring a collaboration to target young Muslims

## MARRIAGE PROBLEMS

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Zeenat initially phoned the Helpline over 2 years ago for support with her marriage problems and has been in touch regularly since then. Her husband had threatened to divorce her, and she felt isolated, with no friends or family to support her.

The follow up call was made a month after the last contact with Zeenat. Zeenat reported that she felt in a much better situation. She is going through divorce proceedings. She reports feeling in a much *“happier and safer place”*

The support from MWN help Zeenat to feel empowered to leave her marriage and to become more resilient and stronger. On a practical level she became more aware of the support that was available, so she felt less isolated. The experience helped her to recognise that other women were experiencing similar issues and she reports feeling more optimistic about life. She would recommend the service to other women.

*“The Helpline was everything that I wanted it to be and the only improvement would be longer opening hours” – Follow Up Testimony*

## SECTION 5: INTERNAL ORGANISATION

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The MWN Helpline Service is now in its 5<sup>th</sup> year of operation and this year has seen higher levels of retention and stability in the team which ensured consistent service delivery across the year. A full-time manager has been in post for the year and the team members believe that their contribution is valued which will help to retain and engage the team members:

*“Our manager always acknowledges our work, even the smallest difference we make. She also cares for our mental well-being and acknowledges the load of work and distributes it fairly amongst us” – Staff Survey*

**83%** of the team feel that their contribution to the team is valued most of the time and just **17%** felt it was valued some of the time. Overall comments were very positive about the internal management of the team

*“Managers and staff are really good at making each member of the team feel valued” – Staff Survey*

### Staffing Levels

A total of **3640** staff hours are required so that the Helpline is fully staffed with 2 workers, 5 days a week. During 2019 the team were able to fully staff the Helpline most weeks and in total **3819** staff hours were recorded.

New employees and volunteers were recruited to start in January 2019 and together with the Helpline manager appointed in 2018 they have created a strong and stable team. There have been changes in the team due to maternity leave returner and an experienced team member taking a 6-month sabbatical period and these changes have been managed within the team to maintain service delivery.

The Helpline is staffed by between 4 to 7 part time workers. This has been an important element in the retention strategy because the use of part time hours enables the Helpline to reduce the overall emotional burden on the workers which was identified as a potential cause of staff burnout during the early years of the operation. The numbers of staff fluctuate during the year and some have increased or decreased their hours to fit the needs of the Helpline or to adapt to their personal circumstances.

This year has been the first full year of operating the Helpline with a full-time manager in place and this has helped to provide consistency and support throughout the working week which has increased the productivity of the team.

In January 2019 there were 4 Helpline staff in position, and this was slightly under the required hours to operate the Helpline. By February 2019 the staffing situation had improved as new recruits were added to the team and the team were able to provide all the



hours required for the Helpline. This pattern was continued throughout the year with a significant understaffing occurring in May due to the unexpected resignation of one of the new members of staff.

During 2019 a change was made to the working hours for the team members with the start time changed from 9.30 to 9.15 which ensures that the workers have 45 minutes in the office to prepare for the opening of the Helpline at 10.00. The finish time has changed from 17.00 to 16.45 which provides 45 minutes after the Helpline closes to wrap up the case recording and supports the workers to return home before the peak travel period.

The growth of the team and the organisational maturity has encouraged the team to be more structured in the way that working hours are managed. An example of this change is found in the shift system. In the past the staff shortages have meant that part time workers would often finish their shift a bit later and then take the time back at another period. Whilst this flexibility was valued for staff with family, there was a growing sense that the approach was starting to cause problems and so it was agreed to implement a more formal system of either working a full shift or a half day shift to create a fair way of offering flexibility of hours whilst still ensuring that the Helpline needs were met.

## Recruiting and Retaining Staff

Muslim Women's Network is an attractive work opportunity. It offers a unique working environment. As one of the team commented:

*"I joined MWN as it was the one organisation that worked to empower women and make change. They are an active organisation that is part of a progressive movement" – Staff Survey*

In previous years the Helpline had tended to recruit newer graduates to the role of Helpline Worker. They were professional and had a good background experiences in customer service and related areas and were effective members of the team. However, the retention levels were poor because the role at the Helpline was often seen as a stepping-stone to other work within this sector that offered more hours/salary.

In December 2018 a recruitment campaign was devised with the Job Centre for both volunteers and paid workers which targeted women who had not been recently active in the workplace, often due to caring responsibilities. The team anticipated that although training needs might be higher (particularly in technological aspects of the role) the return on this investment was likely to be longer levels of retention in these part time roles. The strategy was that by recruiting volunteers and part time workers there would be a pipeline of talent to support growth or changes in the staffing levels of the Helpline.

*"volunteering is useful for women who have been on a career break and it definitely helps with confidence building and 'touching up' on skills before actually going back into employment" - Staff Survey*

Two new workers and two volunteers joined the team in February 2019. Although one of the paid workers did not complete her probation period the other worker has been retained during the year.

*“I have absolutely loved my time on the Helpline, and I can’t wait for future months. This was my very first job and it has set the bar very high” Staff Survey*

Two of the volunteers were able to cover a vacancy created when one of the most experienced members of the team requested a six-month sabbatical period from October 2019. The volunteers were able to split the working hours between them and this arrangement enabled the Helpline to support their worker in her request and provided the volunteers with additional experience that will help them to take on other paid work opportunities should these arise.

The team have reflected on the experience of this phase of recruitment. It was disappointing that the attitude of one of the new recruits meant that the probation period was not completed. The team have reflected on the interview and identified that whilst questions were asked about values and attitudes, they could in the future probe the responses to these questions in more detail to get to the real underlying attitude. This learning insight was also applied to the training period so that there are more opportunities in the training to drill into the attitude and values of the new team members to ensure that these reflect the non-judgemental approach that is taken by the Helpline Service towards all service users.

Exit interviews have been introduced to help the management team to gain a deeper understanding about reasons for staff leaving and to identify any issues that may need to be addressed to improve staff engagement levels and the new staff survey will support this by helping identify trends in levels of engagement over time.

## Management Role

The Helpline Service has benefitted from having a full-time manager in place throughout 2019, providing consistency in the level of support and advice to the workers. The consistency of management support has helped to address some of the challenges that the Helpline have faced in previous years with staff turnover and sickness.

*“Having a full-time manager makes a massive positive difference to the service that we can offer to service users and our staff” – MWN Co-Chair*

The staffing levels have been improved so that the Helpline manager is able to focus on managing the team and the overall strategy for the Helpline and will only occasionally handle calls to cover short term staffing shortages. She provides regular supervision and one to one development discussions and is working in the same physical space as the Helpline team so can intervene on calls or spend time immediately after a call to help debrief the worker. Sometimes after a challenging call she will encourage the worker to take a break

and do a mindfulness activity to help her to regain her composure and gain perspective on the call. This ongoing support has been appreciated by the staff team:

*“I feel as if I have learnt so much and such an enjoyable way. The team and our manager have made the working environment so comfortable and positive despite our line of work being upsetting at times”* **Staff Survey**

The management role has been made more effective by the introduction in 2019 of the new case recording system.

*“The new system makes it easier to gain an overview and to flag up any potential problems with a case”*– **Helpline Manager Interview**

Supervision is provided to the Helpline manager by the MWNUK Executive Director. Initially this supervision was monthly during the early part of 2019, but this was changed to bi-monthly after the initial six months. These sessions are formally structured and planned and provide an important opportunity for the Helpline manager to talk openly about any concerns about the team, the workload and the wider strategy for the Helpline. Notes are taken of the sessions to help the management team to keep track of progress of the agreed actions. These sessions are important to ensuring the overall wellbeing of the Helpline manager so that she can maintain her resilience and be able to support the team effectively. It also provides an important opportunity for the executive team to pick up any early concerns that may need addressing to support the Helpline manager in her role.

*“I have really valued the supervision sessions as an opportunity to take stock of my role and to have someone listen to my concerns and experiences. It helps provide me some vital thinking space”* **Helpline Manager Interview**

## Supervision and Professional Development

In the early evaluation reports it was noted that there was an informal approach to supervision, it was a small team with experienced workers and the volume of work was relatively low. There was an assumption that most supervision could take place informally because the team and the manager were working in the same space and so could easily share information about any challenges during calls.

As the Helpline has matured as an organisation and the volume of calls increased the approach to supervision has become more structured and formal, whilst still maintaining the flexibility to respond to immediate concerns following a challenging call. In addition to an immediate response to concerns from calls there is a structured programme of supervision support:

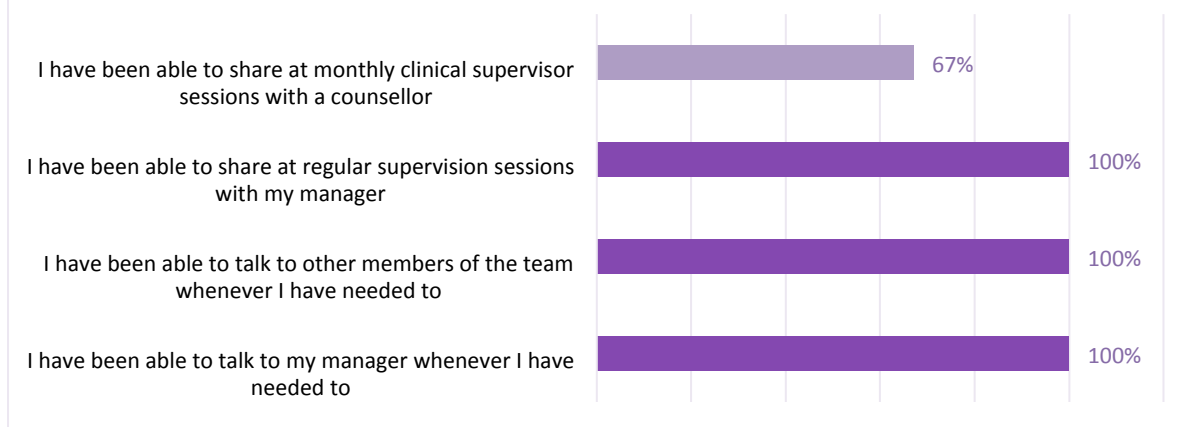
STRUCTURED SUPERVISION PROVIDED BY MWN	
<b>Monthly Clinical Supervision Group</b>	This session is facilitated by one of the MWNUK Counsellors and provides a space for the team to explore their work and their reactions to it in a confidential environment.
<b>Professional development Sessions</b>	All staff and volunteers have two sessions a year with the Helpline manager to discuss their professional development and overall performance. This provides the Helpline manager with an opportunity to pick up any early concerns about the work so that she can provide more support.
<b>Case Debrief</b>	Time is provided at the end of each shift for any worker to debrief complex cases with the Helpline Manager.
<b>Journey to Self-Care</b>	These regular sessions provided by the Helpline Manager offer reminders about the importance of taking care of emotional reactions to the work to retain energy and avoid becoming overwhelmed by the nature of the Helpline work
<b>Return to Work/Keep in Touch Days</b>	If a worker takes sick or dependence care leave a return to work interview is now in place so that the Helpline manager can update them with any changes during their absence and make sure that they are fit enough to return to work and to discuss any adaptations that might be needed to help them in their return to work. When staff are on maternity leave there is the opportunity for them to come back into work for a short day so that they can keep in touch with developments before returning to their work on a permanent basis.

The feedback on this structured support is very positive from the team.

*“I feel that full opportunity is given to talk and reflect on any aspect of my work” – Staff Survey*

Any previous concerns about the mental wellbeing and support for team members have now been comprehensively addressed by this structured and varied approach to supervision and support, which combines informal “just in time” debriefs with a longer-term reflective approach.

## What opportunities have you had to talk and reflect on the more emotionally challenging aspect of your work ?



Initial training provided during the induction period is very comprehensive and because of the range of needs that the Helpline covers it can take several months for a new worker or volunteer to feel able to handle the complexity of the calls that come through the Helpline.

Training and development opportunities often naturally occur during supervision or group sessions. Feedback from the team about the quality of training is very positive and all staff assessed the quality of training as good or higher and all staff felt that the amount of training, they received was the right amount for their needs.

There were some requests for additional training in 2020 from the staff survey particularly for mental health issues and a request for:

*“regular top up training to what is already being covered” - staff survey*

## Student Placement

In 2019 the team were able to support a part-time student placement for the first time. This was a 9-month placement for 3 days a week which began in June 2019. The placement was designed to provide an overall work experience and insights for a student on an English Literature and Politics programme. It was a very positive experience for the student who commented:

*“The experiences I was looking for were met and exceeded. MWNUK have been amazing at offering me additional support to grow and build. The placement was tailored towards me and what I wanted to do. I have learnt to conduct myself in a professional manner and how to engage with and communicate with colleagues”*

### **Placement Student Report 2019**

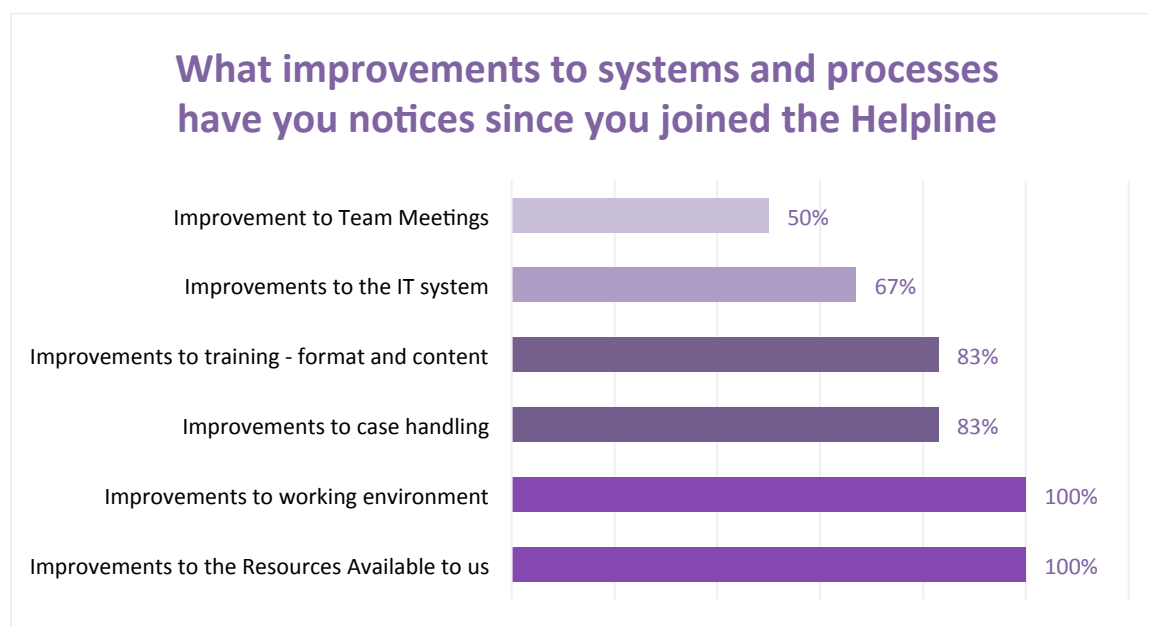
The placement was supervised by the University of Aston and the supervisor came to observe the placement experience. The placement supervisor was very impressed with the work that had been put in to support the student during her placement period:

*“Your placement has clearly given you the opportunities to learn about yourself, about others’ lives and to experience a vast range of situation. Your CV is going to look amazing!”* **Placement Supervisor Report, University of Aston**

The placement was a positive experience from the team who benefitted from the extra resource that the student could provide, along with her energy and ideas. The costs of the placement are limited to the payment of expenses for the student so was affordable for the Helpline. MWNUK have now enrolled onto the University of Aston’s placement programme and will be offering placements in the future.

## Organisational Improvements

Improvements have been introduced in 2019 to support the team to work more effectively and to improve the systems and processes used in the organisation. The staff survey has highlighted that the most significant improvements for the staff group have been improvements to the working environment and to the resources that have been made available, this was an improvement noted by all the staff, including both recent and more experienced team members.



The improvements to processes and systems have been significant this year and have contributed to an overall improvement in organisational efficiency.

*“It has made it a lot easier to log the information, allows the information to follow through in a clear manner and helps to give a clear information format”* **Staff Survey**

The improvements have also helped the team members to be able to track more easily the work that they do and why it is important:

*“Made us a lot more aware of the work that we do and how it impacts people. It has also made us a lot more efficient as we know what to, where everything is and why we are doing what we are doing”* **Staff Survey**

# Case Management

The new case management system has dramatically reduced the amount of duplication and paperwork for the Helpline. The team now operates in a paperless environment, with any notes taken during calls shredded at the end of each day. All information about cases is recorded on one system and each worker has their own unique log in so that it is easy to track actions.

*“we spend less time duplicating records and more time perfecting the data on the records so that this data accurately reflects our service users, their needs and our responses”* **Helpline Manager Interview**

Having made the transition to the new system the Helpline manager has been working with the team to reinforce the importance of accuracy in data recording. The team are gaining confidence in making sure that details such as names and addresses are accurately recorded, asking for spellings if needed.

In the 2018 report there were some concerns noted about the increase in the numbers of “unknown” fields in some of the data recording, particularly those relating to age and ethnic background of the service user. At the end of 2019 it was realised that there remained gaps in the data recording so a training activity was put in place with each worker allocated cases with data gaps and given the relevant case notes to pull out any data that was embedded in the notes but had not been added to the fields. This has helped to raise awareness amongst the staff team about the importance of demographic data. There has been a noticeable increase during the early months of 2020 of the team asking more direct questions to gather this data.

This is not an easy task and the Helpline manager is recommended to conduct a monthly review of missing data so she can track trends over a 3-month period. This will help the team to quickly respond with process changes or training support if the unknown data starts to increase significantly.

Another improvement with the new system is that Helpline Manager can quickly and easily identify any actions which have not been completed.

*“If someone was going to do a welfare check today and does not have the time to do this then this action will carry forward to tomorrow and can either be completed by that worker or another member of the team. I can see the uncompleted actions and can chase these as appropriate”* **Helpline Manager**

The Helpline Manager has identified an issue with cases that are recorded but do not have actions assigned, these can potentially “get lost” and become dormant when they need to be either closed or action taken. The Helpline Manager has committed to improvements in this aspect of case monitoring and recording so that cases are maintained in an active state when they are still live and she can keep alert to any cases that have become inactive and need a decision taking on them – to either close or follow up.

## Working Environment

The team are based in central Birmingham in rooms rented from another organisation. The space has been adapted to accommodate the large team, but it remains a small working space, particularly when all team members are in attendance from both the Helpline and the wider MWN Team.

During 2019 there has been a pro-active effort to make better use of the available space and to keep it easier to find information. This has included the storage of resources and providing space for the team to debrief.

*“The resources are clearer/easier to access in the way that they have been laid out in the Helpline room. There have been other improvements to the working environment such as having a breakout room that has mindfulness posters around/quick relaxation tips. This has helped especially on days when the Helpline are at their busiest”* **Staff Survey**

If the team are to further develop the Helpline there will need to be more space made available so that each Helpline worker has adequate space to be able to handle the calls, write up notes and to keep up to date with any new resources/information.



## SECTION 6: ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER AGENCIES

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The Helpline team work proactively with other agencies, often encouraging them to act to intervene to prevent further risk of harm to vulnerable individuals.

*“I would like to thank (Helpline staff) for (their) support in ensuring a caller with complex mental health problems was linked with local services, including raising safeguarding concerns about children in her family. Your calm, professional and compassionate approach has greatly benefitted this woman at a difficult time and no doubt prevented a more crisis”* **Dr Rachel Squires, Clinical Psychologist July 2019.**

### Police Involvement

The Helpline team record the number of cases where there was police involvement. This could sometimes be involvement prior to the call, or it could be that the service user was advised to contact the police after the call.

In 2019 **19%** of cases had an element of police involvement which is a slight drop from last year when **21%** of cases had an element of police involvement

In **16%** of the calls where the police were involved this involvement was initiated by the Helpline Team and this is a slight increase over previous years. This indicates that there are less direct referrals from the police, but the team are more proactively involving the police where there are concerns.

In June 2019 MWNUK launched the report: **“Muslim Women’s Experience of Criminal Justice System”** which outlines experiences gathered from **direct** evidence from Helpline users about the challenges they have sometimes faced in dealing with all aspects of the criminal justice system. It was welcomed by the policy for the insights it provided into the lived experiences of Muslim women:

*“Statutory agencies must work hard to understand the barriers faced by women from minority communities and I welcome this research which can only help the police service improve its response to Muslim women. The issues identified are crucial for our response to all victims whether victims of domestic abuse, stalking, harassment or honour-based abuse. We know that promptly following up after an initial response and keeping victims informed is key to maintaining their confidence, particularly those subject to coercion and control. Understanding how we can better respond to and support victims helps us keep them safe.”* **Louisa Rolfe, Deputy Chief Constable**

## Social Services Involvement

Maintaining a good working relationship with Social Services is vital and MWN Helpline will involve this statutory service in situations where there are safeguarding issues particularly those relating to the welfare of young children. **10%** of cases involved social services and of these **19%** the involvement was initiated by the Helpline either on behalf of the service user or because of safeguarding concerns about the situation (sometimes these calls are made against the expressed permission of the service user).

Compared to 2018 there has been a **46%** increase in the proportion of cases where it is the Helpline that has initiated the contact with social services. This demonstrates the professionalism of the Helpline team in making other agencies aware of concerns or encouraging service users to make use of the statutory powers offered by public organisations like social services.

## Safeguarding Concerns

Some of the information shared during calls raises concerns about the safety of the client and/or others involved with them. These calls are classified as having safeguarding concerns and are assessed using the Safeguarding Protocols.

Year	Total Cases	Safeguarding Cases	% Safeguarding Cases
<b>2017</b>	792	111	<b>14%</b>
<b>2018</b>	931	99	<b>11%</b>
<b>2019</b>	1247	47	<b>4%</b>

During 2018 the Safeguarding Protocols were clarified and improved. The Helpline Manager was encouraged to review the implementation of these protocols and worked with the team and the Trustee who is the nominated Safeguarding Manager to develop the full implementation of these protocols

*“Having the autonomy to improve safeguarding was helpful. I could work with the team to identify the real risks and avoid overwhelming us with safeguarding concerns, where the risk was relatively low. This has given us more focus and has meant we only refer cases to the police and social services where there are significant concerns”* **Helpline Manager Interview**

During 2019 there were 3 cases which were referred to the Safeguarding Manager. These cases were complex, and the team needed a second opinion before making a referral decision. One of these cases involved Child Sexual Exploitation and the service users

explicitly asked the team not to make a referral to other agencies. They would not share contact details and all contact with the Helpline was initiated by themselves.

The implementation of new protocol during 2019 has seen a **63%** reduction in the proportion of Safeguarding cases recorded by the team, with just 4% of cases in 2019 being classified as having safeguarding concerns.

This is a dramatic shift and reflects the improved guidelines provided to the team about the levels of safeguarding risks.

During the 2018 audit it was found that many cases were being classified as a Safeguarding issue where there were only minor concerns and the risks were very low. The new protocol means that if a case is considered lower risk, then the case recording notes will provide details of this consideration but there will not be a referral made to other agencies whilst the case is below the risk threshold.

The Helpline manager has been auditing cases throughout the year and has noticed that:

*“when I am not in the office the team are assessing more cases as having safeguarding concerns because they want to protect themselves. I am working with them to provide more training so that they will gain confidence in the guidelines”*

***Helpline Manager Interview***

Safeguarding cases frequently included situations involving

Domestic abuse (**19%**)

Suicide and Self Harm (**7%**)

Honour Based abuse (**3%**)

Mental Health/Feelings (**3%**)

Other safeguarding cases have involved child custody, marriage, sexual abuse and forced marriage.

## Collaborations

Over the last five years the MWN Helpline team and the wider organisation have engaged with partners working in the third sector. The collaborations are often mutual with the organisations benefiting from the insights that MWN can bring about the lived experiences of Muslim women in the UK and the Helpline Team benefitting from the specialist knowledge in these teams.

These testimonies were in response to the MWNUK AGM, which was attended by the Helpline team.

### Secure Supported Housing - Shiraz Ali

*“Secure Supported Housing have been working closely with the Muslim Women’s Network (MWN) over the course of the year and have been able to assist in providing accommodation to vulnerable women when needed. We have enjoyed a positive relationship with the MWN team and have been encouraged by their infectious and relentless drive to bring about positive social justice and equality for Muslim women and girls...”*

*It is through the strong bonds of these networks that organisations such as the MWN and its partners can move forward in bringing affirmative changes to wider attitudes and beliefs about Muslim women.*

*We will be leaning on and looking to work more closely with MWN to assist us with shaping our services and how we can help them bring about positive changes to lives of Muslim women.”*

### Quetzal (counselling service for survivors of child sexual abuse in Leicester) Dr Marie Lefebvre

*“We were greatly appreciative of the work MWNUK and their members do to advance women’s rights in the UK through campaign, advocacy, emotional and practical support. We were also grateful for the opportunities to share Quetzal Breaking the Silence initiative with MWNUK members during the AGM so that they know the work that we do in Leicester to support women recovering from the trauma of childhood sexual abuse.”*

### Appeal (women’s justice) - Tara Casey and Naima Sakende

*“It was a great privilege to be invited to the MWNUK AGM and to learn more about their recent work looking into Muslim women's interactions with the criminal justice system. The positive energy among the organisers and attendees was infectious and we left with a strong sense of motivation and encouragement that there are fantastic*

*groups like MWNUK and their partners, unrelenting in their fight for justice for women”*

#### Victim Support - Laura Buksh

*“MWNUK is a wonderful organisation and it is a great help to our staff and service users. I was able to attend MWNUK’s AGM this year and it was a wonderful event with some amazing organisations. The ability to network with other organisations and see how we can best work together to empower women was an excellent opportunity”*

## Data Sharing/Research Information

The Helpline Dashboard was launched in 2017. It was designed to share data to improve practice and policy regarding Muslim women and girls and can help with research and awareness rising of issues. To access the data individuals and organisations need to register on the website and can access the dashboard to support their work:

<http://www.mwnuk.co.uk/muslim-women-helpline-dashboard.php>

This data is a potentially rich resource for the Helpline and other agencies. It could be used as an analytical tool to discover links between different types of data. An example that is currently being considered is whether there is a direct link between technology and domestic abuse – are there more cases of domestic abuse that now include abusive texts or social media posts or is technology being used to track the movements of victims, making it harder for them to escape from abusive situations? It may be a potential project for an early career researcher working in this field of research and this is an area that MWNUK could explore.

## SECTION 7: PROMOTING THE HELPLINE

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It is always helpful to know how each individual client found out about the service because this can help focus limited marketing budgets on the areas of most impact.

The most cited method of finding out about the service continues to be by Internet search – **61.3%**.

Friends and family continue to be another source of information – **8.4%**

There is a growth in other organisations acting as a stated source of recommendation- **12.8%** of the calls

A small but significant number of callers had contacted the Helpline previously, **7.4%**, a slight increase from last year

The nature of the calls to the Helpline can make finding this information challenging because in an emotionally focused call it can feel awkward for the Helpline team members to ask data collection type questions.

Only **53%** of calls had this information recorded. This represents a slight decrease from 2018 where the referral source was recorded in **56%** of cases.

During 2020 the team are encouraged to continue to focus on collecting this data (where it feels appropriate to do so)

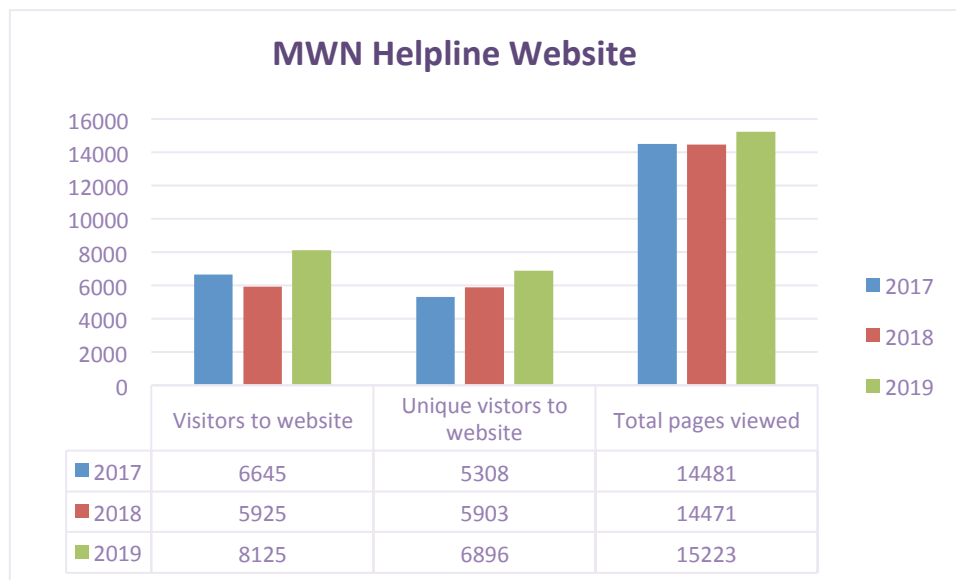
How Did Callers find out about us?	Numbers	%
Internet Search	408	61.3%
Another org	85	12.8%
Family / Friend	56	8.4%
Has Called Before	49	7.4%
College	26	3.9%
Leaflet / Poster	8	1.2%
MWNUK board/Staff	8	1.2%
Social Media	8	1.2%
Event / Workshop	7	1.1%
Another website	7	1.1%
media / news	3	0.5%
Promotional video	1	0.2%

Based on 666 contacts where this information was recorded

## Website Engagement

The MWNUK Helpline website is very important as a source of referrals with **61.3%** of callers mentioning this.

The level of engagement and visitors in 2019 is consistent with previous years, with a slight increase in website visits, unique visitors and the total pages viewed



## Website Downloads

The Helpline team now have accumulated an impressive selection of downloadable resources which can easily be shared with service users to support them after their call.

The MWN published booklets continue to be successful with **9821** new downloads in 2019 which maintains the level of downloads from 2018, when a large increase in the download volume was noted so it is good to see that this was not a one-off demand spike

The booklet on Marriage and Divorce which was launched in 2016 continues to be the most frequently downloaded resource, with a cumulative total across the last 3 years of 13,018 downloads. Marriage and Divorce issues both feature in the 5 issues that are most frequently reported as the reason for the call.

New Downloads				
Resource Downloaded	2017	2018	2019	Cumulative – 3 years
CSE booklet	446	508	684	1638
Domestic Abuse	584	1096	724	2404
Forced marriage booklet	413	555	569	1537
FGM booklet	425	514	340	1279
Discrimination booklet	378	639	399	1416
Marriage & Divorce	2419	6295	4304	13018
Mental Health	378	477	504	1359
Women’s Rights in Islam – launched 2019			278	278
<b>Total Downloads</b>	<b>5,043</b>	<b>10,084</b>	<b>9821</b>	<b>22929</b>

## Helpline Video

A new Helpline Video was created in 2019 to more accurately reflect the types of calls that are handled by the Helpline (the previous video was launched at the beginning of the project in 2015) The video is short, impactful and is designed to encourage women to reach out to the Helpline when they need someone who will listen to them and help them to make sense of situations involving domestic abuse.

The new video was launched on You Tube in July 2019 and had **926 views** in the final 6 months of the year. The video was entered for the Charity Films Awards.

The previous promotional video is still available the views have increased this year, with an additional **3499** views since the end of 2018.

Year	Cumulative Views
<b>2015</b>	320
<b>2016</b>	474
<b>2017</b>	722
<b>2018</b>	1226
<b>2019</b>	4725



## SECTION 8: CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

### Change Implemented from 2018 Report

The new case recording system and a full staff team has enabled the Helpline to implement most of the recommendations from the previous report.

Recommendation from 2018 Report	Response during 2019
<p>1. <b>Measuring Impact</b> – to explore ways of further improving the measurement of longer-term impact of the interventions made by the Helpline</p>	<p>The impact recording used in the case recording is the main sources of impact assessment. Follow up calls are made to a selection of cases to find out what happened over a longer period. The approach to impact has been praised by one of the longer-term funders.</p>
<p>2. <b>Regular Audits of Case Recording</b> To ensure all data fields are completed before cases are closed and to encourage the use of appropriate questions to obtain data about age and ethnicity.</p>	<p>Regular audits are taking place, and these have helped to identify and respond to issues about dormant cases that either need action or closure. The audits have also helped to review the assessment of safeguarding risks to check that the agreed protocols are being applied. The audits did not pick up on missing data fields and 3 monthly checks should be done in 2020.</p>
<p>3. <b>Develop the Use of Text Based Services</b> Explore the current use of text-based services and ways that this could be developed. Provide training in good practice for text-based contacts. Consider the measurement of time units spent on text-based contacts so this is accurately recorded</p>	<p>The chatline on the website has been reopened now that staffing levels are adequate. Training time has been provided to discuss ways of responding to webchat/text-based services and how to interpret the hints that are often provided throughout the conversation</p>
<p>4. <b>Reflective Practice and Unconscious Bias</b> Develop supervision practices that will build self-awareness within the team. Uphold the values of non-judgemental approach particularly in more contentious issues such as LGBT and abortion.</p>	<p>The team have established a rigorous system of supervision and training which seeks to provide opportunities to reflect on and improve practice. The team have developed more probing questions to explore attitudes and values in both training sessions and in recruitment to ensure that all team members are fully aligned with the values of MWNUK</p>

<p>5. <b>Support Team in Using Language Skills</b> Provide opportunities for team members to practice their additional language skills so that their language fluency is maintained</p>	<p>The use of additional languages has been encouraged.</p>
<p>6. <b>Succession Planning</b> Develop succession planning approach in the team so changes due to maternity, sick leave or resignations can be easily made</p>	<p>During 2019 there has been more stability in the staffing of the Helpline than in previous years. Having trained volunteers able to take up paid worker vacancies on a temporary basis has enabled the team to retain an experience staff member whilst she took a sabbatical, develop the skills and CVs of the volunteers and maintain consistency of service.</p>
<p>7. <b>Targeting Northern Muslim Communities</b> Consider and explore ways of improving reach to Muslim communities in the North West/East</p>	<p>During 2019 there was an outreach worker based in the North West. There were some successful connections made with individuals and organisations in this area to raise the profile of MWNUK Helpline. This has not yet made an impact on the numbers contacting the Helpline from this area and the team are consider different approaches to use.</p>
<p>8. <b>Training and Development Opportunities</b> Continue to explore development opportunities for existing team members to develop their skills and knowledge related to the Helpline</p>	<p>Regular training sessions are provided as part of the supervision and support for staff. The staff survey indicated a high level of satisfaction with the quality and quantity of the training</p>

## CONCLUSIONS- 2019

This is the 5<sup>th</sup> year of operation for the Helpline and the organisation has reached a stage of stability and maturity and has handled a total of **1247** service users, bringing the total service users supported over the five years to **3888**.

Increased funding has enabled the Helpline to have a full time Helpline manager and this has made a massive impact by creating a stable working environment for the team and helping to reduce the levels of stress and the potential for burnout that were concerns in the early years of the operation. The new staff survey indicates high level of staff engagement across the team.

The funding provided for the case recording system has supported greater organisational efficiency by reducing duplication of recording and providing a more effective method of case management.

The work to develop a talent pipeline has enabled the Helpline team to respond flexibly to the needs of their team members and offer opportunities for their volunteers to take on fixed term paid roles on the team, widening their skills and their work experience.

As the team enter 2020, they do so from a position of strength and with a backdrop of experience and skills that will support them to continue to deliver and develop a professional national Helpline service.

## Recommendations

At the end of 2020 the team will need to begin to focus on finding sources of funding for the continuation of the Helpline Service and these recommendations are designed to support the team to continue to improve and enhance the quality of the service delivery and the organisational structures.

1. **Further Develop Skills in Text Based Services** – It is anticipated that the demand for text based contact will grow and the team should build on the training and support that is provided to enable these methods of contact to be as rich and supportive as voice based contacts. The team also needs to develop ways of collecting in demographical data from a webchat contact, maybe with a link to a short survey at the end of the chat.  
The webchat function is not currently included on the promotion poster for the Helpline and this should be added in the next print run.
2. **Develop the internal training programme** – consideration to be given about how to further enhance existing training on sensitive topics so that attitudes can be openly discussed, probed and, where necessary, can be challenged. Top up training to be provided for those issues that are most frequently handled and to include specific

training on mental health issues, in response to this specific request from the staff survey.

3. **Conduct Regular Case Audits** – All data fields should be reviewed every 3 months so that missing data can be identified and resolved and to identify dormant cases that need either action or closure. Consider if additional training/support is needed so that staff feel more confident to ask for personal nature in an appropriate manner during initial contact calls.
4. **Promote the Data Dashboard** - Invite early careers researchers from local Universities to make more use of the dashboard and case studies for their research. Consider research projects that would support the continued development of the Helpline line team (an example could be to probe the cases with police involvement to see what the longer term impact of this involvement has been or to develop a deeper understanding of best practice for text based calls)
5. **Encourage Bangladesh Communities to Use the Helpline**– there has been a decline in the numbers of service users from Bangladeshi origin. As there is a Bengali speaker on the Helpline team the Helpline could promote its services to vulnerable women in this community.
6. **Review and Update all Helpline Procedures** –Review all the online procedures to ensure that these represent best practice in 2020 given the learning from the last five years of casework.

## APPENDIX 1: ISSUES HANDLED

### TYPE OF ISSUE - 2019 (42 ISSUES -excluding unknown/none)

ISSUE	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	TERTIARY	TOTAL
Abortion / Pregnancy	21	5	3	29
Addiction - Alcohol	7	2	1	10
Addiction - Drugs	9	3	0	12
Addiction - other	2	2	1	5
Bereavement	7	1	0	8
Child Abuse (neglect)	1	6	2	9
Children / Custody	27	34	28	89
Complaints about public services	15	15	10	40
Disability Issues	2	1	2	5
Discrimination / Islamophobia	13	9	8	30
Divorce	185	52	34	271
Domestic Abuse	211	134	56	401
Eating Disorder (self-harm)	0	1	2	3
Education	3	6	4	13
Elderly Issues	1	1	1	3
Employment / Work	3	6	4	13
Extremism	0	0	1	1
Faith / Spirituality	54	74	37	165
Female Genital Mutilation	1	0	0	1
Forced Marriage	10	10	2	22
Health (physical)	4	13	16	33
Honour Based Violence	12	12	6	30
Housing / Homelessness	82	75	38	195
Immigration	36	36	19	91
Isolation / Loneliness	12	49	61	122
Jinn / Black magic	5	1	3	9
LGBT	19	4	3	26
Marriage	88	71	30	189
Mental Health Feelings	130	141	120	391
Money / Finance	46	34	37	117
None	0	316	632	948
Other	15	10	8	33
Relationships	63	81	51	195
Revenge Porn	2	1	0	3
Sexual Abuse (Adult Survivor of child sexual abuse)	13	5	3	21
Sexual Abuse (child)	3	3	2	8

Sexual Assault / Rape	15	11	6	32
Sexual Education / Intimacy	5	3	2	10
Sexual Exploitation (Adults)	3	1	1	5
Sexual Exploitation (Child)	0	0	0	0
Sexual Harassment	1	1	0	2
Sexual Health	0	2	0	2
Stalking / Harassment	10	9	2	21
Suicide / Self Harm	23	6	11	40
Trafficking	0	0	0	0
Unknown	88	0	0	88
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1247</b>	<b>1247</b>	<b>1247</b>	<b>3741</b>

## APPENDIX 2: ASSESSING THE IMPACT

Outcome One: Muslim women will have BETTER LIFE CHANCES due to accessing advice/information/support and by reporting/leaving abusive situations			
Indicator	Examples of typical activities to support this indicator	Total cases with this impact	% of cases with this impact
<b>Client Better informed of support available</b>	Made aware of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Another helpline / advice service</li> <li>• Public service that can help them</li> <li>• Counselling services</li> <li>• Third sector services</li> <li>• Specialist services such as faith based / culturally sensitive services.</li> <li>• Financial support that can be accessed</li> </ul>	<b>636</b>	<b>51.0%</b>
<b>Client more confident to deal with problems</b>	After speaking to us and with advice given client feels more confident about what to do next e.g., they may state they will / have taken certain steps or even decisions about their life.	<b>365</b>	<b>29.3%</b>
<b>Client Better informed of their Islamic rights</b>	We inform client about the Islamic perspective including different interpretations on any issue e.g. Islamic divorce process, sexuality, abortion, dress code etc.	<b>271</b>	<b>21.7%</b>
<b>Client Better informed of their legal rights</b>	Made aware of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal protection through injunctions</li> <li>• Legislation such as coercive control, revenge porn, harassment / stalking, discrimination, civil divorce law etc.</li> <li>• Free legal advice or access to legal aid</li> <li>• Lawyers in their area</li> </ul>	<b>170</b>	<b>13.6%</b>
<b>Client given help by other support service due to our referral</b>	Where we make a direct referral and client is supported by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• social services</li> <li>• police</li> <li>• community / women's group</li> <li>• Another third sector group</li> <li>• refuge</li> <li>• counselling service</li> <li>• another helpline</li> <li>• Niche service e.g. Faith based service</li> <li>• Legal service e.g. pro bono / legal aid</li> </ul>	<b>126</b>	<b>10.1%</b>
<b>Client better informed of safety advice</b>	Made aware of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contacting police</li> <li>• Precautions to take to protect oneself e.g. what to do if partner is abusive or at risk of forced marriage / honour-based violence etc.</li> <li>• Other safety tips</li> </ul>	<b>88</b>	<b>7.1%</b>

<b>Client more confident to challenge / leave abusive/ harmful situations</b>	When client decides to or takes actions to challenge (or formally report) abuse or leaves abusive situations (or makes plans to leave) e.g. move out, get perpetrator to move out, tell parents they will not have forced marriage, make complaint about discrimination etc.	<b>77</b>	<b>6.2%</b>
<b>Client helped at crisis point</b>	We help client who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is in immediate danger of violence e.g. DV, sexual abuse, HBV, FM, FGM</li> <li>• Has been subjected to violence immediately prior before calling helpline</li> <li>• Is homeless (includes temporarily staying with friends / family after escaping domestic abuse)</li> <li>• Is Suicidal and has taken steps or about to take steps to endanger own life</li> </ul>	<b>72</b>	<b>5.8%</b>
<b>Client helped before situation reached crisis point</b>	When our intervention leads to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police doing safety / welfare check</li> <li>• Help with injunction</li> <li>• Moving client to safe accommodation (e.g. refuge or hotel or some other safe place) before situation escalates</li> <li>• Prevention of HBV, forced marriage, FGM or any other form of abuse e.g., child sex abuse, neglect, physical abuse etc.</li> </ul> Client being referred to mental health / counselling services who are at risk of self-harm / suicide	<b>54</b>	<b>4.3%</b>
<b>Client moved to safety</b>	When our intervention results in client being moved to safety e.g. to family, friend, refuge or other temporary accommodation.	<b>30</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
<b>Client helped with accessing food bank</b>	When we provide information on the nearest food bank or when we contact the food bank and arrange for food to be provided	<b>9</b>	<b>0.7%</b>
<b>Client Supported with form filling</b>	Helping to/filling in forms for the client ego benefits, housing, emergency funds	<b>7</b>	<b>0.6%</b>
<b>Attend meetings on or behalf of client with professionals/agencies</b>	When attending meetings with education/social services/police/MARAC/SARC or other agencies so the client's needs get represented	<b>4</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
<b>Client supported with interpreting</b>	Helping client engagement with agencies and professionals when English is not their first language to ensure their needs are understood by professionals	<b>4</b>	<b>0.3%</b>



**Outcome Two: The mental wellbeing of Muslim women will improve becoming more HEALTHIER AND ACTIVE**

Indicator	Examples of typical activities to support this indicator	Total cases with this impact	% of cases with this impact
<b>Client felt listened to</b>	Client was able to just talk through their problems, felt listened to and provided with emotional support as well as general advice	<b>573</b>	<b>46%</b>
<b>Client feels less isolated</b>	When our help makes client feel less isolated / lonely by talking to through their problems or when we find local support groups	<b>90</b>	<b>7.2%</b>
<b>Client has improved mental health due to counselling referral</b>	When we directly refer client to an internal or external counselling service and client is helped	<b>68</b>	<b>5.5%</b>
<b>Prevented Self Harm/Suicide</b>	When client is in imminent danger of self-harm / suicide and we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call police or ambulance</li> <li>• Make an urgent mental health / health professional referral</li> <li>• Make an urgent counselling referral</li> </ul>	<b>30</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
<b>Practical and emotional support provided by welfare checks and home visits</b>	Checking up on clients via phone or home visits if they are particularly vulnerable	<b>19</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
<b>Client helped with accessing courses to build skills</b>	Support client to identify and register for courses egg learning English, parenting, budgeting, college courses	<b>2</b>	<b>0.2%</b>
<b>No Impact</b>			
<b>Have made no difference/no contact</b>	When we are unable to help due to nature of enquiry or when we have insufficient information and client does not get back to us when we respond to an answer phone message, text, web chat or email	<b>149</b>	<b>11.9%</b>
The percentages in this data total more than 100% because there are often multiple impacts reported for each call			