

**22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017**

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **Muslim Women's Network UK Launches New Sports and Wellbeing Initiative**

This year to mark the national [Women's Sport Week](#) (19 - 25 June 2017), Muslim Women's Network UK (MWNUK) has launched its new sports and wellbeing arm to:

- a) Encourage more Muslim women and girls to take up sports including increasing the profile of those already participating at a competitive level
- b) Improve physical wellbeing and mental health by encouraging sports and exercise
- c) Use sports for empowerment and building confidence and leadership skills
- d) Use sports as a conduit to address women's rights issues including challenging abuse
- e) Use sports to promote integration and cohesion

To help develop ideas and provide expert advice to further these aims, MWNUK has recruited [Janie Frampton](#) as a Patron. Janie, who has been a football referee for 26 years (including in men's football), has been the national referee manager for the FA and was instrumental in overturning the FIFA headscarf ban.

MWNUK's first sports and wellbeing initiative has involved partnering with the ICC Women's World Cup to encourage women to watch the India v Pakistan match in Derby on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2017 by offering [free tickets](#).

MWNUK Executive Director, Faeza Vaid, said: *"Research shows that there is also a close relationship between physical and mental health. For example regular exercise can lower anxiety and depression. Given the number of calls we receive on our helpline relating to isolation, depression and self-harm, counselling should not be the only solution to improve mental health and wellbeing. Through our sports initiative, we therefore hope to raise awareness of the importance and benefits of exercise."*

She added: *"Muslim women also tend to have lower levels of physical activity than the general population, which results in increased risk of obesity, diabetes and heart disease. Exercise will also contribute to improved health outcomes."*

MWNUK also recognises that sports can play a role in bringing communities together. In the current climate it is vital to provide opportunities that forge strong new friendships and bring about more cohesive, tolerant and inclusive communities that value diversity.

Ends

### Note to Editors

#### 1. About Us

Muslim Women's Network UK is a national charity that works to improve social justice and equality for Muslim women and girls and operates a national helpline. We find out about their experiences through research and helpline enquiries and produce resources, deliver campaigns and conduct advocacy work, regularly engaging with government.

MWNUK organisational website: [www.mwnuk.co.uk](http://www.mwnuk.co.uk)

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

MWN Helpline contact info: 0800 999 5768 / 0303 999 5786 / [info@helpline.co.uk](mailto:info@helpline.co.uk)

## 2. Media Contacts

Media spokespeople from Muslim Women's Network UK are:

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