



# ANNUAL REPORT

and Statement of Accounts

Muslim Women's Network UK (2020)  
Charity Number: 1155092  
Company Limited by Guarantee Number: 06597997

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# MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIR



Following our AGM last year, our hearts were filled with optimism for what a new decade may bring. Instead, 2020 has been a year where each one of us has faced the weightiest of challenges to many aspects of our lives.

The MWNUK Board, along with our Executive Director began addressing the potential impact of a global pandemic on us in February 2020 and our forward planning meant we were able to efficiently transition to remote working by the start of lockdown and continue to provide support to our service users, without interruption and without impacting the health and safety of our team. It goes without saying that this would not have been possible without the hard work and cooperation of our staff members, and I would like to give a special thanks to Helpline Manager Shameem Hussain and all our helpline heroes for the strength, resilience and extraordinary spirit they have shown this year. Their commitment to supporting those in need has truly surpassed all odds.

As you will see in this report, MWNUK's continued successes have been many. In January 2020, the MWN Helpline completed its fifth year of service. It is with great pride that I share that in these five years,

we have increased the number of beneficiaries supported by a colossal 272% since inception and at the time of writing, we have helped close to 5,000 beneficiaries. Our expertly trained team has truly gone above and beyond in supporting some of the most marginalised in UK and we cannot thank them enough.

Having embraced the new world of 'Zoom' (and other digital tools), as part of the 'Equal Power' partnership project we have delivered free online training to capacity build women in all their diversities to be more politically and civically active. The switch to online delivery has meant more interactive, accessible and inclusive sessions to more women across the country.

The pandemic also became an opportunity to accelerate the development of a network of change-makers through our online members platform. Previously introduced to you as 'We Rise', we recently re-branded and re-launched our platform under the new name: 'MWN Hub'. We would like to thank all our members who were actively involved in the 'We Rise' pilot and provided us with invaluable feedback, which allowed us to make MWN Hub an even better place to be.

We have also strengthened our relationships with other organisations and are pleased to have been able to work in collaboration with many, including the New Philanthropy Capital (NPC), Criminal Justice Alliance and Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists (RCOG).

Most recently, we facilitated the launch of the new 'APPG on Muslim Women', of which Naz Shah MP and Caroline Nokes MP are the Co-Chairs and MWNUK are the Secretariat. The formation of this APPG and our role within it will allow us to take our research and advocacy work to new heights; it will enable us to bring about the systematic changes we really need to transform the lives of Muslim women through evidence based policy influencing. Work is already underway on our first Inquiry, which will explore Muslim women's experiences of maternity care. We look forward to presenting our findings to you next year.

I am also pleased to share that we have been announced winners of the 'Charity Governance Award' for the second year running. This year's award was in the category of 'Embracing Opportunity & Harnessing Risk' and we are the first charity to win the award two years in a row.

I must thank my fellow trustees whose high-level expertise and determination to make a difference has led to us receiving such prestigious accolades.

This award is made more special by the fact that it comes in the same year that marks the fifteen-year anniversary of Co-Chair Shaista Gohir OBE's journey with MWNUK. Shaista joined in 2005 when we were still a small group of women meeting with policy makers and has led MWNUK to becoming the award winning, multi-service, national charity that it is. Thank you Shaista for your tenacity, passion and endless hours of hard work over the last fifteen years - you are nothing short of revolutionary.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank our Executive Director Faeza Vaid MBE for continuing to steer this mighty ship. Your commitment, compassionate leadership and continuously going above and beyond the call of duty has meant that even a global crisis could not phase MWNUK.

While uncertainty still looms overhead, we remain committed to advancing social justice and equality and hope you will join us on what is likely to be another incredible year.

Wishing you the best of health and prosperity.

**Nazmin Akthar**  
**Co-Chair of MWNUK**

# Our Vision:

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

# Our Mission:

To achieve an equal and just society through Islamic feminism.

# Our Aim:

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

## WHAT WE DO

MWNUK is a national charity working to improve the social justice and equality for Muslim women and girls of all diverse ethnic backgrounds across the UK. We find out about their experiences through research, the MWN Helpline and our membership. We identify policy and practice gaps and inform decision makers in government and other public bodies with the long-term aim of systematic change. Our knowledge also informs our community campaigns, resources and training so women and girls are better informed about their rights and how to access support and help.

Co-Chair Shaista Gohir OBE with the MWN Helpline team members at a #March4Women rally (March 2018)



Research ■ Helpline ■ Advocacy ■ Campaigning ■ Influencing

# THE MWNUK TEAM

## Board Trustees

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

## Honorary President

- Baroness Haleh Afshar (no voting powers)



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



Faeeza Vaid MBE with MWNUK staff at our AGM 2019

## Staff

- Executive Director  
Faeeza Vaid MBE
- Executive Assistant  
Risha Chauhan (until Jan 2020)  
Rizwana Bi
- Online Membership Coordinator  
Zara Shabir
- Editorial and Communications Manager  
Aaliyah Gohir

## Helpline Team

- Helpline Manager  
Shameem Hussain
- Helpline Support Workers  
Adeeba Begum  
Ayisha Karim  
Hadia Mansoor  
Shahna Aowlad  
Shaila Pervez (until April 2020)  
Sumaira Mehmood  
Zaheda Vaid  
Zeinab Abid
- Helpline Caseworkers  
Saima Pasha  
Shahna Aowlad





# OUR NEW AWARD

## Charity Governance Awards (2020)

In May 2020, MWNUK were pleased to have won the national Charity Governance Award in the “Embracing Opportunity & Harnessing Risk” category; organised by the Clothworker’s Foundation in partnership with the Clothworker’s Company, New Philanthropy Capital, Prospectus and Reach Volunteering.

Our nomination focused on the delivery of all our workshops and training programmes over the years. We were told that “judges were impressed with the way in which the board was able to apply great thought and judgment into where their efforts as a charity should be focused... the board’s vision to effect change was extremely powerful.”

We are the only charity to have won a Charity Governance Award two years in a row and are honoured by the recognition. Last year we won the £5000 prize for “Improving Impact” (4-25 staff category). We would like to wholeheartedly thank all our funders and our partners who have believed in us, shared our vision for change and worked with us to raise awareness of issues and effect change through capacity building & skills training.



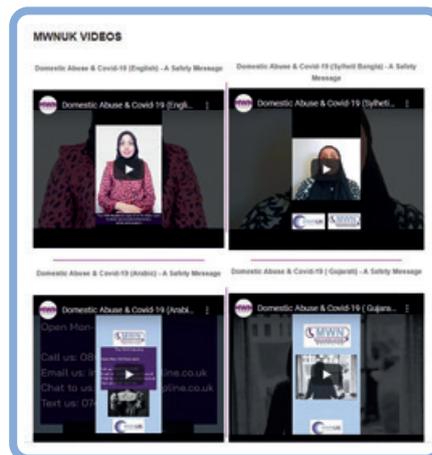
Award-winning and ground-breaking national charity.

# OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

## Working from Home

- When news emerged of the first cases of Covid-19 in the UK in February 2020, the MWNUK board and management began risk assessments and contingency planning. By the time the UK Government implemented lockdown restrictions in March 2020, our team were ready to continue operating the MWN Helpline and all staff were set up to work from home.
- Everyone at MWNUK pulled together and were determined to ensure that the MWN Helpline continued to help those most in need. We upgraded our IT systems to handle more webchats, and encouraged users to email in, if they were unable to call. When the UK's National Domestic Abuse line saw a 25% increase in online requests and calls since the lockdown, we shared with other third sector organisations that our helpline had not seen a similar immediate spike, and this was likely to be due to the fact that Muslim women may face additional barriers trying to report domestic abuse.

- We responded by using an 'iPhone' to film helpline staff urging women to ask for help in different languages e.g. Urdu, Arabic, Bengali, English etc. These were circulated via various WhatsApp groups (and added to our Youtube channel). This resulted in calls increasing and many domestic abuse victims were helped, which in some cases included finding safe accommodation and police involvement. By responding to individual needs, our actions helped to keep women safe, protecting their physical and mental wellbeing. Additional holistic support was also provided to some women via a case worker who, which included arranging counselling.



## Working in Collaboration

Our helpline calls also highlighted the impact Covid-19 was having on women's mental health. Where struggles and difficulties already existed, the pandemic exacerbated problems. Facilitated by the Muslim Council of Britain, MWNUK came together with other UK Muslim mental health organisations in UK to better connect, share information and provide of informative webinars on mental health issues. MWNUK participated in the following online webinars:

- **Coping with Change** (May 2020)
- **Love in the Time of Covid: Mastering Healthy Relationships** (August 2020)
- **What Every Muslim Needs to Know About Suicide Prevention** (October 2020)



# THE MWN HELPLINE

[www.mwnhelpline.co.uk](http://www.mwnhelpline.co.uk)



The MWN Helpline website includes information on a range of issues including addictions, child sexual abuse, domestic abuse, faith and spirituality, and mental health issues.

## Contact the MWN Helpline on:

 **0800 999 5786** (free from landlines and mobile phones)

 **07415 206 936**

 **info@mwnhelpline.co.uk**

 **www.mwnhelpline.co.uk**

**In an emergency  
call 999**

**To contact your  
local or any  
other police  
force call 101**

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

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

## PLEASE CONTACT US

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



You can call us about:

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

# MWN HELPLINE STATISTICS

## JAN-DEC 2019

The MWN Helpline is a specialist faith and culturally sensitive service which provides information, advice, support, and referrals. Available nationally, service users may contact us via telephone, email, webchat and text. Our highly trained and professional staff and volunteers all ensure we deliver a confidential and non-judgmental service to each service user.

The infographic below shows how the number of individuals helped by our team has increased year on year since the MWN Helpline was launched in 2015:

During 2019, the Helpline team supported **1247 individuals** on over **46 different issues**.

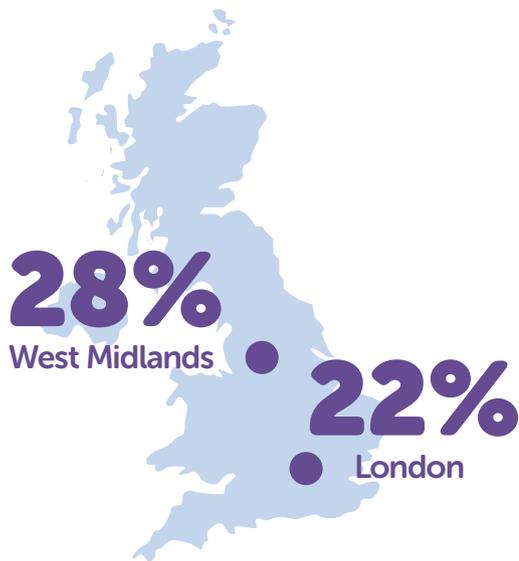


Year	Individuals Helped	Contacts Made
2015	335	814
2016	583	1807
2017	792	2280
2018	931	3626
2019	1247	3133

## Location of Service Users (2019)

**79.63%** of callers were recorded against a specific location in 2019.

Of these calls where the location was recorded, **50% of these were from two locations:**



## Languages Used (2019)

While most staff and volunteers on the MWN Helpline are bilingual, the majority of service users prefer conversing in **English (92.2%)**, followed by **Urdu (5.21%)**, **Punjabi/Mirpuri (0.96%)** and **Bengali (0.88%)**

## CASE STUDY

### SEXUAL EXPLOITATION - IMMIGRATION - DIVORCE

Shafana was referred to the MWN Helpline through her 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 been self-harming. The MWN Helpline team assisted Shafana with her immediate needs and concerns, and then referred Shafana to our Caseworker.

Our Caseworker was able to explore Shafana's complex issues and develop a thorough support plan.

When we conducted a follow-up interview with Shafana 7 months after we had closed the case, she said: *"My life is a lot better now... I feel more confident and ready to face the challenges in life."*

She explained that when she had made initial contact with the MWN Helpline she was depressed and had been considering ending her life. She also shared: *"...whenever I tried to seek help, I was rejected and treated badly from many places. I had lost all hope but the support from MWN Helpline restored my faith, gave me confidence, encouraged me to cope better and gave me goals to rebuild my life."*

*"...the team were like mothers to me. I felt as if I had found a shelter and nothing can harm me now."*

# DATA DASHBOARD



MWNUK actively share our data and resources to ensure it can further support women and girls in the UK, we share anonymised data from the MWN Helpline on the MWN Helpline Dashboard.

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

Register here to access our data dashboard:  
**[www.mwnuk.co.uk/muslim-women-helpline-dashboard.php](http://www.mwnuk.co.uk/muslim-women-helpline-dashboard.php)**



# COUNSELLING SUPPORT

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

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



- Adopting a holistic approach and maintaining the highest standards of professionalism, space is given to explore faith and culture if needed.
- Contact the MWN Helpline for an initial assessment. You will be matched to a counsellor who can most support your individual needs.

The MWN Helpline is able to refer service users to our in-house faith and culturally sensitive counselling service.

**In 2019**, there were **68** referrals made from the MWN Helpline to our Counselling Service, who provided **246** sessions between January- December. **In 2020**, between January- October **105** referrals were made and **357** sessions have already been provided.

It is clear that the impact of Covid-19 has been felt deeply by all, but particularly those with pre-existing vulnerabilities and challenges.

# CASE STUDY

## COUNSELLING SUPPORT - RIFAT'S STORY

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

Rifat had received NHS counselling but felt she needed a service that would understand her faith and be more culturally aware of her situation. Rifat was still married to her husband; her husband had acknowledged he had mistreated her in the past and wanted to make amends. For Rifat, she felt it was too late, but felt trapped in the marriage because they had three children. Rifat felt very angry and needed to explore the complexities of her feelings.



Our faith and culturally sensitive service gave Rifat that space to process her thoughts and emotions, and decide her next steps.

# HARDSHIP FUND SUPPORT

The MWN Helpline's approach is to provide information and advice, and then refer callers on to specialist support services where appropriate. However there are times when such support is not available quick enough. Therefore MWNUK continues to run the 'MWN Hardship Fund' which is used to support, where possible, those in crisis situations and in need of immediate financial support.

The MWN Helpline team assess each application and can quickly ensure hardship provision is made available. Our form of support includes providing hygiene packs, food, clothing and travel vouchers to facilitate travel to emergency accommodation.

Understanding the additional difficulties of Covid-19, MWNUK provided supermarket vouchers to women ahead of Eid in May 2020. Some of the women were residing in refuges, some had young children, and some were just really isolated and struggling financially and needed additional support during this global pandemic.

## Testimony - Hardship Fund Recipient

*"I have received a payment from MWN 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 MWN Helpline. You sisters made me feel worthy of help. Thank you...(the helpline worker) was so supportive and is continuing to support me. Jazakallah!"*



# CASE STUDY

## MWN HARSHIP FUND - AASHI'S STORY

Aashi contacted the MWN Helpline as she feared her ex-partner may locate her and sexually harass her. She was feeling particularly scared, lonely and isolated. Aashi also explained that due to her mental health issues, she was unable to work and dependent on benefits which were insufficient to cover her needs.

### How We Helped

The Helpline team provided Aashi with information of other support options, and safety advice. And the MWN Hardship Fund provided some immediate financial relief to help Aashi. Aashi really appreciated the holistic support offered, and felt more equipped to deal with her situation.

## How to Access the Hardship Fund



# OUR FUNDRAISERS

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

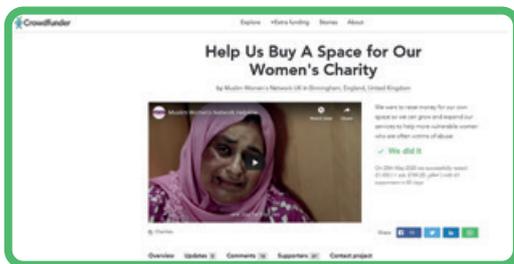
We also have long-term donors who regularly donate to help us with our work. They have individually donated hundreds and thousands of pounds over the years. Thank you for your generosity and commitment to our cause.

## A massive 'THANK YOU' to all our Fundraisers and Donors!

### FUNDRAISING HIGHLIGHTS THIS YEAR:

#### Crowdfunding

In May 2020 we crowdfunded £1400 with over 60 people donating to help more Muslim women and girls in need by supporting us to secure our own office space in Birmingham from where we can run and expand our services.



**£1400**  
raised, by  
**60**  
people

#### MWNUK Featured Supporters

While Covid-19 has meant that many fundraisers have had to halt their fundraising plans, we wanted to share a couple of examples of incredible women supporting women:

#### Marzana Islam

Marzana is fundraising in memory of her late grandmother who passed away from cancer. She plans on doing a bungee jump in the near future, and is raising funds for the MWN Hardship Fund.

*"I wanted to raise this money to this amazing organisation who have helped numerous women in need, and it's something I find inspiring."*

#### Team Snowdon

In 2019 a group of childhood friends, Salma, Tas, Saima, Mariya, Nazia, Sabah and their aunt decided to climb Mount Snowdon. With 'questionable fitness levels' they thought it would be a good idea to raise money for charity to spur them on. They decided the money raised will be split equally between the two charities: MWNUK and Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP), and are looking forward to completing this challenge soon.

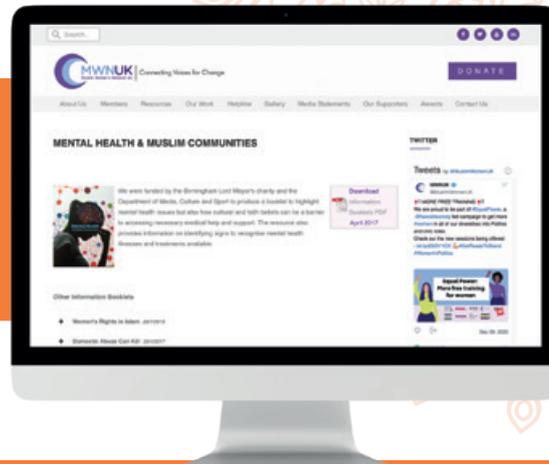
# MWNUK ONLINE

MWNUK has a strong online presence with 3 websites (mwnuk.co.uk, mwnhelpline.co.uk, mwnhub.com) and active social media feeds which we use to keep our members up to date, raise awareness of issues and campaign for change. We encourage you to explore our work further, share our resources, and get involved on our new member platform.

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

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

Our most downloaded information booklets from November 2019 to October 2020 have been:

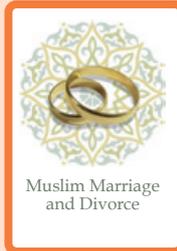


Mental Health & Muslim Communities



Downloads increased by

**78%**



Muslim Marriage and Divorce



Downloads increased by

**75%**



Domestic Abuse Can Kill



Downloads increased by

**58%**

## Resource Downloads

Type of Resource	Total downloads up until SEPTEMBER 2020	Total downloads up until SEPTEMBER 2019	Total downloads up until SEPTEMBER 2018	Total downloads up until SEPTEMBER 2017
Research Reports	18,989	16,868	11,821	8,578
Information Booklets	50,522	37,985	25,551	11,768
Consultation Responses	25,647	17,541	15,641	11,057
Media Statements	49,645	36,627	27,278	17,997
Evaluation Reports	2,085	1,460	833	319
Annual/Other Reports	8,827	6,682	6,496	4,194
<b>TOTAL DOWNLOADS</b>	<b>155,715</b>	<b>117,163</b>	<b>87,620</b>	<b>53,913</b>

## Our Social Media Accounts



Facebook

[@Muslim Women's Network UK](#)  
6,177 followers\*  
[@MWN UK Member](#)  
743 friends\*



Twitter

[@MuslimWomenUK](#)  
7,233 followers\*



Instagram

[@MuslimWomen](#)  
2,494 followers\*



YouTube

Muslim Women's Network UK  
Our videos have been viewed over 68,000 times in total\*

\*All statistics as at 1st November 2020 after running for only a month

# THE MWN HUB

www.mwnhub.com



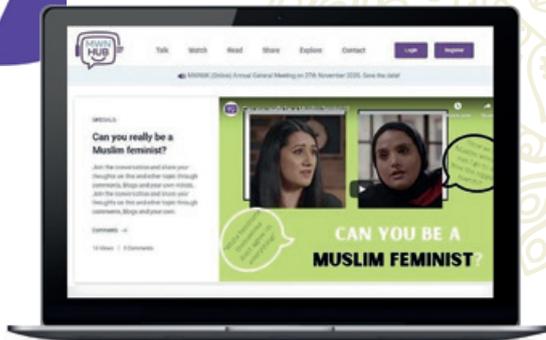
The MWN Hub is our new online member platform. After successfully piloting our 'We Rise' platform between March and July 2020 and collecting useful feedback from our users, we significantly upgraded functionality, re-branded and re-launched the website in October 2020.

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

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

**MWN HUB SOCIAL MEDIA**

- Twitter  
 @MWNHub  
 29 followers\*
- YouTube  
**MWN TV:** Our videos have been viewed 531 times in total



# ONGOING PROJECTS

## EQUAL POWER

Equal Power is a three-year campaign led by The Fawcett Society to get more women in all of our diversities into politics and civic roles. Partners to the project include; MWNUK, the Centenary Action Group, Citizens UK, 50:50 Parliament, Glitch-UK, and The Parliament Project.

### The project has provided the following:

- Training on how to successfully stand as an MP or local Councillor
- Events with current MPs and local Councillors sharing their stories
- Access to peer support circles and mentoring opportunities
- Training on how to be more civically active; e.g. as a Magistrate or Board Director
- Training on digital self-defence
- Training on community activism



MWNUK delivered the first of our events in February 2020 in Birmingham. However due to the pandemic we had to swiftly change our training model and have since then delivered our workshops online:

- **16 participants** attended the 'BAME Women Overcoming Barriers in Civic & Political Roles' workshop (February 2020)
- **35 participants** attended the 'Candid Conversations: On being a Local Councillor, a Woman, BAME and Muslim' workshop (July 2020)
- **48 participants** attended the 'Candid Conversations: On being a MP and a woman and BAME' workshop (July 2020)
- **86 participants** attended the 'Calling all BAME women: Explore Your Political Pathway' workshop. (July 2020)
- **64 participants** attended the 'Your Next Civic Role? Become a Magistrate in England and Wales' workshop (September 2020)
- **51 participants** attended the 'Next Civic Role? Take on a Board Role' workshop (September 2020)

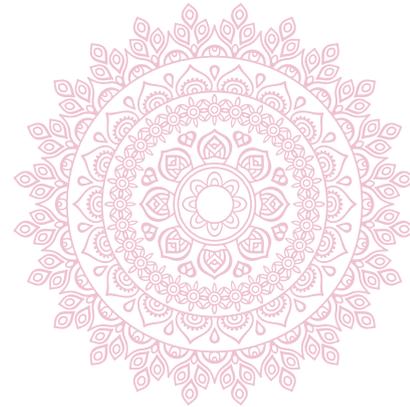
Details of these events can be found on our website.

# MENTAL HEALTH WORKSHOPS

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

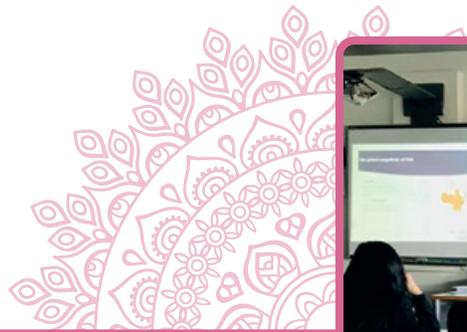
The aim of the workshops is to change attitudes towards mental health illness in Muslim communities. Myths and misconceptions are challenged, and knowledge is shared so that stigma and discrimination is reduced and those affected seek help sooner rather than later. The emphasis is on equipping attendees with skills as well as knowledge, so they know how to speak to someone with a mental health problem.

In November 2019, Iram delivered a workshop to attendees from the Idara-e-Jaaferiya mosque in Tooting. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 we have had to put training within the communities on hold and due to the nature of these particular workshops and the target audience, these cannot be held through online means.



Dr Iram Sattar and workshop attendees from Idara-e-Jaaferiya mosque in Tooting (November 2019)





Helpline Manager Shameem Hussain delivers FGM training (February 2020)

## AWARENESS RAISING TRAINING



For years, MWNUK have delivered awareness raising training on issues such as domestic abuse, forced marriage, child sexual exploitation, unconscious bias and discrimination and female genital mutilation (FGM). Grounded in the lived experiences of Muslim women and girls in the UK, our approach not only defines each of the issues and its occurrence in the UK, but also includes faith and culturally specific factors, and data from the MWN Helpline.

We deliver to a range of stakeholders, including; schools and colleges, other frontline services, police teams, and other professionals.

In February 2020, Helpline Manager Shameem Hussain delivered awareness-raising sessions on FGM at a school in Birmingham .

# ADVOCACY

Our advocacy work involves channeling views of Muslim women and girls to decision makers such as government and other public bodies. Importantly this year, we are now the Secretariat of the APPG on Muslim Women, which is co-chaired by Naz Shah MP (Labour) and Caroline Nokes MP (Conservative).

## APPG ON MUSLIM WOMEN

On the 20th October 2020, 88 participants attended the Inaugural Meeting of the APPG on Muslim Women.



At the meeting, Naz Shah MP (Labour Party) and Caroline Nokes MP (Conservative Party) were elected as Co-Chairs of this new APPG and the Muslim Women's Network UK were elected as Secretariat. Jess Phillips MP (Labour Party) and Nusrat Ghani MP (Conservative Party) were also elected as Vice-Chairs and Apsana Begum MP (Labour Party), Afzal Khan MP (Labour Party) and Baroness Meral Hussein-Ece (Liberal Democrat Party) were elected Officers.

Jess Phillips MP and Nusrat Ghani MP were also elected as Vice-Chairs and Apsana Begum MP, Afzal Khan MP and Baroness Meral Hussein-Ece were elected Officers.

The purpose of the APPG on Muslim women is:

*"to support social justice and equality for Muslim women and transform their lives by debating, scrutinising, investigating and raising awareness of issues affecting them to influence practice, policy, legislation and attitudes."*

MWNUK also announced the launch of its first inquiry: 'Muslim Women's Experiences of Maternity Care.' This much-needed research will be conducted by Dr Suriyah Bi and is funded by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (who are also funding the Secretariat support).

Given the shocking health disparities, the aim of this research is to develop an in-depth understanding of the experiences of Muslim women who have accessed maternity care in the last five years in England, and to better understand the different factors which have had an impact on the maternal health care received by them.

A Panel discussion also took place on the issues faced by Muslim women when accessing maternal health care services, and the need for more research. Speakers included Dr Edward (Eddie) Morris - President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and Shaista Gohir OBE - Co-Chair of MWNUK and Women's Voices Lead at the RCOG.

## Other advocacy activities this year have included:

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

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

# CONSULTATION RESPONSES

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

## COVID-19 Impact on People with Protected Characteristics Women's Equalities Committee (April 2020)

Muslim Women's Network UK responded to the Women's Equalities Committee on its inquiry investigating the impact of COVID-19 on people with protected characteristics. Within our Evidence we highlighted the range of issues that are being faced by Muslim and ethnic minority women in particular, including: increased risk of abuse; added financial strain especially when already on low incomes; detrimental impact on their physical and mental health due to added caring responsibilities.

We also highlighted the serious strain being put on specialist BAME services which assist vulnerable individuals, including victims of abuse, and urged more support for such services. We made a number of recommendations, including:

- The need for greater support for pregnant and new mothers, particularly due to increased risks of health complications as well as post-natal depression.
- Review 'pop up' listening services which have been launched during the pandemic as without appropriate training, such services could end up doing more harm than good.
- The need for gender and ethnicity disaggregated data so that the impact of Covid19 on BAME women can be properly assessed.
- Review existing funding practices and ring-fence funding for specialist BAME services.

## COVID-19: Domestic Abuse and Risks of Harm Within the Home

### Home Affairs (April 2020)

We responded to Home Affairs's Committee Inquiry into the Home Office's preparation for and response to Covid-19 (Domestic abuse and risks of harm within the home).

We highlighted the very real increase in abuse and risks of harm since the 'stay at home' guidance was issued, specifically because restrictions have been placed on victims and potential victims being able to safely seek support and advice or even take preparatory steps to escape without alerting their abuser to their plans.

MWNUK made clear that the following was urgently needed:

- More support for frontline organisations, particularly specialist BAME support services, to ensure that necessary, specialist support can continue to be provided to victims and potential victims of abuse. Faith and culturally sensitive counselling in particular needs to be prioritised.
- Temporary and permanent accommodation to be made available for victims facing abuse, and their children.
- Government must first take into account the lived realities of victims of abuse and takes steps to reduce financial dependency and destitution.
- Awareness raising campaigns are also necessary so that victims and potential victims (and their parents) are informed of the risks surrounding online grooming, so-called revenge pornography and sexual exploitation. This is especially important given that a lot more children and young adults will be spending time online.



## Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (August 2020)

Co-Chair Nazmin Akthar was called to give evidence to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. She discussed the many barriers stopping victims from seeking help, including the concepts of 'shame and honour', and the myths and stigma around mental health which make it all too easy to dismiss a victim's experiences. She also gave evidence of the different religious settings in which children and vulnerable adults may be abused (such as within *Madrassahs*, and through *Ruqiyah* and *Hijama* services).

Various recommendations were put forward, such as greater regulation of faith based services that work with children, requiring DBS checks for tutors providing *Qur'an* lessons and regulation of all counselling services.



Co-Chair Nazmin Akthar (August 2020)

## Other consultation responses included:

- **Victims Code Consultation**  
The Ministry of Justice  
Written Response  
September 2019
- **Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in Religious Settings**  
IICSA  
Written and Oral Evidence  
November 2019 & August 2020
- **Consultation on Carer's Leave**  
The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS)  
Written Response  
August 2020
- **Support for Victims of Domestic Abuse in the Workplace**  
The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS)  
Written Response  
September 2020

# LETTERS SIGNED IN SOLIDARITY

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

**November 2019**

## **When women MPs are forced to quit to stay safe, all of us suffer - Centenary Action Group**

Calling for all parties to condemn attacks and abuse of MPs and to commit in principle to a binding Joint Standard of Conduct which seeks to protect candidates during an election campaign and agrees a responsible framework for legitimate public debate.

**December 2019**

## **Domestic Abuse Bill - Womens Aid**

Over 100 organisations urged PM Boris Johnson to deliver a transformed Domestic Abuse Bill that delivers the changes survivors need.

**January 2020**

## **Safeguard Futures: End child marriage**

Supporting the raising of the minimum age for leaving education or training to 18, and therefore endorsing that childhood should be safeguarded as a time for learning and personal development.

**February 2020**

## **Manifesto to end FGM in the UK by 2030 - Action: FGM**

Calling for FGM to be eradicated worldwide by 2030, was delivered by ACTION: FGM, a coalition of FGM survivors, medical professionals, academics, think-tanks, and other organizations, including Equality Now.

**March 2020**

## **West Midlands Mayoral Election: Women and Girls Manifesto - Fawcett Society**

Due to COVID-19 the most vulnerable will not be able to participate in the elections and make their voices heard.

**March 2020**

## **Calling on the government to postpone all local and regional elections in the UK in response to rising rates of coronavirus**

Calling for women and girls in all their diversity to be visible, heard and have their needs met during the Coronavirus UK crisis response. Women are disproportionately affected by this pandemic due to a range of reasons.

**March 2020**

## **Coronavirus: Joint Call for Womens Visibility in UK Response - Fawcett Society**

Calling for women and girls in all their diversity to be visible, heard and have their needs met during the Coronavirus pandemic.

**April 2020**

## **Relief Packages for the Charitable Sector - Charity So White**

Open letter asking that BAME-led charities and voluntary groups are placed at the heart of the decision making process in respect of any relief packages for the charity sector.

**June 2020**

## **Istanbul Convention on violence against women - IC Change**

IC Change is a volunteer-led campaign for the UK Government to ratify the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence) to make it law in the UK – so that women and girls can live lives free from violence.

**June 2020**

## **Bullying and Harassment of House of Commons staff**

The Leader of the House has included the ability for MPs to debate IEP determinations as part of the new complaints process. This could mean that MPs would have the ability to debate complaints against themselves, which could deter those who had experiences bullying, harassment or sexual harassment from coming forward.

**August 2020**

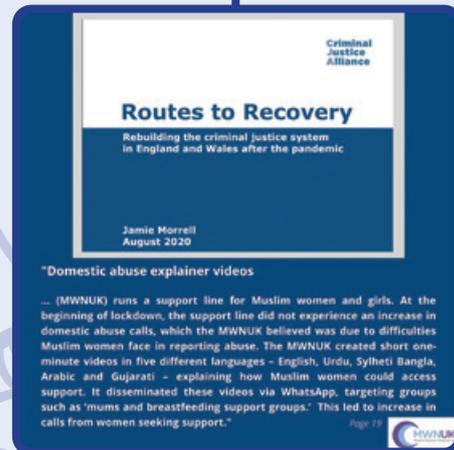
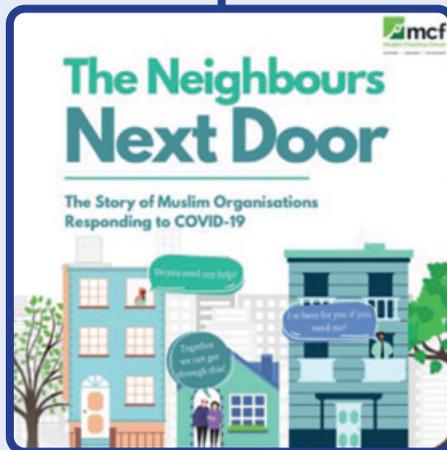
## **Ratify ILO C190 – NGO Coalition to end Violence and Harassment in the World of Work**

Open letter signed by over 550 organisations across the globe urging ratification of International Labour Organization Convention 190, which would recognize the right to a world of work free of abuse and harassment

# REPORT MENTIONS

MWNUK actively seek to share information and our knowledge of issues affecting Muslim women and girls with other organisations. Below are a few examples of where MWNUK has featured in published reports:

- NPC - Gender & Culture Informed Approaches (October 2020)
- Criminal Justice Alliance - Routes to Recovery (August 2020)
- Muslim Charities Forum - The Neighbours Next Door (July 2020)
- The Muslim Council of Britain - Together in Tribulation: British Muslims and the COVID-19 Pandemic (November 2020)



**Supporting victims of domestic abuse**

Shocking statistics revealed that domestic violence has surged since the start of the coronavirus lockdown. The UK's largest domestic abuse charity, Refuge, has reported a 700% increase in calls to its helpline in a single day[1], while a separate helpline for perpetrators of domestic abuse seeking help to change their behaviour received 25% more calls after the start of the COVID-19 lockdown[2].

But as the confinement drags on, the danger will, only intensify. Studies show that abusers are more likely to murder their partners and others in the wake of personal crises, including lost jobs or major financial setbacks. With COVID-19 ravaging the economy, such crises are predicted to become much more frequent.

**Case study**

The Muslim Women's Network (MWN) have been supporting women suffering domestic abuse in a time of crisis. Two-thirds of the enquiries to the MWN helpline are about some form of abuse or violence such as domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence, rape, sexual assault, childhood sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation, stalking and harassment.

Women over women being abused at home have increased with the nationwide lockdown that has been imposed. Women living with extended families may now have no safe space or time to call as they may be in more regular contact with their abusers. MWN has adjusted to operating from home equity and their confidential and non-judgmental approach has helped service users to access support when they need it the most.

**Gender and culture-informed approaches**

What they are and how to introduce them

Margery Ingham, Katie Bennett, Olaya Elyndra Bhatt

**Case study: The Muslim Women's Network UK**

The Muslim Women's Network UK runs a confidential and non-judgemental helpline offering information, support, guidance and referrals for Muslim women suffering from or at risk of abuse. Callers seek support on a diverse range of issues, from divorce and child custody to forced marriage, perpetrators of child sexual abuse and questions of faith and spirituality.

The website empowers the experience of and developing people based on their cultural background. Indeed, they develop a trusting, non-judgemental and open relationship with each individual which acknowledges how faith and culture influence her experience.

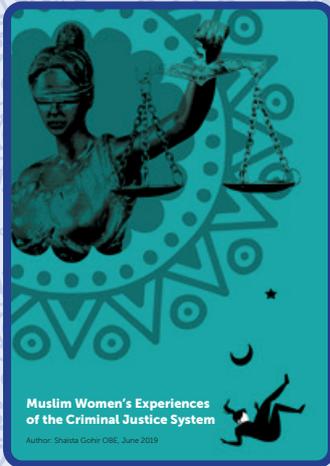
For instance, some services assume that—given her faith—Muslim women will not be missing their abusers. This assumption may be incorrect and trigger a woman's access to appropriate support. Instead, the team are trained to ask questions around faith and culture and working from a health and harm perspective, and to ask a trusting relationship that enables women who may feel particularly stigmatised by their abusers to talk about it.

The network supports helpline workers to recognise and respond to challenges women may face in a culturally sensitive way. For instance, the network reports that some women who contact their helpline following religious counselling may face their religious community being hostile, which may arise from a lack of religious marriage.

This content needs to be taken into account when considering the appropriate safeguarding response.

# POLICY INFLUENCING ACTIVITIES

Following the launch of the report 'Muslim Women's Experiences of the Criminal Justice System' the report has been widely disseminated to a broad range of stakeholders, and shared at the following events:



- **CPS Thames and Chiltern LSIP Meeting** (October 2019)
- **MWNUK Event- 'Muslim Women and the Criminal Justice System'** (November 2019)
- **Solicitors Regulation Authority Roundtable- 'Legal Services, Consumers and SRA strategy'** (December 2019).
- **Angelou Centre's Rethinking Safeguarding Conference** (December 2019)
- **Meeting with Victims Commissioner Dame Vera Baird** (December 2019)
- **Centenary Action Group and Fawcett Society** (January 2020)
- **Law Commission Roundtable on Laws around Intimate image Based Abuse** (March 2020)

## Law Commission Roundtable on Laws around Intimate Image Based Abuse (March 2020)

Co-Chair Nazmin Akthar shared findings from our research 'Muslim Women's Experiences of the Criminal Justice System' at a roundtable meeting with the Criminal Law Commissioner, Professor Penney Lewis. Nazmin put forward the case to criminalise situations where the fear of victims is exploited, irrespective of whether the content itself is of a sexual nature or not, highlighted the increased risks of harm for BAME victims and the links between intimate image based abuse and grooming gangs and other forms of abuse.



## Victims Commissioner Meeting

(December 2019)

Executive Director Faeza Vaid MBE and Co-Chair Nazmin Akthar had a meeting with Victims Commissioner Dame Vera Baird to discuss findings from our report, and actions that can be taken to address the issues raised.



Executive Director Faeza Vaid MBE & Co-Chair Nazmin Akthar with Victims Commissioner Vera Baird (December 2019)

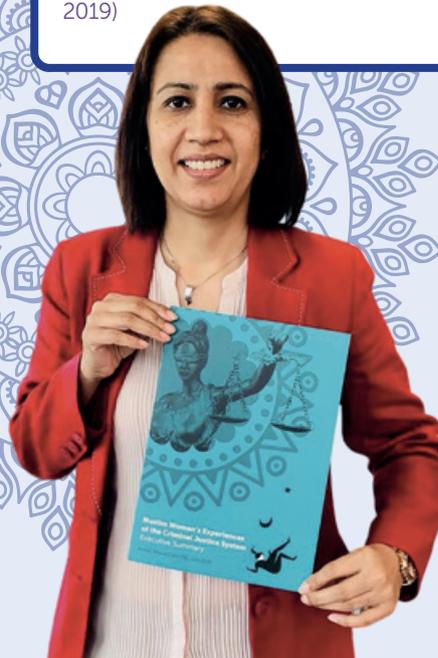
## Angelou Centre Conference

(December 2019)

Our Co-Chair Nazmin Akthar attended and spoke at Angelou Centre at their Rethinking Safeguarding conference. Drawing on case studies from our report 'Muslim women's experiences of the Criminal Justice System', she discussed various flaws including police delays causing loss of confidence.



Co-Chair Nazmin Akthar speaking on the barriers within the Criminal Justice System (December 2019)



# POLICY INFLUENCING ACTIVITIES

## ■ The UK Women's Budget Group's Commission on a Gender-Equal Economy Event (February 2020)

Executive Director Faeza Vaid MBE participated at the Women's Budget Group Commission on a Gender-Equal Economy event, discussing the issues faced by women in the North of England and the policy interventions that have helped, or could help, to address these. She highlighted the particular issues faced by BAME women.



Faeza Vaid MBE with the Women's Budget Group (February 2020)

## ■ Tell MAMA's West Midlands Advisory Board (22 July 2020)

Helpline Manager Shameem Hussain attended this meeting to share MWN Helpline data and lived experiences. Tell MAMA has several regional Advisory Boards across the UK. The aim of these Boards is to not only get members engaged with issues surrounding hate crime and anti-Muslim hatred in their local communities and be local representatives of Tell MAMA, but to also advise Tell MAMA on how we can best support these communities.

## ■ National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) Police Regional Leads & Stakeholders for Domestic Abuse (8 September 2020)

Helpline Manager Shameem Hussain attended along with representatives from the Crown Prosecution Service, Home Office, College of Policing, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the third sector.

Discussions included new developments, recommendations, and learnings as well as updates on the new Domestic Abuse Bill, new risk assessment tool, new perpetrator programme, Impact of Covid 19 on reporting DA to the police. Sharing resources, and ideas, learnings, lessons, good practice.

■ **Bespoke Stakeholders meeting surrounding Domestic Homicide Pilot - Domestic Homicide Project** (8 September 2020)

Helpline Manager Shameem Hussain attended to share MWN Helpline data and lived experiences. The Police representative provided updates on a new police-led project to collate and learn lessons from domestic homicides in England and Wales, to prevent future deaths and improve policing.

■ **Commission on Childhood Sexual Abuse and Exploitation** (20 October 2020)

Sajid Javid MP and the Centre for Social Justice launched this Commission in August 2020, to better understand the prevalence of child sexual exploitation/ abuse in the UK, to focus on how to prevent its occurrence, and to examine the UK's response to dealing with these issues. Given her expertise on this topic, Co-Chair Shaista Gohir OBE was invited to be a Commissioner on this group.

■ **Fawcett Society Commission on Pay and Progression of Women of Colour** (Ongoing)

Fawcett are working in partnership with the Runnymede Trust to deliver a project exploring the pay and progression of women of colour. The project aims to gather a clear picture of the points at which intersecting gender and ethnicity differences in pay and progression begin to set in, for different groups of women. Co-Chair Shaista Gohir OBE sits on this Advisory Group.

■ **Member of the Fawcett Society Commission on gender stereotypes in early childhood** (Ongoing)

Fawcett has launched an expert Commission on Gender Stereotypes in Early Childhood to build a new consensus on the impact gender stereotypes have and how, together, we can end them. The Commission will run until 2020, and Co-Chair Nazmin Akthar sits on this Advisory Group.

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

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

# CAMPAIGNING

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



# PARTNERSHIP CAMPAIGNING

MWNUK have actively worked in partnership with other organisations to advance equality and social justice for women and girls.

## Day of Memory - West Midlands Police Sentinel Team (July 2020)

To help increase awareness of forced marriage and honour-based violence, MWNUK joined the West Midlands Police 'Stop Forced Marriage' campaign and held a competition, to coincide with the National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Honour Based Violence on the 14th of July.

We asked entrants to create a henna design that included the hashtags #Stopforcedmarriage or #MychoiceMylife, and the winner of a £50 voucher was Amrinder Bahia.



## Centenary Action Group (Ongoing)

The Centenary Action Group (CAG) is a cross-party campaigning coalition of activists, politicians and women's rights organisations working together to eradicate the barriers to women's political participation. MWNUK have been active members since 2018, and Executive Director Faeza Vaid MBE has been on its steering group since May 2020.

Their current campaigns include:

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

# EVENTS

Where resource allows, the MWNUK team actively attends events, speaks at other events and holds our own events. This year's highlight was certainly our International Women's Day featured event: 'An Audience with amina wadud':

## An Audience with amina wadud (March 2020)

Professor amina wadud has been at the forefront of the Islamic feminist movement for decades. As a scholar of the Qur'an, her publications include "Quran and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective" (1999) and "Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam" (2006).

Her work demonstrates the influence of patriarchy on interpretations of the Qur'an and how the practices of Muslims have come to restrict the Qur'anic message of equality and justice.

One of the key arguments she makes is that patriarchy is a form of shirk (making partners to God) because by placing men above women it contradicts the Qur'anic vision of equal and reciprocal relationships and violates the requirement that God is supreme.

amina shared her journey to Islam, the challenges she has faced, and how she feels equality and justice can be realised in Muslim communities.



The MWNUK team with amina wadud (March 2020)

## Support for Pregnant Muslim Women in the West Midlands (April 2020)

Executive Director Faeza Vaid MBE spoke at a virtual roundtable with the Chief Midwifery Officer for England, Professor Jacqueline Dunkley Bent. She highlighted the support needed for pregnant Muslim women in West Midlands, the issues and additional barriers faced by Muslim women, and how MWNUK provides support.

## Musawah - Women Against Extremism Conference - Malaysia

(October 2019)

Co-Chair Shaista Gohir OBE attended the international conference, Women Rising Against Extremism, hosted by Sisters in Islam in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Shaista spoke about rising conservatism in Islam particularly in the context of how this impacts on Muslim minority communities in the UK such as how gender equality is sometimes undermined.

## National Refugee Women's Conference

(February 2020)

Executive Director Faeza Vaid MBE spoke at the conference in Birmingham organised by 'Women for Refugee Women'. Women for Refugee Women launched their new research that documents the experiences of over 100 destitute asylum-seeking women. Faeza spoke on how cases for refugees and asylum seekers is often complex, how more resource is needed, and we can together help rebuild lives with dignity.



Executive Director Faeza Vaid MBE speaking at the National Refugee Women's Conference

## Faithful Feminist Conference

(March 2020)

Executive Director Faeza Vaid MBE, delivered a workshop and shared the experiences of Muslim women who access our MWN Helpline at the 'Faithful Feminist Conference', held by the SAFE Communities Project (which is a project of Standing Together Against Domestic Violence). The event also saw the official launch of the Faith & VAWG Coalition.



Faeza Vaid MBE at the Faithful Feminist Conference

## British Pakistan Foundation Social

(March 2020)

Co-Chair Shaista Gohir OBE shared her journey and the journey of MWNUK at the 'British Pakistan Foundation Social', and discussed the challenges overcome and achievements made both personally and professionally.



Shaista Gohir OBE at the British Pakistan Foundation Social

## March4Women (March 2020)

As part of our International Women's day activities we marched along at Care International UK's 'March4Women', and even met with Jeremy Corbyn along the way! This year, the march celebrated the power and passion of women and girls who are on the frontline of responding to climate change. There were speeches from many inspirational women, including Dr Shola Mos-Shagbamimu, Helen Pankhurst, Bianca Jagger, Himesh Patel, Nicola Coughlan, Nikita Gill and Jude Kelly CBE, and music from Emeli Sande, Raye, Bond and the Urban Voices Collective.



Co-chair Shaista Gohir OBE and Treasurer Dr Iram Sattar at the March4Women event, pictured with Jeremy Corbyn

## Criminal Justice Alliance - Members Event (Virtual) (13 July 2020)

Co-Chair Shaista Gohir OBE, spoke at the Criminal Justice Alliance held virtually about the needs of Muslim women in the criminal justice system particularly in the light of the Covid pandemic. She also highlighted some of the findings and recommendations from the MWNUK report on 'Muslim Women's Experience of the Criminal Justice System, which she authored. The keynote speaker at the event was Alex Chalk MP, the Justice Minister with responsibility for race disparity, victims and domestic violence.

## **Charity Governance (Prospectus, NPC and Clothworkers)** (September 2020)

Prospectus, NPC and Clothworkers held a joint event on Charity Governance. The event was Chaired by the Executive Chair of Prospectus, David Gold. MWNUK Co-Chair Shaista Gohir OBE spoke at the event about board response during the first 8 weeks from lockdown and what changed in the ways of working with Muslim women.

## **NPC Ingnites - National Annual Conference** (October 2020)

Co-Chair Shaista Gohir OBE spoke on a panel chaired by NPC trustee Delroy Corinaldi - Trustee of NPC, about how MWNUK has been recovering and rebuilding during the Covid pandemic including identifying and harnessing opportunities and also how we are making better use of technology to improve and change the way we reach Muslim women.

Other speakers included:

- Baroness Barran (Minister for Civil Society)
- Cassie Robinson (National Lottery Fund)
- Julian McCrae (Engage Britain)
- Caroline Abrahams (Director of Age UK)

## **The Power of Women's Leadership in Times of Crisis Event** (November 2020)

Executive Director Faeza Vaid MBE, chaired this event hosted by Big Tent Ideas. Speakers discussed the importance of women and girls' equal participation at the UN Climate Change Conference and how diverse women's voices are essential to tackle climate crisis.

Partners of the event were CARE International UK, ActionAid, Centenary Action Group, Plan International UK and Women's Environmental Network.

## **Community Practitioners & Health Visitors Associations National Conference** (November 2020)

Co-Chair Shaista Gohir OBE spoke at the national annual conference about how health visitors and community nurses can better meet the needs of Muslim women when providing healthcare during and after pregnancy, especially identifying signs of domestic abuse and mental health concerns.

# MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

## ENGAGING WITH MEDIA

Over the years MWNUK has regularly been asked to comment and contribute to mainstream, international and niche broadcast and print media, on a range of issues affecting Muslim communities in Britain. This year, this included:

### Podcast with Sky News Faeza - Dermot Murnaghan (April 2020)

Executive Director Faeza Vaid MBE joined the 'Daily with Dermot Murnaghan' podcast, and joined other faith leaders to discuss faith in lockdown, and in particular how Muslim communities were adjusting to Ramadan in lockdown.

### Unity FM 'Parenting Hour' (April 2020)

Executive Director Faeza Vaid MBE appeared on Unity FM's 'Parenting Hour' show to speak about domestic abuse, and how to get support, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic.

### Ramadan Radio London's 'Positive Minds Show' (May 2020)

Executive Director Faeza Vaid MBE appeared on Ramadan Radio London's 'Positive Minds Show' as part of Mental Health Awareness Week 2020.

### British Muslim TV (October 2020)

Co-Chair Shaista Gohir OBE was on 'The Naz Shah Show' on British Muslim TV. Shaista spoke on a range of issues including our APPG on Muslim Women, how to tackle misogyny in Muslim communities, and Shaista also shared advice on how to achieve your aims despite the barriers that come in the way of women.



Co-chair Shaista Gohir OBE with Naz Shah MP on British Muslim TV (October 2020).

### Radio 4 - The Corrections (November 2020)

Co-Chair Shaista Gohir OBE participated in the episode 'Trojan Horse: The kingpin' of the podcast 'The Corrections'. The series revisits news stories that left the public with the wrong idea about what really happened and investigates how and why the narrative went awry. Shaista shared her views about how the voices of Muslim women were excluded from the narrative at the time.

## Child Sexual Exploitation and Grooming Gangs - BBC Newsnight (January 2020)

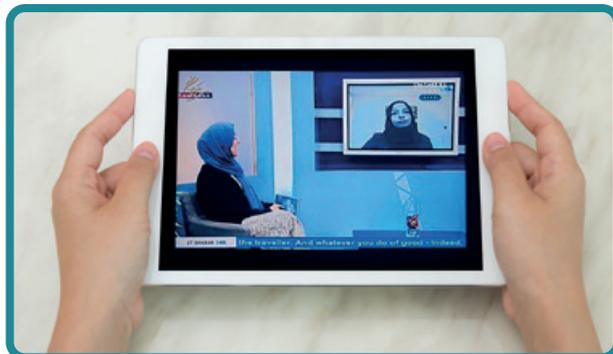
Co-Chair Shaista Gohir OBE was on BBC Newsnight discussing child sexual exploitation and grooming gangs, and highlighting that CSE is ultimately driven by misogyny. As our research has consistently highlighted, Muslim and South Asian girls are also victims of grooming and it is important to not ignore their experiences. Whilst Pakistani men also featured heavily in our research, our findings highlighted that perpetrators come from all backgrounds. More research is certainly needed and safeguarding must come first.



Co-Chair Shaista Gohir OBE on BBC Newsnight (January 2020)

## Impact of Covid-19 on Domestic Abuse and Mental - Islam Channel (April 2020)

Executive Director Faeza Vaid MBE was on Islam Channel TV discussing the issues surrounding domestic abuse and mental health matters which have been magnified as a result of Covid-19 crisis. Faeza also discussed ways in which our MWN Helpline is providing support and advice during this difficult time and urged individuals to seek help no matter what the issue.



Executive Director Faeza Vaid MBE on Islam Channel (April 2020)

# MEDIA MENTIONS

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

**08.03.2020**

**Stylist**

11 inspiring charities that deserve your attention this International Women's Day

**15.05.2020**

**Daily Mail**

Muslim Women's Network UK Britain's biggest Islamic authorities say child sexual abuse in Muslim communities is 'underreported' because young victims are too scared to tell anyone about it

**20.05.2020**

**Parentology**

Sexual Abuse Underestimated in Muslim Community

**22.05.2020**

**UK Fundraising**

Muslim Women's Network UK Seven charities win share of £35,000 in 2020 Charity Governance Awards

**09.06.2020**

**theiPaper**

'He began stalking me': Muslim women have been duped into fake marriages and assaulted by men from matrimonial sites

**11.09.2020**

**The Sun**

CULTURE CLASH My girlfriend hasn't told her family about me because they want her to marry a Muslim

**15.09.2020**

**Asian Voice**

Reluctance to donate organs is not necessarily about religion

**05.10.2020**

**Financial Times**

Letter: Call for enactment of key Equality Act provision

**19.10.2020**

**Civil Society**

Charities could be sued over coronavirus safeguarding failings, conference told

**23.10.2020**

**UK Fundraising**

New categories & prizes for 2021 Charity Governance Awards

**30.10.2020**

**The Muslim News**

MPs set up all-party group on Muslim women

**30.10.2020**

**Bradford Telegraph and Argus**

Naz Shah MP hosts new show on British Muslim TV

**30.10.2020**

**Asian Image**

MP to host own show on British Muslim TV

## MEDIA STATEMENTS

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

- **17/02/2020**  
**Urgent Law Reform Needed to Govern Religious-only Marriages**
- **03/06/2020**  
**Action is Needed Now to Tackle Racial Discrimination, Inequalities and Social Injustices**
- **20/10/2020**  
**Launch of new APPG on Muslim Women**

# FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND ACCOUNTS

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

	2020 (£)	2019 (£)
<b>INCOME</b>		
Voluntary Income (grants and donations)*	238,668	315,839
Activities Generating Funds	5,787	423
Investment Income (Interest Receivable)	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>244,455</b>	<b>316,262</b>

<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Cost of Running Charitable Activities	230,331	290,183
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>230,331</b>	<b>290,183</b>

<b>RESERVES</b>		
Retained Surplus for the Financial Year	14,124	26,079
Total Reserves Brought Forward	80,913	54,834
Rounding error	-1	0
<b>Total Reserves Carried Forward**</b>	<b>95,036</b>	<b>80,913</b>

\*Of the £238,668 voluntary income, £13,984 is donations of which £5870 is restricted.

\*\* Of the £95,036 reserves, £23,114 are restricted and £71,922 are unrestricted

## Independent Auditors

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





# RECOGNITION AND THANKS

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



GARDEN COURT CHAMBERS



And others

# THANK YOU!

# Support Us

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

## Make a Donation

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

- Donate by via PayPal  
Go to [www.mwnuk.co.uk](http://www.mwnuk.co.uk) and click DONATE.
- Donate by Cheque  
Make cheque payable to:  
Muslim Women's Network UK  
The Warehouse  
54-57 Allison Street  
Digbeth  
Birmingham  
B5 5TH.

## Fundraise

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

### Organise an Event

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

### Do a Sponsored Activity

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

## Spread the Word

Help spread the word about our work:

- MWNUK
- The MWN Helpline
- The MWN Hub

### You can raise awareness through:

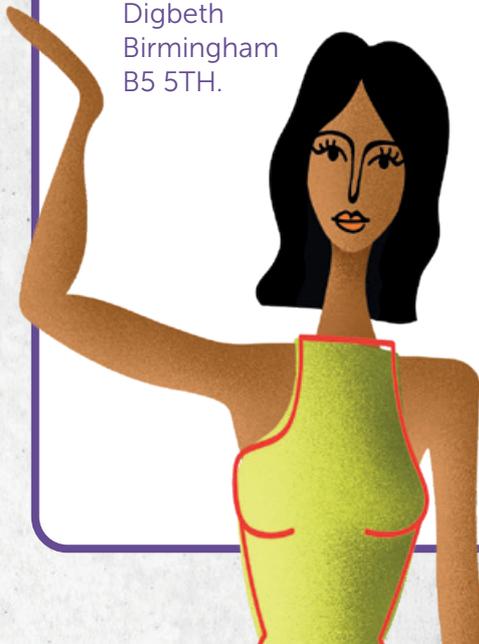
- Sharing and using our work
- Disseminating our resources
- Inviting others to join in
- Connecting and sharing on Social Media

If you are interested please email [contact@mwnuk.co.uk](mailto:contact@mwnuk.co.uk)

## Volunteer

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

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





## Some fundraising tips to help you:

- **Understand your 'why'**  
Why are you fundraising?
- **Set a target**  
How much do you want to raise? And how will the money be used?
- **Set a timescale**  
People often need targets - especially if you're fundraising as a group, when do you want to do the activity by?
- **Who else do you need?**  
Are you fundraising yourself or do you need volunteers?
- **Go for it!**  
There's no time like the present! Remember: every little helps.

**We wish you all the best of health and prosperity.**





**W: [mwnuk.co.uk](http://mwnuk.co.uk)**

**E: [contact@mwnuk.co.uk](mailto:contact@mwnuk.co.uk)**

**T: 0121 236 9000**

Muslim Women's Network UK (2020)

Charity Number: 1155092

Company Limited by Guarantee Number: 06597997

Any enquiries related to this publication should be sent to us at:

Muslim Women's Network UK

The Warehouse

54-57 Allison Street

Digbeth

Birmingham

B5 5TH