

Nothing about us, without US

*Apna Haq's written submissions for the Equality Impact
Assessment of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's decision
to award the contract for Floating Support Service for BME Women
Experiencing Domestic Abuse to a non-BME provider*

Apna Haq and Imkaan
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1. Notes and Acronyms

All citations are listed in full in the Appendix. Most are from supporting letters provided by stakeholders, all of which are attached at appendix 1. If we have omitted or misquoted anything, please contact for clarification.

All quotes in pink are directly from current and ex-service users of Apna Haq and are key pieces of evidence for this submission. The translations have been undertaken as accurately as possible, hence the grammatical errors.

Acronyms:

AH: Apna Haq

Black: used interchangeably with BME and BMER unless otherwise specified

BME : Black and Minority Ethnic - used interchangeably with BMER and Black

BMER: Black and Minority Ethnic and Refugee- used interchangeably with BME and Black

DV: Domestic Violence

Generic/ mainstream services: For the purposes of this submission, these terms refer to non-BME led services, including VAWG specialist services that may have BME staff but are not BME-led by and for

RMBC: Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Specialist services: *'are designed and delivered by and for the users and communities they aim to serve. They may be delivered by a range of equality-led organisations including Disabled People's Organisations, Women's Voluntary and Community Organisations (VCOs), LGBT VCOs and BME VCOs. Many specialist services have developed in response to this historic failure of generic services to meet the needs of BME communities. They provide services sensitive to cultural, religious and linguistic needs that generic services often overlook and reach communities that other providers label 'hard to reach' (Voice4Change and NAVCA 2012).*

VAWG : Violence Against Women and Girls.

2. Who we are

Apna Haq

Apna Haq is a Rotherham based advice centre led by and for Black and Minority Ethnic Women. Apna Haq opened its doors in 1994 and has supported over 2000 women and children in that time. Apna Haq offers a unique space for BME women to meet with other BME women for support, advice, friendship and skill-sharing and has worked for 21 years to develop extensive community based life saving networks throughout the diverse BME communities of Rotherham. Apna Haq is a truly service user led organisation, with 80% of it's board being made up of current and ex-service users and over 60% of it's referrals coming from women themselves. Apna Haq is recognised in international, national and local networks as a leading example of best practice in working with survivors of violence to support the development of women's safety, stability, resilience and autonomy, and has shared it's innovative approaches on local, national and international platforms.

Under the floating support contract, Apna Haq offers confidential, one to one support for BME women and their children who are survivors of Violence Against Women and Girls. The service provides support and information regarding housing, the police, solicitors, refuge, benefits, NHS, school and education and courts. Apna Haq has delivered the floating support service for 14 years and has consistently achieved excellent results.

Imkaan

Imkaan is a human rights organisation, with national membership, representing the expertise and perspectives of frontline specialist Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women's services that work to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls (VAWG). Our core work involves: operating as a co-ordinated strategic voice for frontline BME VAWG services; undertaking strategic advocacy, sector development and support, research, publications, accredited training, peer education, community engagement and consultancy; and seeking to promote positive attitudes, recognition, and the effective inclusion of BME women and girls' experiences and needs.

In relation to this submission, Imkaan provided support to Apna Haq in their preparation of evidence. Our role in this process has been to support Apna Haq board, staff, stakeholders and service users to collate the evidence contained here. The views and expertise contained in this document represent the views and lived experiences of the women connected to Apna Haq, not necessarily Imkaan.

3. Introduction

Apna Haq board, service users and staff (hereafter referred to as 'the women of Apna Haq') and stakeholders, as local and national experts in the provision of services to Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) survivors of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), strongly believe that the decision to award the contract for floating support for BME women experiencing domestic abuse in Rotherham to a non-BME provider will have significant adverse impacts on marginalised members of BME communities in Rotherham, most particularly BME women and BME children, including BME mothers, BME pregnant women, BME young people and Muslim women and children.

We, the women of Apna Haq, are concerned that this decision will have adverse impacts in relation to the following public sector duties as laid out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation
2. Advance equality of opportunity:
 - Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
 - Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
3. Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low:
 - Tackle prejudice,
 - Promote understanding.

Our Chair Langathani Nkomo states: **Apna Haq is value for money, we bring so much to Rotherham and we are being punished for that. As a mother, if I go to the shop with £5 and bring back £10 worth of food for my family, is that not a good thing? That is what Apna Haq does for BME women and children in Rotherham, but this is not recognised. It is not seen**

We, the women of Apna Haq, and our stakeholders have worked around the clock to gather evidence to inform your assessment. For many of us, English is a second language so we have also had to have evidence translated in this time period. Due to the tight deadline to prepare for this submission (12 working days in addition to our regular life and work commitments) this document is not as comprehensive or as polished as we would like it to be. Please overlook the errors, contact us for any clarifications and look to the content and the clear voices of BME women and girls of Rotherham stating our case and asserting our rights.

4. Unique needs of BME women in Rotherham

There is no doubt that BME women and children have unique needs. Research and current policy *recognises and supports this, and understanding of this is evident in the government's current strategy to end VAWG*, which highlights the need for women only services, and in particular recognises the unique and different needs of BME women and the need for specialist BME *women's services to meet these* (Pollard 2015).

Census data collected in 2011 highlights that BME communities of Rotherham are a growing minority with the BME population in Rotherham doubling over the last ten years. The census further found that 43% of Rotherham residents born outside the UK have been in the UK for less than 7 years, suggesting a high number of newly arrived migrants in the area. The census also showed the faith composition of Rotherham is changing, with the number of Muslims in Rotherham nearly doubling in the last 10 years.

The data helps us to contextualise the experiences of BME women living in Rotherham, and gives us an insight into the emerging needs in Rotherham amongst BME women, particularly for those who are newly arrived and/or hold a Muslim identity.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on VAWG has noted the particular vulnerabilities of such communities, stating in her most recent country report: BME women were more likely to be living in a deprived area, more likely to be subject to poverty, to have experienced the state care system and to find it harder to access educational opportunities. She went on to note the particular vulnerabilities of asylum seeking women: 85% of [asylum seeking women] claimed they had been raped, tortured or both in their country of origin (Manjoo 2015).

As one stakeholder put it, BME women remain one of the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in our society. Yet as growing evidence and research shows in many parts of the country including Rotherham, they are under-served by their local authorities and generic organisations. Many abused BME women have extremely low socio-economic status and are located in some of the most socially deprived areas in the UK such as Rotherham. In February 2005, for instance, the Fawcett Society produced a report based on research on BME women in the UK. It concluded that as a whole, black and minority ethnic women face discrimination on the grounds of both their gender and their ethnicity. And that in some areas, sexism and racism combine to create an intensity of discrimination that far exceeds the impact of any single strand (Patel 2015).

Whilst recognising that VAWG affects all women, it raises particular issues for BME women who face many barriers to seeking help. BME women stay longer in violent relationships, taking longer to seek help and often knowing little about existing support services. The longer the abuse continues, the less likely BME women are to disclose to others or to leave (Yoshiaka et al 2003; Gill 2004). BME women are disproportionately impacted by particular forms of VAWG and are likely to experience simultaneous, multiple and recurring forms of VAWG (Thiara and Roy 2012). The complex nature of the domestic abuse experienced by BME women includes the harmful practices of so-called 'Honour' Based Violence, Forced Marriage, and Female Genital Mutilation, often perpetrated by multiple family members and others in communities (Mullan-Feroze 2015).

BME women face considerable family pressure to keep the family together, particularly if they have children and they also face community and cultural pressure in relation to their family's reputation. It is also known that BME/South Asian women face post-separation violence of greater intensity and frequency, by several perpetrators and for longer periods, in some cases lasting for more than 5 years. As well as these barriers at a personal and family level, BME women face other barriers simultaneously in that their isolation and disempowerment results in them not knowing how to seek help or how to access services (Roy and Thiara 2012).

It is this combination and range of barriers that makes specialist services so essential for BME women facing domestic violence. We the women of Apna Haq and all our stakeholders understand that to effectively address these complex issues there is a need for BME women only space and BME women only provision. For many BME women, support and help is much more accessible where it is embedded into the community as BME women are more likely to talk to friends and family before any generic services about their experiences of abuse (Roy and Thiara 2012). BME women have unique needs and therefore require unique types of support:

BME women often require high and intensive levels of support over a longer period of time. This can include practical help, risk management strategies, advocacy with statutory and legal agencies, general emotional support, specialist counselling and basic life skills to support *independent living... BME women also require high levels of support to reduce risk of significant harm and homicide by planning and implementing safety plans based on understanding the specific pressures and threats BME women face from intimate partners, families and communities nationally and internationally* (Mullan-Feroze 2015).

When I had my situation I did want to leave. Where would I go? Who do I turn to? Where do I get the support? There was nowhere to go no one to speak to and totally no support for me to access.

There was no financial support or communication support and even often being stabbed when I left the hospital the police did not guide me to any supportive group or organisation. I was left alone and isolated and unsupported. The thought of my situation is horrendous and I felt helpless and isolated with no one to communicate with. I wanted to commit suicide. I wanted to jump through the window. I never wanted to be alone with the man I was married. I felt isolated and always uncomfortable. It was not even look at programs I enjoyed on the television. Once I was almost killed for talking to the church minister.

We know also how experiences of domestic violence impact on many aspects of women's lives, including their mental health. There is considerable evidence that certain symptoms of/reactions to abuse are more prevalent in some communities. For example, Asian women under 35 are at least twice as likely to self harm as white British women. Domestic violence, including forced marriage, has been identified as a major factor in 49% of suicide attempts made by black women compared to 22% of suicide attempts by white women (Bhugra & Desai 2002, Bhardwaj 2001).

It is important to note here that a quarter of women said they had left an abusive partner earlier, before receiving BME specific support, but returned. 40% of the women had been in a violent relationship for over five years. These facts further reinforce the extent to which the barriers are felt by BME women (Thiara and Roy 2012).

Because of the nature of the abuse we have experienced, it is very important for me to be in a service that is women only ... *I have found male workmen in the refuge very disturbing and intrusive*

I wouldn't want to be involved in a service where victims and perpetrators are both supported- where will the workers loyalties lie?

BME services should be provided by BME women workers because there is a familiarity with the culture. I feel comfortable telling another woman who understands me and gets my culture

BME services working in partnership with other services need to 'vet' the other services for racist and discriminatory practices

Beyond the unique needs that arise out of the contexts of migration and VAWG, when asked about their experiences of living in Rotherham, BME women talked about the racism and faith based abuse they experience on a daily basis. Women talked about feeling like second class citizens,

and having to take actions like self-imposed curfews in order to stay safe. Women noted a marked increase in racism and Islamaphobia over recent years and linked it to the reporting of Child Sexual Exploitation issues:

We are stopped from going out –I don't go out after 5pm

Even if I see four white people in a group I am afraid to walk past

When I was wearing my scarf- some one in town pushed against me really hard and just ran off

It was the EDL march this Saturday- and it was Eid- as a single parent I was too scared to go out- I had planned to go to my friend's and then go together to Next sales but I was too scared so I did not go anywhere- I stayed at home

While I was driving, a white woman was swearing at me and the kids

Cashier at ASDA could see I was struggling I had my disabled son with me, but she just sat there not doing anything to help with my packing

English boy passed me and said '##--ing Muslim' so I said I am Muslim what are you going to do about it so he put his head down in shame

They treat us like second class citizens

Before... [white people were] really nice said hello, you had conversations, they gave help and support. Now suddenly changed to the extent that don't even say hello

They've taken our rights away - make us feel that we can't live here -we have no place here-look at my colour and punish me

Children are also impacted on because of school life -outside of the home-treatment on streets- racist comments and behaviors

Also feeling of mistreatment and inequality- teacher's lack of understanding- really feel differently treated as a result of CSE scandal

Neighbor brings his dog into my garden to do his [toileting]-I have reported this and now he still brings his dog to wee in my garden

Knowing that this is an Asian household-beer cans/bottles are thrown in the front garden

From the above comments, the context of racism and exclusion that BME women in Rotherham are operating in is clear. The resulting needs of marginalised communities of BME women have been documented:

For BME women, the traumatic experiences of domestic, sexual and so called honour based violence are further compounded in the context of multiple forms of oppression they face in the UK. These include racism, in the community and within the state machinery, lack of services for those with no recourse to public funds and lack of responsiveness to specific needs within mainstream services. The diversity of identities and intersectionality of circumstances is only one dimension in a range of other concerns in combating violence against women and girls.

It is the right of every woman and girl to be free from discrimination, oppression and violence in any form and the argument for BME services is located within this rights based framework. BME specialist services recognise the lived experiences of BME women and uphold their right to services that do not repeat victimization and facilitate a journey of empowerment for survivors of violence.

Mainstreaming should not seek to replace the role of user-led specialist organisations, but through *recognising race inequality as everybody's problem, should ensure support for BME communities and individuals* (NAVCA and Voice for Change 2012).

It is important that the full context of BME women and girls lives in Rotherham are taken into consideration when determining what the most appropriate services are to meet these unique needs. It is clear from the above that a service with developed expertise around VAWG issues alone may not be enough to meet the needs of marginalised groups of BME women experiencing racism, street harassment, exclusion and fear, particularly if that service is predominantly staffed and used by women from the dominant community and does not provide any opportunities for developing new networks with other BME women:

There is an urgent need for more specialist BME women's organisations and services... generic organisations do not have an understanding of the specific nature of violence faced by Bme women and are unable to support them adequately.. because of the impact of increasing racism and Islamophobia many BME women and girls are reluctant (or even unable) to access generic services (Wilson 2015) .

The lack of understanding of the need for BME specialist services has been noted by Rashida Manjoo: ... the insufficient attention paid to the particular intersections of violence, poverty and structural inequality, which is experienced by black and minority ethnic women and which places them at particular risk of suffering depression, anxiety and mental health issues ...*[particularly so]* in smaller towns where women are often further isolated from their support networks and families (Manjoo 2015).

5. How Apna Haq meets the needs of BME women and children

It would be plain common sense to suggest that the marginalised BAME communities have *multiple identities and are diverse within groups themselves. Even notions of 'religion' and 'faith' within groups are diverse. BAME communities are also not by definition 'faith' groups*, in as much as white British people are not by definition Protestant, or homogeneous in terms of class. There are multiple economic, social, racial, ethnic, and faith identities, as there are multiple experiences of life itself. In defining policy, we should think of people as multiple whole beings within themselves and reinforce equal economic, civic and human rights rather than ethnic marginalised *identities to be accommodated in the 'core'*" (Bam-Hutchison 2011).

BME VAWG led by and for organisations are best placed to meet the needs of BME women and girls, and to provide effective and long lasting prevention and early intervention programmes for BME communities. Imkaan recently presented for Lloyds Foundation around the unique aspects of quality BME VAWG services that enable them to reach BME women more effectively, offer more empowering models of support and create longer lasting change. This section is organised around these aspects of BME VAWG provision.

I am not happy [to go to another service], I would not be able to open, you can have 5 friends but you can only open up with 1. It is exactly the same with Apna Haq's organisation. I am now standing on my feet, I have become a foster carer due to Apna Haq. Apna Haq have given me a 2nd life. I refused to go to advice centre I only took on Apna Haq's support. Workers in other organisations do not take notice, they just write on paper.

Women appreciate being in specific BME provision because they are less likely to feel isolated and they have a shared understanding with the workers about the context that abuse has been perpetrated (Mullan – Feroze quoted in Dugan 2015)

The circumstances I was going through, I was thinking at that time that what is going to happen now, everything is finished. I had lost hope. But Apna haq made me feel loved as though I was their own family and helped me resolve my problem. My fear was that if I left home, where will I go and what will I do. I could not make sense of anything. Then I called Apna haq and they gave me advice and it took some time but gradually I started to come out of my worries. As far as I know, there is no other organisation as helpful as Apna Haq.

Quality BME VAWG services, including Apna Haq, are:

1. Led by and for, rooted in communities, ensuring reach and access

.. black women respond best, open up best and can be best supported by working with other black women in particular those from their own community, BME organisations like Apna haq are crucial for this. In my previous capacity as Domestic Violence Coordinator for Rotherham, I can attest to the support given to BME women in Rotherham by Apna Haq and the trust women felt in that organisation. It has taken Apna Haq years to build up that trust in the communities it served So It reached many women who would not access generic services (McNeill 2015).

Stakeholders commented on the confidential and professional service provided by Apna Haq, managing the delicate balance of being integrated within communities in Rotherham, while also maintaining professional boundaries and ensuring absolute confidentiality, rooted in an understanding of the potentially extreme implications for victims if family members are made aware of services being accessed.

Women need choice and the majority of BME women indicate that they need specialist services, especially those that are run by and provide services to other women like them, who understand their situation and experiences without the need for lengthy explanations as to their culture and community. This includes workers being able to understand the issue of 'shame' and 'izzat' without lengthy explanations and justifications from women, and women being able to be supported in their own language, in a non-threatening environment. This gives them the support they need to escape violence in the first place and to avoid a return to an abusive relationship (Thiara 2015).

Not have that in the Yemeni community- it's really important as member of the Yemeni community to join Apna Haq and take information back to Yemeni community so that women can approach Apna Haq for support

2. Known and trusted by communities

Imkaan and Warwick University undertook a large scale research project in 2010 and repeated in 2012, collecting information from 124 women across 10 BME VAWG organisations across the UK (including Apna Haq) and found that 87% women interviewed said they preferred BME specific services to support them to stay out of the context of violence. The majority of women interviewed preferred a BME service not only to access support, but to stay out of a violent relationship and make empowering choices, demonstrating the effectiveness of BME specific services in providing

safety for women and child over time as well as at points of crisis. All women respondents said having the support of a BME specialist service was a key factor for them in accessing the criminal justice system, ranging from police reports to going to court (Roy and Thiara 2012).

The importance of BME-led specialist services for BME women repeatedly reinforced in research. BME women need choice and some will prefer a generic service, but the majority of BME women feel that specialist BME services understand the contexts in which abuse is taking place in their lives and are more trusted. For BME women, the *'relationship of trust' is key*; if they experience racism or a lack of understanding from the services available to them, this acts as a further barrier and re-traumatizes women and is likely to result in women returning to abuse. This is in opposition to recent developments – where larger organisations with limited expertise on VAWG and BME issues are commissioned; where there is a view that BME services can be replaced by a single worker or there is tokenistic/ unequal involvement of BME services in partnerships. Bme services *often go beyond meeting women's needs to also ensuring that women's rights are secured and* have been acting as advocates for BME women for three decades (Thiara 2015, WA Conference). Trust is far easier to achieve for an established organisation that has been providing quality services and its staff are from the communities of the victims (Anstead 2015).

“Ethnic minority women stressed their preference for service that recognised their faith and culture, often over and above the women-only aspect of the service. A number of ethnic minority women suggested that although they were aware of alternative provision elsewhere, they would not access this service even if it was women-only, because the service would not be culturally sensitive. (Hirst & Rinnie 2012)

They [generic services] just write down, see and talk about it, - *sorry can't help you*. If you get late, they say sorry you are late therefore we are unable to see you. Apna Haq will see you, if support worker is busy someone else will see you, been to other places i.e. advice centre they say come back next week

Apna Haq have spent many years building up relationships of trust with traditionally hard to reach communities to enable women to access safe and culturally appropriate support: A lot of our ladies disclose personal information and we refer to Apna Haq as they feel comfortable with the organisation as they themselves are a BME organisation. This is very important to the women as they feel that they are understood better as Apna Haq have an excellent reputation for offering help and support to them with fantastic results.(Luqman 2015).

Many times I thought of getting rid of my troubles but I could not do it due to my circumstances. I kept bearing the sorrows continuously but not once did my family thought that I am taking it all. They were always cruel to me. In the end, they had beaten me and kicked me out of the house. In my life, there were too many challenges that I did not have the forbearance for. Being homeless, my child did not have even a milk bottle for the milk. It was the most adverse circumstances. *I didn't have anything, no clothes, no shelter etc. I wondered what is going to happen to me, and who will help me.* I would think all the time that these are the worst days of my life. When I contacted Apna haq, they helped me in every way possible. The matter had been taken to the court. My husband and mother-in-law said that they would take my child off me. I was very worried that I would rather die than to have my child taken away from me.

3. Connected to communities and responsive to emerging and changing needs and contexts

Over the last 21 years, Apna Haq has developed and grown and shifted in response to the changing needs and demographics of the local BME community. For example, in 2011, Apna Haq shifted organisational identity from a South Asian service to a BME service, reflecting the changes in the local communities. Apna Haq was one of the first VAWG organisations in the UK to recruit and support a Roma specific VAWG worker in an effort to increase engagement with local Roma and Eastern European communities. A generic organisation will not have the focus, the skills or the placement in communities to be able to carry out this work in the same way.

The 2012 Imkaan study found that: ..over a quarter of women had no recourse to public funds. This shows how BME specialist services are working with more complex cases, requiring more specialist capacities and understanding for holistic support of the service users. The specialist *capacity and culturally sensitive support boost women's confidence to challenge systems and secure a safe future for themselves and their children.* (Thiara and Roy 2012).

A current exploration of Cultural Encounters in Interventions Against Violence (CEINAV, in progress, refer to Kelly 2015) is finding that BME women face multiple barriers to accessing statutory and non-specialist voluntary services. Researcher lead Liz Kelly reports that Apna Haq is: 'uniquely positioned to meet the complex needs of BME women and children in Rotherham. Women talked about the wide ranging support they received from Apna Haq, including: housing and finance advice, legal support around immigration and child contact proceedings, learning English, accessing education and employment, and emotional support. Importantly, women talked *about Apna Haq being a 'comfortable' and safe environment within which they were able to disclose the abuse they had experienced.* .. Because Apna Haq is led by BME women, the

interviewees also spoke about how they were able to identify with these women and recognise their own strength. (Kelly 2015).

Apna haq helped me and my children to build our confidence and other matters regarding school. They helped us in all matters; *we didn't know how to settle in to new environment. After getting help from apna haq, we can see change in our life; children are getting good education and feeling more confident. I have done few courses through Apna haq which helped me a lot in my life.*

4. Key Knowledge Hubs, developing local and national expertise around BME VAWG issues

In addition to the excellent services they provide to victims, BME VAWG services like Apna Haq are also Key Knowledge Hubs, developing knowledge skills and expertise around the unique needs, contexts and aspirations of BME women and children and also around forms of VAWG that disproportionately impact on BME women and girls. As mentioned above, BME women's experiences of VAWG are often interconnected with prior experiences of abuse, family situations and BME specific contexts, for example, immigration related issues, that compound and complicate the needs of the victim. Apna Haq holds local and national expertise around many of these issues and is thus more able to access and accurately identify victims of VAWG whom other services are repeatedly ignoring and failing.

For example, Apna Haq is uniquely placed to identify BME women and girls experiencing sexual exploitation, a victim cohort that the investigators found remained invisible to statutory and non-BME services. The UK Muslim Women's Network produced a report on CSE in September 2013 which drew on 35 case studies of survivors from across the UK, the majority of whom were Muslim. It highlighted that: Asian girls were being sexually exploited where authorities were failing to identify or support them. They were most vulnerable to men from their own communities who manipulated cultural norms to prevent them from reporting their abuse. It described how this abuse was being carried out. 'Offending behaviour mostly involved men operating in groups . . . The victim was being passed around and prostituted amongst many other men. Our research also *showed that complex grooming 'hierarchies' were at play. The physical abuse* included oral, anal and vaginal rape; role play; insertion of objects into the vagina; severe beatings; burning with cigarettes; tying down; enacting rape that included ripping clothes off and sexual activity over the webcam.' (Gohir 2015)

The Jay report echoes this: One of the local Pakistani women's groups described how Pakistani-heritage girls were targeted by taxi drivers and on occasion by older men lying in wait outside

school gates at dinner times and after school. They also cited cases in Rotherham where Pakistani landlords had befriended Pakistani women and girls on their own for purposes of sex, then passed on their name to other men who had then contacted them for sex. The women and girls feared reporting such incidents to the Police because it would affect their future marriage prospects (Jay 2014).

CSE is only one example of the unique knowledge and expertise that Apna Haq has developed, another stakeholder refers to the interconnectedness of migration and VAWG: ... *the most* vulnerable women are those from abroad who have come here as brides they need to access a service which has bilingual workers from the same community they can trust. The first hurdle would be language, cultural understanding, the implications around honour, shame, Izzat which is still a powerful force in Asian community that only women workers from the same community understand this fully. (Rassool 2015).

CASE STUDY: A social worker contacted Apna Haq seeking advice as they were supporting a young woman who was seeking to leave her violent husband. Her husband had recently been released from prison where he had been serving a sentence for grooming related charges. She had fled the house and returned to retrieve her belongings however they had all been thrown into the street. Apna Haq provided contact numbers for specialist support services in the victim's area and advised on the processes for applying for injunctions and obtaining her personal documents. Apna Haq offered phone support to the victim. The social worker sought specialist advice from Apna Haq on how to support this young woman in the face of backlash and anger from her other family members.

5. Peer support- Survivor involvement- survivor leadership

BME VAWG services provide opportunities for peer connection and peer support that a generic service is simply not able to mirror. Women consistently report this to be one of the most helpful aspects of service provision, describing how seeing other women in the same or worse situations, and seeing them recover and move on with their lives is an inspirational and life affirming experience. Apna Haq takes this survivor involvement to another level, offering progression pathways for the women of Apna Haq to return to the service as volunteers offering peer support to other survivors and also becoming involved in the operational and strategic direction of the organisation. Being with other BME women who have also experienced gender based violence, being able to communicate in their own language, and the specialist expertise of workers were all identified by BME women as aspects of service provision that were key to BME women's recovery (Roy and Thiara 2012).

They sent me to college. There is no other organisation that can support us like they do. I wish that this organisation always stays for women and children like us. When I met with Apna haq workers, my children were very upset that they were homeless. School is far from home. Mosque problem. Apna Haq give all support to my children. Take my kids to school and mosque. They arrange to *take parents and kids on days out. If I didn't get any support from Apna haq then life would have been very difficult for me. As I didn't know anything about doctors, schools, shopping centres and I didn't know English. How Apna haq supported my children =, I wouldn't have been able to manage without them as it was a very tough time. But it's only become easy because of Apna haq.* I wanted to leave the situation because I went through some hard time. When I came here, everyone said that there *are English regulations in place and that I don't know the language so I can't do anything. I spent the first 4 years with great difficulty. I felt very isolated and imprisoned as nobody understood my language and feelings.*

6. Change public attitudes, raise professional awareness, educate children and young people, hold perpetrators to account and prevent violence in the future

BME VAWG services contribute significantly to early intervention and prevention, not only through their own community engagement work, but also through the secondary consult they provide (often for free) to local and national voluntary and statutory services, and for some services, their very existence sends out a clear message to local communities that VAWG is not acceptable in their community.

There is a strong missing link in early intervention in cases of violence against women services, particularly for BME women, and BME specific support helps women bridge this gap. This is particularly significant as BME women tend to experience violence at earlier ages, and remain in the abusive relationship for longer, before seeking help. In the context of BME women there is under reporting of so called honour-based violence, disclosure of child sexual abuse and harmful practices. There is need for awareness raising and specialist support services to create a safe environment for women to validate their feelings and seek support that is not racist or lacking in capacity to understand the specific complexities in their context (Thiara and Roy 2012).

Apna Haq has identified the need for services for BME women and children in Rotherham, successfully campaigned to have these services funded and have developed services to most effectively meet those identified needs. Apna Haq has enabled greater awareness and understanding of domestic violence and its impact on the Asian community. It has tackled areas of work and pushed the boundaries amongst all organisations, partners and communities to

recognise and support Asian and Black women (Wheatley 2015) with many stakeholders offering personal and organisational endorsement:

I cannot emphasise enough the contribution Apna haq has made, both to individual professionals like myself, who have been supported, encouraged and sometimes constructively challenged to develop our understanding and practice in relation to working with BME women, and to the women they have supported over the years who are often in very difficult, dangerous and damaging *situations and experiencing significant harm... the learning* I gained in relation to my understanding and practice was both personally and professionally life changing (Pollard 2015) .

Apna Haq's contributions to the development of professional awareness nationally is evidenced in the broad range of it's stakeholders, with one stakeholder commenting: 'The Office of the *Children's Commissioner does not support individual services however [we have provided a letter of support as we] recognise that there is a significant need for the services you provide that address the needs of BME population, and more specifically, the needs of BME children and young people who can be particularly vulnerable to abuse* (Dr Gulyruthu in email correspondence with Zlakha Ahmed, July 2015).

I have done 2 different courses, I have learnt about child abuse and domestic violence laws of this country relating to those topics how women can get support if going through this. I did jobs skill course learnt about how to look for work do CV's interviews. My English has improved a great deal since my involvement with them

7. Transformational and empowerment-centred models of practice

BME specialist services play a crucial role in supporting women and advocating on their behalf so as to enable them to build their independence and autonomy within an understanding of their contexts – *expanding 'women's space for action'* (Kelly 2015) (Thiara 2015). Women may never have lived independent lives, they may not be prepared psychologically or practically to live independent lives and require specialist tailored support to develop that independence: Through its ground breaking and pioneering work it has built up trust and confidence with women and is now *often the first and only point of access for Asian women experiencing abuse and violence... it is for most Asian women the only organisation they trust*. Its careful and slow approach has helped numerous women regain their confidence, hope and rebuild their lives. (Wheatley 2015).

Apna Haq takes this empowerment to deep levels: I have worked in the community for 30 years and have been to many Apna Haq events and seen women from being victims to becoming

powerful advocates for the service. Some of their service users are now on their management committee and are volunteers that support other women to access the project by sharing their positive experiences of Apna Haq (Rassool 2015).

They solved my immigration problem because when I came here I didn't have a visa. They made an appointment with solicitor and sent my passport to home office. Then they find a place in refuge for me. I lived there for 4 months. After that they applied for a house for me in Rotherham council and they helped me claim benefits, and still I have more problems in my life they still help me with coming to terms with my problems. Apna haq knows about our culture and they also know about the religion and they also understand the mental situation of women in these circumstances. They advised me on how to help my child in education and which school is best for the child. They also gave me information on how to stay safe myself and keep my children safe too. There is still ongoing support from the staff members, they have helped me to improve my English language and build in confidence. Now I can speak with confidence. My life is very different now. Apna haq emotionally supported me. And they told me about mine and my daughters rights in this country. I have never one to any other organisation because I have never trusted any other and I am not comfortable with any other organisation.

If Apna haq did not intervene with the problems in my life as I approached them, if the problems persisted I would've had a nervous breakdown.

I am standing up on my feet, I found that when I came to Apna Haq... these ladies are, you know, running the big project... these are women like us... that women can do [anything] (Kelly 2015)

6. The barriers for BME women to access mainstream services and the resulting adverse impacts on BME women if Apna Haq closes

6a. Barriers

Rather than create a 'one size fits all' approach, mainstreaming should recognise that no single organisation can be all things to all people, but that there is value in a diverse civil society where organisations are able to work together towards shared goals (Voice for Change and NAVCA 2012)

The barriers for BME women to access mainstream and generic services around VAWG issues are well documented. For ease, we have categorised some of the barriers under distinct, but overlapping, areas:

1. Racism– culture of blame/ culture of shame

Because of racism and Islamophobia I have reservations about using generic services

Mainstream services in all sectors have been shown to routinely fail service users from marginalised groups, whether disabled, young, elderly, LGBT, or BME communities. There is considerable national evidence on experiences and contexts of racism as a barrier for BME women and girls accessing services. This barrier is particularly acute in Rotherham when considering the experiences of women around racism in Rotherham are detailed above and have in the media: Asian girls are too frightened to go into Rotherham's town centre because of an alarming backlash in the wake of the child exploitation scandal. Three months ago the Jay Report highlighted how authorities had failed 1400 girls who were abused there - mainly at the hands of British Pakistani men. Today the town's MP, Sarah Champion, said she'd met a growing number of Asian girls who have faced physical and verbal abuse from racists, apparently as revenge for what had happened to white girls in the town (ITV, 25th November 2014).

In addition to barriers to access, there are also documented barriers once women are engaged in generic services, outlined by Chantler who found that racism was prevalent in mainstream refuges and services on three levels: among service users, among the workers and at state level (for example through immigration policies that prevent women from accessing services or public funds) (Chantler 2006).

All women fleeing domestic violence can face difficulties accessing mainstream services and research indicates that women on average contact such services up to 11 times before they receive a positive response; for BME women this increases to 17 attempts to obtain help before they receive a positive response. The research I carried out first in 1996, and then later, showed that even in mainstream domestic violence services BME women faced additional difficulties, such as racism from other users of the services or sometimes from staff; this can lead to BME women returning to a violent family; they are essentially doubly vulnerable, even in the context of domestic violence support services. They are faced with stereotyping when they seek help from workers who are not sensitised or who carry prejudice, and whom they may therefore perceive as racist or unresponsive to their needs. In addition, a lone BME worker in a mainstream service was also reported in this research to experience isolation and have limited or no support from colleagues (Thiara 2015).

The NSPCC in their work around the needs of children in VAWG services similarly found: about a *third of practitioners interviewed spoke about children's experiences of racism and bullying from other children, members of the public, public services and refugees*. A few practitioners noted that verbal bullying and name calling also reflected the current political climate, for example with *references to children as 'terrorists' or 'bin-laden'* (Izzidien 2008).

Apna haq had given me a letter to prove to the court and spent time talking to me and made me and my children feel better. Now, Apna haq workers try to look after my feelings, they talk and listen to me and believe me, it is different than people working in the court. I feel another service *they don't want to understand me and don't want to know how I feel. But Apna haq welcomes me anytime and try to help me. I had been in the family court in Doncaster; I don't think they try to help me because i'm Thai. If I don't have someone to talk and listen to me from Apna Haq, I will get no power to move on. I think we should go to Apna Haq first as police and social services don't want to listen to foreigner.*

2. Repercussions and exclusion from other family/ community members/ faith spaces and pressures of from family on the pretext of honour and shame.

BME women .. face some of the greatest internal and external barriers to reporting and are over-represented in most forms of domestic violence/ harmful cultural practices and related issues of immigration, destitution, homelessness and mental health... *the notions of honour and shame are powerfully constraining mechanisms and can be extremely difficult to address except by specialist services* (Patel 2015).

3. Lack of access/ lack of reach from and to generic services

BME specialist services are able to reach communities that generic services cannot: the loss of specialist help is putting victims at risk, according to forced marriage experts, who warn that cultural and language barriers mean many women would never go to a generic domestic violence *refuge... many of the charities have built more than 30 years of trust within specific communities*, meaning they see some of the most isolated victims who their members argue generic services would struggle to reach (Dugan, 2015)

Apna Haq provides a specialist culturally sensitive service and can reach women and girls who would not normally access a non-*BME voluntary service or mainstream service... [the decision]* indicates that RMBC has no or very little understanding of the diverse services that are required to ensure all women and girls have equal access to services and therefore equal life chances (Gohir 2015).

Upon hearing of Apna Haq's potential closure, Azzizum Akhter, Chief Executive of the local Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance (REMA) expressed shock and informed Apna Haq Chief Executive Zlakha Ahmad that the first contact he had with Rotherham Women's refuge was in the last three months. He stated they had been in touch with REMA as they were undertaking research on child sexual exploitation and were not able to identify 15 BME women they could interview (face to face conversation, 7th July 2015). Mr Akhter expressed concern about how a generic service like Rotherham Women's Refuge would be able to provide services to BME community members when they have limited current contact with those communities.

Many stakeholders commented on Apna Haq's reach. For example, Muslim Women's Network highlighted in their letter that they would not have been able to access the women who form the subject of their research if it were not for Apna haq and talk about the 'lifeline' that Apna Haq offers to BME women, in an area where there are already not enough specialist services (Gohir 2015).

4. Lack of information and awareness about services and language barriers

Women of Apna Haq talked about the lack of awareness about generic services amongst BME communities in Rotherham, as well as a lack of trust. Women spoke about the importance of having staff from the same linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and discussed the limitations of interpreting services.

I do not understand any English at all and [non-BME services] *don't understand us, they don't understand our culture*

Interpreter will only say what we say- they will not understand our feelings or where we are coming from

My biggest worry is my language barrier. I could not tell how I was feeling and what to say to a white person. This is why Apna Haq is very beneficial for me. Also because with white people there are sometimes males and sometimes females so if there are men present then I cannot talk openly with them. My circumstances were already extremely distressing and on top of that, white people *don't understand our reason for our worries and neither do I understand their language* so how can I answer the questions they ask me. Lack of language creates lots of misunderstanding i.e, they think you understand- you respond but have not understood- creates more problems as they then can think that you are lying or changing your story

BMER women are less likely to seek help from services they perceive as insensitive to their values and needs and this reinforces the marginalisation they experience due to social and economic inequalities. BMER women also face cultural and social barriers of honour, shame and stigma attached to leaving abusive relationships. Combined with feelings of guilt and responsibility (and often the uncertainty of insecure immigration status) they may ensure abuse for longer periods, and to experiencing severe abuse and extreme isolation by the time they seek help (Mullan-Feroze 2015).

5. Lack of understanding around the contexts and complex needs of BME women and a fear of further marginalisation or being seen in silos or as stereotypes

We highlighted the lack of understanding from some professionals and statutory services on how to engage with BME communities. This is a barrier to the identification of victims from these communities. Statutory and generic services were often identified as being inaccessible, as professionals failed to understand, recognise, and accommodate individual needs, language, beliefs and feelings. This made it more difficult for victims and those at risk of CSE to engage with statutory and generic services (Gulyurtlu 2015)

The lack of provision for BME women in Rotherham has been widely noted. The 2014 OFSTED Inspection noted the specialist skills required to accurately identify and assess risks and safeguarding issues of BME women and children:

Support for women from minority ethnic communities is also lacking. There is a lack of access to specialist services and insufficient cultural understanding in some risk assessments about the obstacles preventing women from reporting abuse. A specialist support group for minority ethnic women reports a *mixed response from children's social care, and also a lack of financial and practical support for women and children fleeing abusive relationships* (OFSTED 2014) ¹.

BME women, having stayed in a violent relationships for longer periods and being more vulnerable to isolation, may require support for a longer period and frequently need more intense support than other women, for example in terms of practicalities such as opening a bank account, learning to utilise public transport, paying bills and so on, as well as support in relation to complex cultural issues. Apna Haq maintains connection with women for years, some for over a decade as the healing journey is so much longer for women who experience longer periods of abuse and who may have fewer social and practical resources than their white British counterparts.

BME women are also likely to face abuse from other family members and are particularly vulnerable because those people will be looking for them, especially if the woman has left with her children. These specific safety issues must be recognised and addressed to enable women to escape violence and be supported once they have left (Thiara 2015).

It is important to many BME women that they are not judged for their decision to seek help and support, that they are given culturally appropriate support that does not place the blame on them, that they are supported within a relationship of trust in their own language, and that they do not feel pressurised to return to abuse because of a lack of understanding at best and prejudice and racism at worst from the services they interact with. Without specialist services, many women state they would either consider suicide or be killed, and generally not be able to move on with their lives (Thiara 2015).

7. Not being believed

White people think we are backward and don't know anything

They don't trust anything and they think we are giving them false stories

6b. Impacts

¹ Metropolitan Borough of Rotherham Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and Review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board1 Inspection date: 16 September – 8 October 2014 Report published: 19 November 2014

To support RMBC's equality impact assessment, we asked the women of Apna Haq and stakeholders to offer their expert opinions on what the potential impacts would be if Apna Haq were to close. The responses were disturbing as many stakeholders commented on the increased risks of domestic homicide, suicide, self harm, prolonged periods of abuse and multiple negative impacts on them and their children. A disproportionate number of victims of domestic homicide are BME women, relative to their percentage of the population, and one of the lessons learned from recent Domestic Homicide Reviews in South Yorkshire is the danger of losing key voluntary and community services like Apna Haq.

The loss of Apna haq and its services would be hugely detrimental for Rotherham and nationally. *Most importantly... would be the loss of a vital service to Asian women leaving them even more isolated, vulnerable and subject to abuse and exploitation.* It would mean the loss of a key BME organisation that has strong and trusted links in the communities it serves and promotes the diversity of Rotherham as a whole (Wheatley 2015).

...the closure of Apna Haq would have a detrimental and potentially harmful impact on many women who are experiencing abuse (Mullan – Feroze 2015).

Tasibee feels that a lot more abuse will go unreported if Apna Haq are forced to close their doors along with an increase in domestic homicide rates suicides, increased domestic violence towards *BME women, reduced opportunities for BME to access services relevant to their needs....* Invaluable within the BME community as they provide a strong communication port for the women (Luqman 2015).

If Apna haq had not helped me I would have been in jail or psychotic ward by now. My mental health was really bad. My GP referred me for counselling sessions. Apna haq helped me in all matters and listened to me and kept everything private and confidential

Rotherham council's decision is both shocking and of immense concern to those of us who have witnessed the appalling failure of statutory services and the police in Rotherham to protect young vulnerable children and women *subject to violence, sexual grooming and exploitation...* [South Asian] women and girls are overlooked by front line agencies and little if anything is done to identify them so they can be supported; at least a third of the women and girls have suffered *sexual abuse but are routinely disbelieved... we are concerned that an important life line for BME women in Rotherham is being taken away* (Patel 2015).

South Asian female suicide accounts for a proportion of suicides that is almost double or treble their *proportion in the wider population... [Apna Haq] service cannot be replaced by a generic provider and without it we fear a rise in the pain and suffering and in the rates of suicide and homicide amongst BME women ... we estimate that in the absence of a specialist service like Apna Haq, the costs involved in domestic violence case to the Council for instance, including young children or young persons being abducted or forced into a marriage, would run into hundreds of thousands of pounds per case since it would include the cost in interpretation and expert services, police call outs, assessments by social services, possible care proceedings and emergency and mid to long term housing and financial support (Patel 2015)*

Once my husband had hit me so I phoned police. They had said to me that they will take me and my son away on a certain day but they never came and they never contacted me either. Then Apna Haq helped me. I was going through a very tough time; I would not know what I would have done or where I would have gone. Maybe I would have taken my life quite possibly. When I left home, I was extremely distressed. My son was disabled and it was a very difficult time for me. Apna haq helped me a lot to get through this tough time. I was very worried because I did not have a house of my own. I feared that every body would laugh at me if I was going to tell the people in the community and I was worried about what would people say.

If Apna Haq is closed down, it will have an adverse impact of local BAME women and girls and contribute towards their suffering and the development of crisis situations, which in the long term will cost local services more. Women will suffer in silence, which will impact their mental health. This in turn will have an adverse impact on the well being of their children, particularly girls who will grow up thinking abuse is normal. These situations will result in more women and girls self harming and committing suicide. For example, Asian women between the ages of 15-35 are two to three times more vulnerable to suicide and self harm than their *non-Asian counterparts... approximately two Asian women are murdered every month by their spouses or family members (Gohir 2015)*

I have seen Apna Haq develop into an excellent organisation with committed staff that have saved *women's life through their quick intervention, women who would have ended up badly beaten or even killed, their children taken off them forced to go back to Pakistan, for example (Rassool 2015)*

I am greatly concerned that ... there will be an increase in domestic homicide rates for women with BME communities, reduced opportunities for BME women to access support and to participate in public life, as not only does the project support women and children in crisis to exit violent

situations, they go on to support them to engage in personal and social activities and to empower them to become active in their communities as advocates, supporters, volunteers and to raise the voice of BME women (Pollard 2015)

I could not take this step because of my religion. I went through a very difficult time. From the very *first day I didn't make a move. I wished that if there was a woman from the same ethnic background and who spoke my language, who would be able to understand my current situation. One of my female friends, who actually belonged to my country, told me about Apna haq that the Apna haq organisation consists of people who spoke my language and they belonged to my culture, it is that moment when I thought of leaving my house and the family. Now, I feel that if I had taken this step sooner then my life would have improved a lot earlier. Apna haq supported me limitlessly. I am very happy and now I am successful. This is only happened because of Apna haq. I am very grateful that organisations such as apna haq exist and this also helped me to not stray from my religion.*

The closure of BME services is likely to lead to an increased in domestic homicide rates, drastically reduce Bme women and girls opportunities for empowerment and access to support, leaving them more vulnerable to violence and is likely to lead to a grave violation of human rights (Wilson, letter)

Our experience from a number of other areas where BME led by and for VAWG services have lost tenders or been forced to merge or close such as the East Midlands, West and South Yorkshire and the North *East is that staff TUPE'd over move on quite quickly and the perception in BME communities is that there is no longer a service for them* (Women's Aid 2013)

Pertinently, with all the attention around CSE in Rotherham, one service user highlighted the needs of all potential victims, including the BME women connected to the perpetrators. The assumption that BME men were 'targeting white girls' and therefore ignoring women in their own families and communities was disproved with the Muslim Women's Network 2015 report which highlighted the extent of Asian victims of CSE and other VAWG. There is a concern amongst the women of Apna Haq that those women would have nowhere to access were it not for Apna Haq: *'I'm really worried about what's going to happen to those women in the lives of men involved in the grooming; like a friend of mine is a single mum and her son has gone into prison, she needs support too'*. There are currently approximately 200 Pakistani men under investigation in Rotherham (meeting with PCC 2015) and Apna Haq is familiar with the webs of VAWG that surround these men. The women of Apna Haq are particularly concerned that at a time when so

much pressure will be placed on Asian women, the only BME VAWG specialist service is at risk of closing. The women of Apna Haq were clear that in the current climate of racism and mistrust in Rotherham, they would not feel comfortable or safe to access a generic service for support around these issues.

7. Unique opportunities Apna Haq provides for BME women to participate in public life and to enhance cohesion and integration in Rotherham

*“I think there are three parts to integration. I think number one is having the ability to participate in the cultural, social, economic and political system. Number two would be to have the ability to accept the cultural norms, rules and regulations of the system that you’re part of. Number three would be, being able to create your own space in a system that initially had no space for you. So coming here and making it your own you know? I think that would be integration for me as an all encompassing *definition*.”* (Migrant woman interviewed for research project, Eaves 2015)

It has been noted that: *BME specific women’s services fulfil positive criteria in Equality Impact Assessments and deliver clear evidence of public bodies promoting equality and diversity for women and children.*

The positive steps that Public bodies can take to ensure their duty is fulfilled can be summarised as:

- Ensure equitable and transparent commissioning and procurement practices.
- *Demonstrate understanding that there is not a ‘level playing field’ for BME women and children and a facilitating environment must be created for including the views of BME service users and independent BME women’s services in the commissioning process.*
- Allocate funding and develop strategies within the localism agenda to promote the *sustainability of BME women’s domestic and sexual violence services.*

... The BME voluntary and community sector has been delivering on government and local priorities in an innovative and value - driven way to the most marginalised communities, seen as *‘hard to reach’ by many service providers. As discussed, BME specialist services meet local*

needs, empower users, create bridging social capital, and contribute to social cohesion.²
(Monaghan 2008)

Apna Haq provides unique opportunities for a diverse range of women from marginalised BME communities in Rotherham to participate in public life. As mentioned above, there is a growing Muslim population (3.7% at 2011 Census) and 90% of Apna Haq service users are Muslim women. Since shifting organisational identity in 2011, Apna Haq has also successfully managed to diversify its board and service user community offering opportunities for a range of BME women in Rotherham to participate. Apna Haq provides positive opportunities for employment and leadership development for BME women, a much needed area in Rotherham and nationally. BME women, especially from South Asian backgrounds, are less likely to be economically active and are represented amongst the highest levels of unemployment. Rashida Manjoo noted that women *continue to be underrepresented in certain occupations ... the Committee was particularly concerned at the low representation in political life of Black and Minority Ethnic women and women with disabilities* (Manjoo 2015).

In addition to employment opportunities, Apna Haq provides formal and informal volunteering opportunities for all women of Apna Haq with an average of 7 hours per week of formal volunteering. In addition to this, Board members, peer mentors and staff all volunteer, hours varying from week to week depending on client needs, issues and meeting schedules. Apna Haq uses many volunteers to provide the support and befriending service their clients need. It is unlikely these same volunteers will be supported, welcomed and encouraged in a generic organisation : Organisations like Apna Haq are also vital in building cohesion between and within communities because they support women to acquire the skills and the knowledge needed to integrate in the wider society. .. it has effectively worked across religious and ethnic lines within black and minority communities precisely to bridge differenced and build a sense of citizenship (Patel 2015).

The Jay report highlighted the over-reliance of RMBC on 'traditional community leaders' and the disenfranchisement of Pakistani heritage women in Rotherham: There was too much reliance by agencies on traditional community leaders such as elected members and imams as being the primary conduit of communication with the Pakistani-heritage community. The Inquiry spoke to several Pakistani-heritage women who felt disenfranchised by this and thought it was a barrier to people coming forward to talk about CSE (Jay 2014).

² Monaghan, K. (2008) An Independent Legal Analysis of the Compact Code of Good Practice on Relations with 'BME' Voluntary and Community Organisations, for the Commission for the Compact Matrix Chambers

This is further supported by Rashida Manjoo: In the case of BME communities, interviewees explained how they *tend to be represented by “self-styled community (business and religious male leaders” who rarely represent the interests of women and increasingly adhere to patriarchal religious norms and values.* This has resulted in the increased surveillance and policing of women and the denial and silencing of issues that affect them, including gender based violence. (Manjoo 2015).

Further, David Cameron ..[has]..highlighted the importance of Muslim women playing a role in and contributing to society so we have more cohesive and integrated communities. Apna Haq is also a very important channel to contribute towards this goal .. Ana Haq has been getting the voices of Muslim women and girls heard locally and nationally by decision makers (Gohir 2015).

Apna Haq’s significant contributions to the shaping local and national policy, and providing platform for BME women and girls to speak out, were applauded by many stakeholders, a selection of which are quoted here. For example, Apna Haq successfully advocated for attempted suicides to be routinely considered in ‘near misses’ for domestic homicide reviews; harnessing experience and research to build the evidenced case to ensure the situations of Asian women were being considered. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council has also relied heavily on Apna Haq to support it’s development of the Forced Marriage Strategy in 2013. A sample of media engagement that Apna Haq has undertaken promoting the voices and needs of BME women is attached at Appendix 3.

Apna Haq’s CEO was appointed by the VCS to act as one of their representatives on the Local Strategic Partnership Board and has taken on this role for a number of years actively representing and advocating for the needs and issues affecting women, black women and BME groups and the VCS sector as a whole. Zlakha has ... been at the forefront of a number of pioneering areas of work in relation to women’s rights, especially BME women... plays a vital role in supporting BME women to play an increasing active role in public life, have their voices listened to and shape services so they are more effective and appropriate. It is a completely user led organisation involving women from all parts of the BME community and empowering them to influence not just the organisation and services but campaign where needed nationally to shape policy and delivery (Wheatley 2015).

CWASU study women talked about the opportunity Apna haq gave them to provide a platform to participate in public life and have their voices heard (Kelly 2015)

The organisation is known through the Rotherham BME vol/com sector as one which is passionate about giving a voice to women who, without it, would struggle to be heard (Rogers 2015)

Apna Haq gave access to women for South Asian communities in particular so their voices could be heard and views taken into account. This informed the development of policies and protocols on forced marriage in Yorkshire and beyond. One key point [at recent forced marriage conference] *all speakers made was the need for councils to work with local BME women's organisations. Not all towns have one. Rotherham is privileged to have access to the experience and wisdom of Apna Haq (McNeill 2015).*

The issues raised by Apna Haq and the opinions expressed by its Chair [sic] Zlakha Ahmed on these platforms hosted by us have been heeded by academics, and contributed to discussions of Government policy (Johal 2015).

Apna Haq's influence internationally was evidenced in the letter from Women Against Violence Europe who acknowledge Apna Haq's engagement with the network has benefited the work of over 100 VAWG organisations based in 46 countries.

8. Additional Added Value of Apna Haq

Apna Haq's added value work is extensive. Provided here is a selection of examples of projects and contributions and further examples are attached at Appendix 6.

- Co-developed a programme for justice agencies, and went on to co-train with the Training Principal for the Magistrates Courts to deliver the JSC programme: Domestic Violence- An Ordinary crime? To hundreds of magistrates across South Yorkshire
- National consultation on NICE guidelines for domestic abuse, jointly organised a sessions for women's organisations across south Yorkshire to consult on the draft, and helped to ensure that the voices of BME women were heard and to strengthen the case for culturally appropriate services
- 2011 Challenge project with Ashiana to train and support young people to take positive peer education messages into schools and other settings and challenge harmful practices like FM
- Partnering with AVA to deliver prevention work relating to FM in Rotherham and Sheffield

- Partnering with Imkaan to conduct research prepared in report Vital Statistics
- Partnering with Imkaan to deliver Forced Marriage events in 2014 involving over 70 professionals at one South Yorkshire event
- Hardship fund: set up 8 years ago as regularly getting women with no recourse wanting support but generic services including refuges were not willing to support them. Hardship fund is perfect example of an empowering communities approach also as community members contribute towards the fund and organise local fundraising events including fairs, melas and drama performances, requesting Zakat³ donations raising the profile of the issues and the service, while also raising funds for those women who are excluded from mainstream services due to immigration status. This fund is accessed by the local Women's Aid service, and by social services. In one case, Apna Haq was able to use this fund to pay for refuge provision for one BME woman for several weeks, preventing homelessness and ensuring safety and dignity for this survivor. In addition to refuge space, this fund is utilised to pay for food, toiletries, clothing, solicitors fees and other essential items for Pakistani, Roma and African women who are not able to access public funds or who are experiencing short term cash flow problems such as benefits sanctions.
- National Forced Marriage roundtables
- No recourse campaigning
- Research and development of innovative services
- NICE involvement
- South Yorkshire partnership
- National Imkaan partnership
- House of Lords House of Commons Joint Committee on Human Rights Violence against women and girls Sixth Report of Session 2014–15 submission
- Office of the Children's Commissioner Report - 'If it's not better, it's not the end' Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation

9. The commissioning of BME services

There is local, national and international guidance on the absolute need for quality BME led by and for specialist VAWG services. For example, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) found that : Specialist BME services are in short supply throughout the European Union. As a result it is of utmost importance for Member states to strive to support their existence, in order to *not only provide effective support for BME women and children, but also to contribute to States' fulfilment of their human rights obligations in the area of combating Violence against women,*

including article 22 of provision of specialist support services, as specified in the council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating Violence against women and domestic violence (Rosslhumer 2015).

The impact of tendering processes on BME groups must be considered. Many smaller VCS and BME organisations provide excellent services to the community but struggle with the capacity to submit best quality tender documents; it simply isn't a level playing field. A White British run organisation, where women have been educated and acculturated to British ways of life and processes is going to be competing from a different starting place to a BME service user led organisation. The demographics detailed earlier highlight that BME women in Rotherham are likely to have been in the country for 7 years or less, further compounding Apna Haq's barriers to preparing high quality tender submissions.

In tendering out for these types of services, the wider implications are not considered can result in disastrous unexpected outcomes. In Nottingham a similar commissioning decision in 2012 led to the destabilisation and subsequent closure of a vital BME led by and for refuge and support service. These sorts of closures have been recognised by central Government and other significant funders as a loss for BME women and girls in the UK and a problem for local governments, not an inevitable outcome.

In 2008 Southall Black Sisters (SBS) were at risk of losing their core funding as Ealing Council decided there was no need for a BME service. SBS challenged the decision and received a verdict from the High Court, with Lord Justice Moses stating that: There is no dichotomy between the promotion of equality and cohesion and the provision of specialist services to an ethnic minority. Barriers cannot be broken down unless the victims themselves recognise that the source of help is coming from the same community and background as they *do*." Taking on board the learning from this process, Ealing Council in it's most recent commissioning round has stipulated they are seeking to commission a 'led by and for' BME service provider.

In 2015 Latin American Women's Aid (LAWA) was at risk of closure as Islington Council sought to stop funding the only dedicated Latin American refuge in the UK. LAWA launched a campaign and Islington Council managed to secure national funds to keep the refuge fully operational, recognising the absolute vitality of this service for Latin American communities in the UK.

The absolute and urgent need for BME women to be offered meaningful support and access to policy makers has been highlighted most recently in the Casey report: With hindsight, it is clear

that women and girls in the Pakistani community in Rotherham should have been encouraged and empowered by the authorities to speak out about perpetrators and their own experiences as victims of sexual exploitation, so often hidden from sight. The Safeguarding Board has recently received a presentation from a local Pakistani women's group about abuse within their community. The Board should address as a priority the under-reporting of exploitation and abuse in minority ethnic communities. We recommend that the relevant agencies immediately initiate dialogue about CSE with minority ethnic communities, and in particular with the Pakistani-heritage community. This should be done in consultation with local women's groups, and should develop strategies that support young women and girls from the community to participate without fear or threat (Casey 2014).

The decision to de-commission Apna Haq so soon after this report is shocking and could have dire consequences. We urge RMBC to re-consider.

10. Appendices:

Appendix 1: Stakeholder contributions

Due to the length of these submissions, we have submitted these in hard copy only

- A) Sandra McNeill on behalf of Justice for Women, letter dated 20th July 2015
- B) Alan Anstead, Coordinator, UK Race and Europe Network, letter dated 21st July 2015
- C) Shaista Gohir MBE, Chair of Muslim Women's Network, letter dated 21st July 2015
- D) Zanib Rasool MBE, letter dated 21st July 2015
- E) Donna Covey CBE, Director, Against Violence and Abuse, letter dated 21st July 2015
- F) Khalida Luqman, Manager, Tassibee, letter dated 22nd July 2015
- G) Professor Liz Kelly, Director, Child and Women Abuse Studies Unit, London Metropolitan University, letter dated 22nd July 2015
- H) Dr Sandra S Cabrita Gulyurtlu, Senior Research Advisor to the Children's Commissioner, Children's Commissioner for England, letter dated 22nd July 2015
- I) Rachel Mullan-Feroze, Service Manager, Ashiana Sheffield, letter dated 23rd July 2015
- J) Lesley Pollard, Managing Director, Chillypep, letter dated 23rd July 2015
- K) Artistic Director, Open Minds Theatre Company, letter dated 23rd July 2015
- L) Dr Amrit Wilson, letter dated 23rd July 2015
- M) Gill Haggie on behalf of Management Committee, Rotherham Abuse Counselling Service, letter dated 23rd July 2015
- N) Maria Rosslhumer, Managing Director, Women Against Violence Europe, letter dated 23rd July 2015
- O) Pragna Patel, Director, Southall Black Sisters, letter dated 24th July 2015
- P) Janet Wheatley, Chief Executive, Voluntary Action Rotherham, letter dated 24th July 2015
- Q) Maureen Storey, Director, VIDA Sheffield, letter dated 26th July 2015
- R) Sarbjit Johal on behalf of Freedom without Fear Platform, letter dated 27th July 2015
- S) Priya Chopra, Director, Saheli, letter dated 24th July 2015
- T) Baljit Banga, Director Newham Asian Women's Project, letter dated 24th July 2015
- U) Janet McDermott, Manager of Member Services Women's Aid, letter dated 27th July 2015
- V) Sumanta Roy, Research and Policy Manager, Imkaan, letter dated 27th July 2015
- W) Lee Eggleston and Dianne Whitfield, Co-chairs Rape Crisis England and Wales, letter dated 23rd July 2015
- X) Sharleen Bugar, Student Social Worker Apna Haq, letter dated 24th July 2015
- Y) Sharleen Bugar, Student Social Worker, Apna Haq, letter dated 22nd July 2015
- Z) Dr Ravi Thiara, Principal Research Fellow, Warwick University, letter dated 27th July 2015

- AA) Sarah Champion MP, Member of Parliament for Rotherham, letter dated 16th July 2015
- BB) Michael Privot, ENAR Director, European Network Against Racism, letter dated 24th July 2015
- CC) Azizzum Akhtar, Chief Executive Officer, Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance, letter dated 23rd July 2015

In addition to letters of support we received expressions of concern from the following who were not able to prepare anything in time for this submission but requested for their names to be added to the list of concerned parties:

- i) Dr Aisha K Gill, Criminologist, University of Roehampton
- ii) Leila Taleb, JUST West Yorkshire
- iii) Gabriela Quevedo, Chair Latin American Women's Aid

Appendix 2: List of cited research and reports

Casey 2015 Report on Inspection of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

OFSTED 2014 Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and Review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board

Jay 2014 Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham 1997 - 2013

Roy and Thiara 2012 Vital Statistics: The experiences of Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee women & children facing violence & abuse. Imkaan and University of Warwick .

Roy and Thiara (2008) A Right to Exist: A Paper Looking at the Eradication of Specialist Services to BAMER Women and Children Fleeing Violence. Imkaan and University of Warwick

Roy et al (2013) Beyond the Labels: Women and girls' views on the 2013 mayoral strategy on violence against women and girls. Imkaan

Muslim Women's Network 2013 Unheard voices, the sexual exploitation of Asian girls and young women

Women's Aid and Rape Crisis England and Wales 2014 The Changing Landscape of Domestic and Sexual Violence Services All-Party Parliamentary Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence Inquiry

Eaves for Women 2015 Settling in: experiences of women on spousal visas in the UK

Women's Aid 2013 A growing crisis of unmet need

Thiara 2015, Reframing responses to domestic violence – focussing on services that have to 'pick up the pieces' and opening up opportunities for disclosure' presented at Women's Aid Conference 2015

Imkaan 2015 Lloyds Foundation presentation, presented at internal Lloyds seminar in July 2015

Bam-Hutchison, J. (2011) Race, Faith, and UK Policy: a brief history University of York
<http://www.york.ac.uk/ipup/projects/raceandfaith/discussion/bam-hutchison.html>

Hirst A. and Rinnie S. (2012) The impact of change in commissioning and funding on women-only services Equality and Human Rights Commission Research: Cambridge Policy Consultants

Manjoo 2015 Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against women, its causes and consequences United Nations

Anitha et al 2008 Forgotten women: domestic violence poverty and South Asian women with no recourse to public funds Saheli

2014 A call to end Violence Against Women and Girls Home office

WRC 2011 Hidden value: Demonstrating the extraordinary impact of women's voluntary and community organisations , Women's Resource Centre

Moosa and Woodroffe 2009 Poverty Pathways: Ethnic Minority Women's Livelihoods Fawcett Society

Fawcett society 2005 Powerless poor and passed over: Black and Minority Ethnic Women in the UK Fawcett Society

Gill 2004 Voicing the silent fear: South Asian Women's experiences of domestic violence, Howard Journal of Criminal Justice

Chantler et al 2006 Working with differences: issues for research and counselling practice

Bhardwaj A 2001 Growing up young, female and Asian in Britain : a report on self harm and suicide, Feminist Review

Bhugra and Desai 2002 Suicidal behaviour in South Asians in the UK, Crisis

Colucci and Montesinos 2013 Violence against women and suicide in the context of migration: a review of the literature and a call for action Suicidology Online

Izzidien 2009 I can't tell people what is happening at home: Domestic abuse within south Asian communities the specific needs of women, children and young people NSPCC

Office Children's Commissioner 2015 If only someone had listened : OCC enquiry into CSE in gangs and groups

Wilson 2004 Dreams struggles questions – South Asian women in Britain

Wilson 1978 Finding a voice- Asian women in Britain

2012 European Institute for Gender Equality Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States: violence against women – Victim Support

Muslim Women's Network 2015 Unheard voices: the sexual exploitation of Asian girls and young women,

Appendix 3: Sample of Apna Haq media contributions

- a) Emily Dugan, 21st July 2015, The Independent Forced Marriage: Asian victims being put at risk by closures of services set up to protect them, accessed online:
- b) Panorama Interview, 25th August 2014
- c) BBC radio Today programme, 27th August 2014
- d) BBC Newsnight , 27th August 2014
- e) New York times 28th August 2014
- f) Panorama, 28th August 2014
- g) Press Conference, Unity Centre, 29th August 2014
- h) BBC Sheffield Asian radio, 31st August 2014
- i) Eastern Eye telephone interview 1st September 2014
- j) Guardian, 1st September 2014
- h) BBC world news, 1st September 2014
- k) BBC radio Sheffield 2nd September 2014
- l) Radio 4 Women's Hour 2nd September 2014
- m) Sunday Times and Advertiser 2nd September 2014
- n) Unity FM 2nd September 2014
- o) BBC world news Sheffield 5th September 2014
- p) Inside Out 9th September 2014
- q) BBC radio Sheffield 9th September 2014
- r) Hallam FM 29th January 2015
- s) 5 live investigates 27th February 2015
- t) C4 news 27th February 2015
- u) BBC Asian Radio July 10th 2015

Appendix 4: Transcripts and testimonials from focus groups and discussions with women of Apna Haq

Focus groups were held on Monday 20th April 2015 (12 women), Tuesday 30th June (12 women), Wednesday 15th July (27 women) , Thursday 23rd July (21 women) and there are 21 service user written and translated testimonials. Some of these notes have been provided here.

Appendix 4d) Focus group notes from 23rd July 2015 , Apna Haq

17 service users and 3 management committee members representing Chinese Pakistani and Yemeni women

What does Ah mean to you?

Help and confidence in women's rights

can tell your story in a comfortable way as know they understand where your coming from if go any where else uneasy as they do not understand our issues or problems

Same culture same language same religion

Give us advice get us to use our faith as a source of strength

Culture they understand why know problems happen -what the solutions can be

Know how can change our minds to change into positive

Safe and support

Made welcome safe secret every thing you say

I feel very kind a friend

police referred me they made my home safe I feel very better before I was very anxious and worried now I feel I have power Yes I can !

Good reputation all know to come to them

Staff speaks 4 different south Asian and English languages

Can communicate in all situations

Very vulnerable situations through Apna Haq get confident

With other orgs felt pulled back a little as although females kept reserved as unsure to whether they would understand my issues whereas AH understood straight away

AH support that lots of women in community can go through problems so did not feel alone.

other org they were kind polite but deep inside I could not share how cos of difference did not open up heart to them to way upset and going through emotions did not feel they would understand Ah is the perfect org

Don't feel I can survive without AH

They have the background and understanding of the family base

Amazing to think of where I started from and where i have finished Ah help women to build selves

Not have that in the Yemeni community really important as member of the Yemeni community to join AH and take information back to Yemeni community so that women can approach AH for support

Ah helps us to recognise our own value -this stays with us for life

We had been rejected by family

Recognise that we have values self worth change to feel strong

Felt initially that no value as had been consistently been put down

Now self respect and confidence that can stand on own feet don't need anyone

Other orgs do not know anything about culture religion language

English people do not understand so cannot express ourselves so never reach a level of confidence

Does not trust own families as much as trust AH?

What opportunities for wider learning engagement?

Help with future planning as get stuck and don't have energy at beginning they guide and advice

Without AH women totally stranded as don't know the language

Can share everything

I have done 2 different courses have learnt about child abuse d/v laws of this country relating to those topics how women can get support if going through this

Did jobs skill course learnt about how to look for work do CV's interviews

My English has improved a great deal since my involvement with them

Forced marriage event recently learnt a lot that did nor know about so many opportunities to gain awareness of issues -knew knowledge

learnt how to report a crime if I see one happening if not report how I could support person going through this ie how to recognise if some one happy or not with what's happening to them through

their body language ie reading their face

Re Islamic divorce

a year ago ah gave us all the related information otherwise lots of stress and crying as traumatic experience as would not have known where to get Islamic divorce as till got this for my disabled daughter husband would have said I am husband even if had English divorce only way to get her away from him.

Need Islamic divorce for our future planning ie future marriage need to have Islamic divorce if have English divorce does not count

Need Islamic divorce in order for us to carry on our lives as we want

In Pakistan English divorce not recognized so cannot remarry there without Islamic divorce

Islamic divorce important for my life and my future

In order to change the Pakistani ID card ie get rid of the husbands details have to have Islamic divorce (if u have ID card do not pay visa fees)

English and Islamic divorce means the same but men still see you as their property if only English divorce

The nikkaha namah is a part of our lives defines who we are so end this part of our life start a new life

At ease peace in the community that divorced and that can get on with life and that you are not the ex husbands property

Even though English divorce he could still claim that she's my wife so still feel threatened not be able to make a new life but Islamic divorce gives closure

Discussion on Islamic divorce and why6 women able to get khulla ie Islamic right of woman to gain divorce within her own right

English people don't understand the khulla they just have the concept of divorce

Beauty of faith women have rights

What if no AH?

They don't understand us

They don't understand our culture

Interpreter will only say what we say-will not understand our feelings or where we are coming from

I do not understand any English at all

I couldn't sleep at night used to cry all night this lasted for 2 weeks-friend said go to AH she took me I did not know about benefits housing any of my rights -1st meeting I didn't know how to express myself- my brain was not working I could not understand what my own family members were saying I was so traumatized

when I met them I felt I can cope I don't need to be in such despair I felt a surge of energy in my body that I can survive that I can have life worth living for

it may have been that had not my friend rang me when she did to say that there is an org (AH) that I have spoken to and they have said will help you (I had been abandoned in Pakistan with my baby daughter) I had prepared the tablets that I was going to take to kill myself and my daughter as life as an abandoned wife was not worth living. I had experienced too much trauma while growing up as a girl and I could not face having to put my daughter through some thing similar-so I thought well both be better off dead.

young woman with learning disabilities 'the only residential I have ever gone on was with Apna Haq 12 years ago to the seaside without Ah women will never get those opportunities.

Learning disabled woman referred onto a Sheffield org but her and her mother requested that they be referred into AH

without AH our future will end I was in court 8 times as my husband was trying to get my son as well as my mother in law-the court had an interpreter who said different things to judge to what I said so I took the Ah worker and she explained to the interpreter that this is what I was saying not what she was thinking so judge agreed that the AH worker could interpret on my behalf my sister in law was told that send me to Ah. Judge had also been saying why is this woman changing her story it was not me it was the interpreter.

I was alone in hospital in Ramadan (after physical attack by husband) I felt life was going to end. Nurse told me about AH. I was totally reliant on my husband I did not know I could get benefits in my own right. I had never been on a bus before-they said catch the bus and get off and we'll meet you -I had to get great courage to agree to meet them-some one else had spoken to me ion the phone- they had said go to a refuge but I did not want that.

I met with the Ah worker=they told me about my children's rights and benefits =they sorted

everything for me-they became a life line for me

Question was asked that men will start coming to the AH offices if AH providing a 'low level of service to men' women asked for their opinions

When you meet a man you have the threat of being followed

A man might follow you and exploit you

Men coming to AH will cause trouble for Ah ie why u helping women and they will cause trouble for us they will tell our families that we were seen at Ah

They might say I saw your daughter at Ah

They might question and try and find out if we live on our own

They will get us into trouble for going to AH

They can tell their friends that we are single and can follow us

They might knock on our doors at night

If it's a woman only service it should be confidential like it is

If meet man on the way he will know and tell in the community that she has a problem

Should be no link of men with AH we will be scared to go to AH what if men there

Men will gossip

Won't feel comfortable going in

Will cause safety issues

Fear that man might be there

It's not Pakistan -its safe I don't have any relatives here so I don't mind men coming

I don't have relatives but a man can follow harass lead to exploitation

How feels as Muslim women in Rotherham

Edl in town threat throw stones smash windows mosque windows so felt threatened

Stopped from going out

Even when see 4 white people in a group fear to walk past

Don't go out after 5

Some one in town pushed against me really hard and ran off

Some times I wear a scarf on my head sometimes I don't-had scarf on my head was pulled really hard from behind me

English people give us dirty stares due to the cse issues

Told to stay at home as we are woman and kids and not safe in town for us

Scared to go out

edl march this Saturday -it was Eid -so as a single parent too sacred to go out-had planned to go to friends and then go together to next sales but too scared so stayed at home -did not go anywhere

Usually AH ring us and tell us that edl coming bit did not this time

Lots of police every where

Last time I had gone to park gate to shop when edl came -I had felt really threatened

While I was driving a white woman was swearing at me and the kids

White worker in the library every time talks aggressively I can tell from her facial features that she does not like me-its happened numerous times the manger is very nice. one day I was asking for help in using the internet she said i'm busy but when some one else called her she went straight away - I have stopped going as I didn't feel comfortable

Cashier at asda could see I was struggling I had my disabled son with me but she just sat there not doing anything to help with my packing

English boy passed me and said 'fucking Muslim' so I said I am Muslim what are you going to do about it so he put his head down in shame

Because of racism Islamaphobia have reservations about using generic services

Above examples of how we are treated as Muslims are a result of the grooming issues

Shopping centers /public services visible different treatment

White people think we are backward that we don't know any thing

They don't trust any thing we say they think give false stories

They need the answer to one thing but ask so many questions feel trapped they seem happy and smiling on the outside but we never know what they are really thinking

They treat us as second class citizens

Before a year ago really nice said hello conversation help support now suddenly changed to the extent that don't even say hello

Taken our rights away - make us feel that we can't live here -we have no place here-look at my colour and punish me

Children slandering the Quran-and this incident was dealt with unfairly as both parties were not heard

Children impacted on because of school life -outside of home-treatment on streets-racist comments behavior

Also feeling of mistreatment equality from teacher's lack of understanding really feel differently treated as a result of cse scandal

Neighbor brings his dog into my garden to do his business ie pooh-I have reported this and now he brings his dog to wee in my garden

Knowing that this is an Asian household-beer cans/bottles are thrown in the front garden

Appendix 4e) 21 Service User translated testimonials

Person 1

Age: 50 Nationality: Pakistani

No of children: 2 Children(s) Ages: 24 & 21 years

How many years have you been with Apna Haq?

20 years - Apna Haq's 1st service user

Why did you need Apna Haq's support? What were you going through?

My husband hit me I went to the police. They referred me to Apna Haq. Apna Haq got me injunction. To settle i needed support with benefits, accommodation. council asked me to leave the property because of rent arrears. I was really depressed. Since then I have been getting on-going support from them. on one occasion i went to hospital, interpreter came he was my relative and I felt unsafe. we had regular home visits from Apna Haq at the starting of support.

No in my opinion, no other organization can help me as much as Apna Haq has done because their organisation is consisting of all women and they speak the same language and share the same religious beliefs so they would be able to really understand my worries.

1. My biggest worry is my language barrier. I could not tell how I was feeling and what to say to a white person. This is why Apna Haq is very beneficial for me. Also because with white people there are sometimes males and sometimes females so if there are men present then I cannot talk openly with them.
2. My circumstances were already extremely distressing and on top of that, white people don't understand our reason for our worries and neither do I understand their language so how can I answer the questions they ask me.
3. Lack of language creates lots of misunderstanding i.e, they think you understand- you respond but have not understood- creates more problems as they then can think that you are lying or changing your story.
4. Cannot approach services directly need an interpreter?

Cannot trust interpreters as don't know them. Feel nervous to talk to strangers.

Person 2:

- 1) I am a 38 year old Pakistani woman. I have two children; my son is fifteen and my daughter is 10 year old.
- 2) I didn't know the English language. I did not have a car, so I always needed help of someone so she always came to my house.
- 3) From past 15 years.
 - The social service had told me about Apna Haq.
 - Apna haq organisation has helped me in all aspects especially when my daughter was very ill.
 - They also helped me to fill in forms for my children's school.
 - All my fears that I had in my heart were gone.
 - Now I can go forward in life.

4) No, in my opinion there isn't any other organisation. Once my husband had hit me so I phoned police. They had said to me that they will take me and my son away on a certain day but they never came and they never contacted me either. Then Apna Haq helped me.

I was going through a very tough time; I would not know what I would have done or where I would have gone. Maybe I would have taken my life quite possibly.

When I left home, I was extremely distressed. My son was disabled and it was a very difficult time for me. Apna haq helped me a lot to get through this tough time.

I was very worried because I did not have a house of my own. I feared that every body would laugh at me if I was going to tell the people in the community and I was worried about what would people say.

Person 3:

I am 44 years old. I don't have any kids. I have joined Apna haq from past 18 months. I came to England with my husband I didn't know anybody else here. I didn't have any relative. When I had a fight with my husband, apna haq provided me with some support.

Because of my parents and family honour I had to bear the cruelty for a long time, when it got very unbearable I sought Apna Haq's support.

When I was going through this thought if I told someone that would create more problems. I was afraid of what the community would say. Nobody could support me the way apna haq did. Once I went to the jobcentre to sign on, I couldn't speak English they had a go at me, they wouldn't have done it if I could speak English. My situation would have been worst without apna Haq's help. I can share anything with apna haq.

My husband called the police at 3am, police looked to the both of us, and the house was in my husband's name. At 3am the policeman asked me to take my belongings and go and stay with the friend, I had no one where I could go at 3am in the morning. I had no money on me. I rang Izbeth from Apna haq at 5am and she was off from work. She rang her colleague Razia and she helped me. I am very thankful of apna haq. I have found out this from Miriam shah. She came to my house when my husband was beating me; she rang Izbeth from Apna haq for help. Apna had helped me to fill in the benefits form.

Person 4:

- 1) I am 45 years old.
- 2) I have 6 children and their ages are as follows: 22,21,20,16,13,9
- 3) I have been getting help from Apna haq for the past 15 years. I had lots of difficulties, because of my husband as he used to stay out a lot with his girlfriend. He did not give any financial support at home. Then Apna haq helped me to get separated from my husband.
- 4) When I was faced with these difficulties then I had a feeling that I will not be able to escape from these difficulties. But when I came across Apna haq organisation then all my worries actually turned into happiness. Their support and help gave me lots of courage and gave me strength.
- 5) The circumstances I was going through, I was thinking at that time that what is going to happen now, everything is finished. I had lost hope. But Apna haq made me feel loved as though I was their own family and helped me resolve my problem. My fear was that if I left home, where will I go and what will I do. I could not make sense of anything. Then I called Apna haq and they gave me advice and it took some time but gradually I started to come out of my worries.

As far as I know, there is no other organisation as helpful as Apna haq.

Since I have been with apna haq, I have not needed to use the services of any other (English) people. I tried once to use their services but I did not get any reply. I believe that if Apna haq wasn't there for me and didn't support me then my circumstances would have worsened drastically.

In my opinion, when a woman is going through some cruel treatment, she should definitely raise voice for her rights. And she should also get help from these organisations.

Person 5

In 2009, when my husband started beating me up. I went to police station and they asked me to seek help from Apna Haq. Apna Haq's workers came to my house and helped me with everything. I didn't know anything about mortgage, benefits, bills, etc. Apna Haq helped me to sort out everything.

I have to go through this because I didn't have confidence. And I didn't know who to ask for help. I couldn't tell anybody about my problems. Apna haq is still helping me in many matters. Their services are very confidential and trustworthy. I can't even imagine leaving Apna haq.

I was really worried about my kids that how am I going to raise them up. I was not good at English and I didn't know hoe to deal with different affairs outside the house as I was house wife. Apna haq gave me moral support.

I was afraid of sharing anything with anybody due to family honour. I had lack of confidence. My husband took advantage of that. I have found out about Apna haq from police.

Apna haq helped me and my children to build our confidence and other matters regarding school. They helped us in all matters; we didn't know how to settle in to new environment. After getting help from apna haq, we can see change in our life; children are getting good education and feeling more confident. I have done few courses through Apna haq which helped me a lot in my life.

No other organisation can help like Apna haq because there is no language barrier. And they understand our language. Without Apna haq help we can't get through to other organisations.

Citizens Advice Bureau filled the form in for my daughter's disability allowance. But they didn't fill it in properly and got rejected. But later on Apna haq helped me and filled in the form I have got the benefit approved. CAB did not help me in any way.

If Apna haq had not helped me I would have been in jail or psychotic ward by now. My mental health was really bad. My GP referred me for counselling sessions. Apna haq helped me in all matters and listened to me and kept everything private and confidential.

Person 6:

- 1) I am 38 years old
- 2) I have 4 children and their ages are: 12,11,8,7
- 3) I have been seeking help for past five year and I still need help
- 4) Me and my children were facing difficulties and it was effecting them badly
- 5) If we haven't had contacted Apna Haq, our circumstances had been worst
- 6) I used to think if our life is going to get better or not
- 7) I was always worried about my kids future
- 8) I think nobody can help like Apna Haq
- 9) Can't get access to the other services due to the language barrier

10) I wouldn't have been able to do anything on my own. Our life was hard. Apna Haq's support has saved our children's and make their future better

Person 7:

1) I am 32 years

2) I have 2 children, my daughter is 6 years old and my son is 5 months old

3) I have approached Apna Haq in 2009 and used their services for 2-3 years

4) My husband is suffering from mental health and he doesn't even go to the doctors, I struggle with the English language. I didn't have house to live in, I had other problems that's why I approached Apna Haq

5) When I was really worried I used to feel helpless and I wanted to leave everything and go away, but I used to think about my daughter that she needs both parents, then I used to think if I leave who will look after my husband as there was nobody else to look after him.

6) When I was going through bad time I was thinking when is it going to get better and when is life going to be normal and wishing that my children can have normal life. When is my husband's health going to get better, when can we have normal married life.

7) I used to be scared of my husband's mood. I was scared when he is going to get angry out of blue and starts hitting me. Because my husband starts hitting me in front of other people without realising I used to get embarrassed and I use to get scared.

8) I found out about Apna Haq through my sister in law's friend

9) Apna haq helped me with the housing issue and they advised me regarding my husband's treatment and told me which benefit we are entitled to. When I used to get really worried I used to talk to Apna Haq.

Person 8:

When I went to give theory test then the Apna haq worker looked after my baby 4 times. And she went with me and when I needed to move my house, she also helped me then. Because of Apna haq, I learnt to know my rights. There is also another thing that we struggle with is understanding English language. I got lots of help from Apna haq, for example child tax credit and benefits or anything where I needed help, and they always

provided it. I had become very isolated in my life and didn't feel like I had a life. When I met Apna haq I got to know about a lot of things and I am becoming independent now.

Person 9 : Age: 45

Nationality: British Pakistani

No of children: 2

Children(s) Ages: 23 & 20 Males

How many years have you been with Apna Haq?

15 years

Why did you need Apna Haq's support? What were you going through?

My friend informed me that women get support with Apna Haq who suffer domestic violence and it is confidential and non-judgemental service. I use to suffer from severe head aches, I got emotional support. My husband left me it caused me lots of stress having to bring up young children. They helped me to change my life and I became a dinner lady and now am a foster carer.

Husband left me, with house on mortgage and two young children.

He ran away with White woman

Didn't give money, didn't care about the children, no food for wife or children or gifts.

He used to shout, scream and was physically abusive towards me.

Used to come home in early hours.

One incident, when he hit me - he said that he will burn me and children with petrol - this was the only time I called the police.

Had you ever considered leaving the situation you were in? If no, what was it that prevented you from doing that?

No. due to bringing shame/ izzat within own home, family laughing, children did not tell at school as children would laugh. I did not tell family and neighbours that he left.

What were your thoughts and feelings at the time about the situation you were in?

Didn't want to live, how would I live, 2 children, mortgage

Scared, cant trust him, he would kill me and both my boys.

What were your fears?

Scared for life and children, how would I manage.

Bank came - scared that I will lose house, gave 1 weeks notice - told my brother-in-law, family and friends. Family friends paid me arrears on mortgage. Brother-in-law told husband to put her details on mortgage.

Husband applied to courts to see children - he didn't turn up. Husband also tried to claim house - judge asked her if she could look after the house, she replied yes that she can pay mortgage as family will support her.

He used to promise my children every Saturday that he will come and he didn't.

How did you find out about Apna Haq?

Friend told me, when I was crying, saying that I can not fill in form, I have got no family to support me.

What support has Apna Haq provided; For you

Letters, home visits, learn to live for children, emotionally support as said I haven't got life. Phoned Apna Haq, they were flexible to see me, even late. Provided appropriate support, visits - talk to them, they support you, feel a lot better, support provided was very helpful, hospital, dentist appointment, English classes, training courses, improved English so I thought of fostering.

I feel very proud to foster, only done because of Apna Haq support, no-one else can give me support. I now know how many organisations are open. Apna Haq gives advice to anyone, whenever they call, I have asked for advice on fostering and religious questions and they have given me appropriate advice by getting the right information.

& For your children

Trips for children, meeting with school due to childrens issues.

What difference has this support made to you and your children's lives?

Benefited me a lot, health better, "I can do It" attitude, worker encouraged me.

My one son is working the other one is at university.

How do you feel about another service providing the support that Apna Haq provides?

I am not happy, would not be able to open, you can have 5 friends but you can only open up with 1. it is exactly the same with Apna Haq's organisation. I am now standing on my feet, I have become a foster carer due to Apna Haq. Apna Haq have given me a 2nd life. I refused to go to advice centre I only took on Apna Haq's support. Workers in other organisations do not take notice, they just write on paper.

Give us an example of how you were treated by a generic service? Did they understand your needs if not why not?

They just write down, see and talk about it, - sorry can't help you. If you get late, they say sorry you are late therefore we are unable to see you. Apna Haq will see you, if support worker is busy someone else will see you, been to other places i.e. advice centre they say come back next week.

What do you think your situation would be now if you had not got support from Apna Haq?

Not a foster carer, unable to look after my sons. Apna Haq have showed me way, made me stand on feet. Apna Haq is like a family part.

Do you feel that a BME woman going through domestic violence will go to the police social services or to a generic organisation?

NO, due to English language, unaware of support, police will come arrest husband and in a couple of hours will release him. Then he comes home and gives more grief.

If you call a generic organisation most time the phone goes to voicemail so they dont answer and only call back to give appointment.

Person 10:

I can feel that Apna haq is helpful and welcomes everyone and good organisation. Apna haq had given me a letter to prove to the court and spent time talking to me and made me and my children feel better. Now, Apna haq workers try to look after my feelings, they talk and listen to me and believe me, it is different than people working in the court. I feel another service they don't want to understand me and don't want to know how I feel. But Apna haq welcomes me anytime and try to help me. I had been in the family court in Doncaster; I don't think they try to help me because i'm Thai. If I don't have someone to

talk and listen to me from Apna Haq, I will get no power to move on. I think we should go to Apna Haq first as police and social services don't want to listen to foreigner. Because I think about my children and I know I don't have much things to fight with him because it's not my country. I need to live with this situation for more than ten years because I think about my children's. I feel very sad, unhappy, don't want to live anymore and I try to talk to myself to keep moving forward for my children. Everyday I feel this house is not safe for me and my children. Need to walk with a feeling of fear.

Person 11

1. I feel very uncomfortable and dissatisfied about sacrificing this organisation which I have been actively involved with. As I am not there with confidence. It is not easy to change while I am still trying to come to grips with my independence.
2. Apna Haq is where I am getting continuous help so I would not like to consider any other option that would make me feel less of myself. She thought of not getting them support is not something I would like to entertain.
3. I have not been assisted by any other organisation throughout my unpleasant experience. I tried a number of organisations including the N.H.S. but was not given any assistance. I never get the help I now receive and was passed from one place to the next without success.
4. A) I am a bme woman and I did not get help from the police- No I will not go or encourage anyone to go the police.
B) Social Services- No, I have absolutely no idea of the involvement of social services in Domestic Violence.
C) Did not ever get the assistance that I needed from a generic organisation- No.

When I had my situation I did want to leave

Where would I go? Who do turn to? Where do I get the support?

There was nowhere to go no one to speak to and totally no support for me to access.

There was no financial support or communication support and even often being stabbed when I left the hospital the police did not guide me to any supportive group or organisation. I was left alone and isolated and unsupported.

The thought of my situation is horrendous and I felt helpless and isolated with no one to communicate with. I wanted to commit suicide. I wanted to jump through the window. I never wanted to be alone with the man I was married. I felt isolated and always

uncomfortable. It was not even look at programs I enjoyed on the television. Once I was almost killed for talking to the church minister (who was a woman)

Well my fears were a reality I was almost killed by being stabbed a number of times. I was abused

1. Domestic
2. Financial
3. Sexually

I was recommended to Apna Haq from the Red Cross.

1. I have no minors but was placed with other organisations and there is constant contact and I am involved in conference and seminars which is informative and assisting in confidence building.
2. The support from Apna Haq is what I would recommend to other women who suffer the difficulties that I suffer. The support that I am happy to be involved with but is somewhat sad that I did not access earlier.

Person 12:

I came to know of Apna haq from a leaflet. Some people around me gave me information about Apna haq. I also got information about AH from the doctor's surgery. I receive all kinds of support from AH. It's hard to share everything but I will share a few things. Firstly, the cultural aspect, the Asian workers really understand me and any other problems I share. They fully understand the problem and solve it. My problems were about house, immigration and about benefits which are resolved now. Every family has a different culture. We may share the same religion but our culture is different.

Apna haq offered all the support from taking the kids to mosque, school and doing the shopping. They tell us about safety. They have given me so much courage to stand on my feet. Apna haq really pushes individuals to go forward and move on in life.

They sent me to college. There is no other organisation that can support us like they do. I wish that this organisation always stays for women and children like us. When I met with Apna haq workers, my children were very upset that they were homeless. School is far from home. Mosque problem. Apna Haq give all support to my children. Take my kids to school and mosque. They arrange to take parents and kids on days out. If I didn't get any support from Apna haq then life would have been very difficult for me. As I didn't know anything about doctors, schools, shopping centres and I didn't know English. How Apna

haq supported my children =, I wouldn't have been able to manage without them as it was a very tough time. But it's only become easy because of Apna haq.

I wanted to leave the situation because I went through some hard time. When I came here, everyone said that there are English regulations in place and that I don't know the language so I can't do anything. I spent the first 4 years with great difficulty. I felt very isolated and imprisoned as nobody understood my language and feelings.

In that situation, all I could think was how to get out of that situation. I was thinking that if I get in touch with police then they wouldn't understand me fully and my in-laws can speak English so police would listen to them more and understand them more. I lived with in-laws at that time and they were the cause of tribulations for me and my children. I feared that if I leave the house where I lived with my in-laws, then I would have no where to go as I didn't have any of my own family here either.

Person 13.

Age: 34 Nationality: Roma

No of children: 6 Children(s) Ages: 5,6,7,10,11, 15

How many years have you been with Apna Haq?

Why did you need Apna Haq's support? What were you going through? hears about Apna Haq for a 1st time when Mr Maros Kovac was still supporting people in community. He introduced me to two women and it was when I had problems with my partner due ti domestic violence and his alcohol drinking. That time I was seriously considering to leave him. Since then Apna Haq has been helping me in every step of my life (with food, benefits) and I'm very grateful.

First it was Mrs Pavla supporting me, but unfortunately after a while she stopped and I don't really know why. Then I got to meet Mrs Jana who works at Apna Haq now. She is very good and does her best to sort anything out for me. I do appreciate everything she has done for me. She is my gold, my good luck.

Since then I've been very happy, started a new life in-----, even though first few months were really hard. I used to cry a lot, didn't have any friends around and was all alone to look after kids. It improved a lot since then, I made some friends. I am very happy. I don't want to leave ----- any more and it is thanks to Apna Haq. This is a big "thank you" to everybody at Apna Haq from ----- and kids.

Person 14:

No I had never been able to think that my problems could get solves like this. Because I don't know how could I do this and I am scared about my daughter and my family because my husband threat and kidnapped my sisters. That time I thought I finished my life because I dint know about anything. I don't know about my and my daughter rights.

They solved my immigration problem because when I came here I didn't have a visa. They made an appointment with solicitor and sent my passport to home office. Then they find a place in refuge for me. I lived there for 4 months. After that they applied for a house for me in Rotherham council and they helped me claim benefits, and still I have more problems in my life they still help me with coming to terms with my problems. Apna haq knows about our culture and they also know about the religion and they also understand the mental situation of women in these circumstances.

They advised me on how to help my child in education and which school is best for the child. They also gave me information on how to stay safe myself and keep my children safe too. There is still ongoing support from the staff members, they have helped me to improve my English language and build in confidence. Now I can speak with confidence. My life is very different now. Apna haq emotionally supported me. And they told me about mine and my daughters rights in this country.

I have never one to any other organisation because I have never trusted any other and I am not comfortable with any other organisation.

If Apna haq did not intervene with the problems in my life as I approached them, if the problems persisted I would've had a nervous breakdown.

Person 16:

Many times I thought about this but for this reason, I could not leave this situation, because me and my family didn't feel safe that if somebody could help me or not because I didn't trust anyone.

Also I could not take this step because of my religion. I went through a very difficult time. From the very first day I didn't make a move. I wished that if there was a woman from the same ethnic background and who spoke my language, who would be able to understand my current situation. One of my female friends, who actually belonged to my country, told me about Apna haq that the Apna haq organisation consists of people who spoke my language and they belonged to my culture, it is that moment when I thought of leaving my house and the family. Now, I feel that if I had taken this step sooner then my life would

have improved a lot earlier. Apna haq supported me limitlessly. I am very happy and now I am successful. This is only happened because of Apna haq. I am very grateful that organisations such as apna haq exist and this also helped me to not stray from my religion.

Person 17:

A friend told me about Apna haq that I should go to them as they will be able support me in every way possible So I contacted them and they gave me support.

Apna haq sorted my accommodation, living expenses and the Visa etc. They also used to read out all the letters for me. Whenever I needed to speak over the phone, they would make calls for me as it was very difficult due to me knowing no English.

The child benefit was not granted to me but Apna haq got that approved for me. I could not feed my child either, so Apna haq workers helped me.

There were many changes in me and my child's life. But today I have no worries.

Whenever there is a problem, I contact Apna haq and they always resolve it. I always wonder that what I would have done without them.

Many times I thought of getting rid of my troubles but I could not do it due to my circumstances. I kept bearing the sorrows continuously but not once did my family thought that I am taking it all. They were always cruel to me. In the end, they had beaten me and kicked me out of the house. In my life, there were too many challenges that I did not have the forbearance for. Being homeless, my child did not have even a milk bottle for the milk. It was the most adverse circumstances. I didn't have anything, no clothes, no shelter etc. I wondered what is going to happen to me, and who will help me. I would think all the time that these are the worst days of my life. When I contacted Apna haq, they helped me in every way possible. The matter had been taken to the court. My husband and mother-in-law said that they would take my child off me. I was very worried that I would rather die than to have my child taken away from me.

I had this fear that I will be sent back to Pakistan and what would I do there. My son was here. I feared that my ill father will not be able to bear my grief. My mother had already passed away 21 years ago.

I think that Apna haq is the best organisation as no one else could offer this much help to us as much as they have. Our circumstances were such that no body else could have solved them.

If I didn't receive the help and support from them, then right now I would be in great difficulty. I would not have been able to do everything. Apna haq staff really understand me and helped me. In my opinion, Apna haq is the best organisation.

Person 18:

I went to the market, and this is where I met the apna haq workers. I told them about myself that I need help. They gave me their contact number and address.

I received the help I needed and I am still receiving. They organised a place for me to live, got my children admitted into school, sorted all the next expenses of my house, and got us out of many difficulties. They helped children get a place in the play group. Sometimes looked after my children and cooperated with them very well.

The fear that we had in our life before, the Apna haq staff eliminated that fear. Now, today I can think freely about myself and I know about mine and my children's rights. Now my kids don't feel that our mother can't do anything for us. The staff also told us about health and safety and sent us on a course about health and safety.

Person 19

I was in hospital when my daughter was born and she wasn't breathing. She was in ICU and I was really worried. Then I met a social worker who gave the contact for apna haq organisation. She asked me to get in touch with them and that they would be able to help me. That's how I found out about apna haq.

I had language barrier but apna haq really helped me. They helped me with the court case by accompanying me to see the lawyer. I didn't understand the bills and dealing with social security, they also helped me to resolve the school dinners. They provided really good support to me and my kids. Whatever there is a problem my children ask me to contact apna haq as they know that apna haq is very helpful? My children are grown up now but I still need apna Haq's support and they still sort my problems out.

I think every woman needs apna haq support.

Person 20

I am Pakistani. I am 28 years old and I don't have any children. It's been one and half years I know Apna Haq. They helped me a lot when I needed a house to live. So they helped me and I am living in a flat.

There is only one Apna Haq centre where we can go and trust because it's totally confidential and trustworthy centre. People are really helpful and nice. They understand need and requirement of people who need most help in crisis.

Person 21 (woman in her 30's with learning disabilities)

People from other services come to help but talk to family members and not to us

Question asked to why she thought this was ?

I don't know but may be colour of us

They feel I cant understand speak English because I wear a hijab/scarf

I don't know how to speak back to them

Appendix 5 : Women of Apna Haq demographics (2014- 2015 financial year)

Table 1.3 Ethnic Identity of women of Apna Haq

Age	Service Users	Rotherham (census 2011) ⁴
South Asian	73.6%	42.47%
Black African, Black Caribbean and Black other	1.3%	9.38%
Chinese and other Asian	1.3%	8.64%
Arab	7.89%	2.47%
White other	11.8%	20.37%
Mixed and other	3.94%	16.04%

Appendix 6 : Examples of recent local work

'Stop it now' seminar on 27 Nov 2013

Stop it Now! UK and Ireland is a child sexual abuse prevention campaign which supports adults to play their part in prevention through providing sound information. Through this

⁴ BME population of Rotherham is 8.1%. The census figures provided here are ethnic identity as a percentage of the BME population in Rotherham, rounded to the nearest .00

child abuse awareness programme 'adults who care for children can act to stop child abuse. This session was run at the Unity Centre targeting Apna Haq staff and service users. 12 women took part in the programme.

New Muslims Project Domestic Violence 24th May 2013

The Sheffield New Muslim Project provides help and support to people who have converted to or are interested in learning more about Islam. "An Islamic Perspective on Domestic Violence" presented by Apna Haq Chief Executive Zlakha Ahmed who attended a study circle, attended by 15 women of mixed nationalities and ran an hours session on violence against women issues focussing on domestic violence and support available for women.

Developing links with Roma communities/wider communities

8th April 2013 Eastwood Mission Church Fire Day, targeting of Roma community: Apna Haq advocacy staff facilitated 2 workshops street dance and Mehndi engaged with 50 Roma women, men and young children raising awareness of Apna Haq and the support it offers

Meeting with Alnaar Clayton at Mowbray gardens library with Chief executive and Roma worker to share ideas on how target Roma women –agreed to develop a book mark with support for DV in different languages that could be given out to women within the library sessions

20th May 2013 Ferham Children's Centre community day: Advocacy workers stall with displays carried out mehndi and balloons for children

15th June 2013 Broom Valley summer fare: Advocacy workers stall with mehndi and balloons for children

3 /4th August 2013 Rotherham Show: Advocacy workers did stall with Mehndi and balloons

6th January 2014 Recruited new Roma worker to support Roma and EU women

Women's Development work:

Black women's history month women's session:

A session was facilitated between a group of Roma, Pakistani, Chinese and Malaysian women covering the following:

Why Black history month?

Where from the world are we originally from? maps world map

Our language lifestyles climate religion foods

Why we came to Britain

How we live and are treated in Britain

Recruitment of tutor for Peoples Health Trust Work

Peoples Health Trust group set up and running on a weekly basis with crèche support 20 women registered. Back ground, Apna Haq has always had a philosophy of doing things with women and not just to them, thus we developed our protocol's and procedures to ensure that we had 70% of involvement on our management committee from service users.

Since we became a BME women's organisation 3 years ago, we were acutely aware that we needed to some development work with women from different community groups to get them to a position where they felt comfortable with being members of Apna Haq committee, thus we set up an advisory committee for women to join who were not quite ready.

Since the end of January 2014 we have been running a women's group targeting women from various BME communities including those already involved with our committee and advisory group and doing a planned piece of learning. The aim of which is to skill them up with knowledge understanding of how to campaign and lobby with agencies, with councillors and their MP's to make lives of the women and children within their communities better.

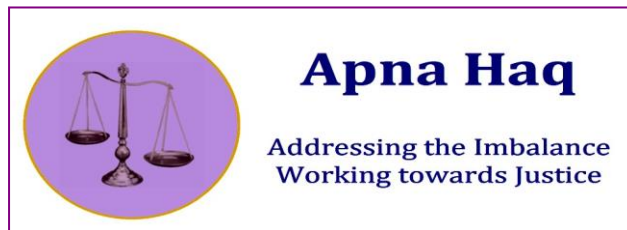
REBOUNCE

The group members are a mixture of existing Apna Haq board members and women who are currently not board members. Through our specific recruitment of the non board members we have had discussions with each of them to them becoming potential board members to which they have expressed an interest. We have begun the process of inducting them into the board and will be recruiting them in the forth coming months as board members. This will strengthen not only our

organisation Apna Haq, but also the voice and experience of BME women in Rotherham, as Apna Haq will be able to represent a broad range of bme women from different communities. Their involvement with us will last for years to come. They also are and will continue to engage with other pieces of work, organisations and contribute their own thoughts experiences and views thus making Rotherham a much better town for BME women to live in. The women have begun to engage with local decision making structures and started to attend some strategic meetings.

Join me on the Bridge Event

Councillor Jo Burton requested for the Labour party to be able to use the picture with Langa holding the banner for their upcoming campaign



Rebounce Conference 13th March 2015

Agenda

9.30-10.00	Registration and refreshments
10.00-10.15	Welcome and housekeeping. Brief history and context of the day
10.15-10.25	Reading - ' Does anyone care if you are alive' Capturing the events ' Slide Show'
10.25-10.45	Presentation - Miles Crompton Policy and Partnership Officer 'Profile of BME Women in Rotherham'
10.45-10.55	'Hot Stones' - A short play Rebounce Group in conjunction with Open Minds Theatre

10.55-11.15	Questions and Discussion - 'Hot Stones' Reading - 'Violence'
11.15-11.25	Comfort Break
11.25-11.45	Speaker - Amrit Wilson, Writer and Activist
11.45-12.05	Speaker - Chief Superintendent Jason Harwin, Rotherham District Commander Reading ' Victorious Women of Rotherham'
12.05-12.20	Janet McDermott Capacity Building Manager, Imkaan and Women's Aid Partnership - National Quality Standards
12.20 - 1.00	Buffet Lunch and Networking
1.00-1.40	Workshops
1.40-1.55	Feedback and Summary of Workshops
1.55-2.20	Speaker - Sarah Champion Certificate Presentation by Sarah Champion
2.20-2.30	Reading – 'Equality' by Maya Angelou Evaluation and close

Apna Haq's Delivery of Training

Work with schools

Continuation of delivery of 2 sessions on Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage with year 10 at Brinsworth Comprehensive School consisting of 10 groups

RMBC

Apna Haq is commissioned by RMBC to deliver a day's training on Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence. Last year we delivered 2 days consisting of 40 professionals from a range of agencies.

Multi Agency Domestic Abuse Awareness Delivery

Apna Haq Co-delivers the above trainings in partnership with other agencies. Last year we co-delivered 3 days training, consisting of 60 attendees.

CAMHS (Child Adolescent Mental Health Services)

domestic violence schools workshop

' Honour based violence challenging our assumptions'

Training for SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre)

staff on sexual exploitation issues for BME Women

Ashina Bridge The Gap

Ashiana were commissioned by the Forced Marriage Unit to work with young people and the community to highlight the issue of Forced Marriage across South Yorkshire. Apna Haq were involved in both the steering committee for this piece of work and in presenting its work in schools at the subsequent community events.

Forced marriage Workshop by Imkaan & Rights of Women

Apna Haq worked in conjunction with Imkaan and Rights of Women to enable them to deliver 2 forced marriage workshops, one targeting saviours and the other for professionals.

15 service users took part in the morning workshop and 80 professionals attended the afternoon workshop.

Advocacy With Other Agencies

Meeting with local authorities Public Health Specialist (Mental Health for all ages and domestic abuse) and RMBC regarding women with no recourse being charged for medical records –agreed that issue would be taken to the regional board to get a decision for GP's not to charge women under these circumstances

Meeting with Councillor raising issues women face at job centres resulted in

Advocacy, staff meeting with DWP manager to talk through these issues to look at how to resolve

Presentations

4th May 2013 Sexual exploitation presentation to DAPG

18th June 2013 Freedom without Fear Platform on sexual violence

13th January Sexual exploitation presentation to Gold Sexual Exploitation Group

4th March presentation to CSE forum re sexual exploitation

Research/Submissions

Case Study Contribution to Muslim Women's Network

This is an action based research project which will aim to examine powerlessness in decision making processes amongst the most marginalised and vulnerable South Asian women in the context of poverty, family and community life in the UK.

15-20 in-depth interviews will be carried out with women from a range of minority, largely South Asian backgrounds, in order to ascertain how and to what extent they are constrained by their circumstances from making their own decisions on matters that impact on their equality and access to justice and to what extent they obtain justice using religious mechanisms for arbitration, ie sharia councils or tribunals or religious leaders or other forums. The research will culminate in a report that will be disseminated widely to black and minority women, key policy forums, professionals and other interested individuals and organisations across the UK.

12 service users took part in the use of the Khulla through the Islamic Shariah councils women received a £10 gift voucher.

Child Abuse Research.

The chief Executive met with researcher Dr Karen Harrison to talk through service users experiences of the below:

The project aims to explore whether sexual offending in South Asian communities truly remains behind closed doors as popularly perceived. Further, it investigates the degree to which South Asian victims/survivors draw upon informal or formal means of support and redress. Guiding questions for this research then include: How usual is it for the victim's/survivor's local community, or specific members of the community (such as faith leaders), to be presented with allegations of sexual abuse? If so, how are these dealt with? The study also seeks to examine whether there is any interaction with the police in such cases, even if on an informal basis, and whether support for victims is also (or alternatively) sought from local charities or support groups. If informal mechanisms are identified, the research will seek to evaluate their effectiveness and appropriateness. If you have any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact us. Project Information Sheet attached.

Undergraduate Researcher of the Criminology Division at Nottingham Trent University

To explore the possible reluctance within the Indian community to report cases of child abuse. As part of the research representative at Apna Haq were interviewed that had first-hand experiences in dealing with victims of child abuse.

Researcher's feedback: "As a British born individual with an Indian heritage, it was very important for me to unfold the issues surrounding the silence of child abuse within a community that obscures such an appalling crimes. In interviewing yourself, I was able to gain a depth of understanding from a point of view of a specialist that has first hand experience in dealing with victims. This was an invaluable experience, which has enriched my dissertation entirely. With this email I have attached a completed copy of my dissertation, and I am pleased to inform you that it has been awarded a 2:1. This would not have been possible without your permission to conduct the interview, of which I am very grateful for. This dissertation amounts to a large proportion of my degree, therefore the grade I achieved was huge accomplishment for me. I cannot express enough how appreciative I am for being granted the opportunity to carry out my research alongside such a wonderful organisation."

Human Rights Abuses Submission on Spiritual Abuse

The purpose of our doing the submission was to ensure that this type of abuse was given the recognition in that agencies need to become aware and develop policies practises that enable them to engage with families, young people who may fall prey or have done so, to these types of practises. Also the abusive practises need to be reported and action taken on. Which will only happen once the mainstream acknowledges that these practises exist, hence our submission.

Influencing

20th May 2013 Tracy Cheetham Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner work of Apna Haq

29th November 2013 Tea and cakes with Sarah champion

7th January 2014 meeting with Alexis sexual exploitation work review

10th January Sarah champions office sexual exploitation of Roma children

Strategic Work

16th may RMBC scrutiny panel re d/v

17th Sep CAADa self assessment process LA + partners

Health watch steering committee

Attendance at Domestic Abuse Priority group meetings

Voluntary sector LSP (local strategic Partnership)

National Level Work

NICE

National Institute of Health & Clinical Excellence

NICE standards continued development launched February 2014.

Domestic violence and abuse: how health services, social care and the organisations they work with can respond effectively The guidance is for health and social care commissioners, specialist domestic violence and abuse, staff and others whose work may bring them into contact with people who experience or perpetrate domestic violence and abuse. In addition it may be of interest to members of the public.

Vida Sheffield

Chief executive was asked to attend a meeting organised by Maureen Storey the lead worker from VIDA to share her experiences in developing the NICE standards so that the Sheffield group could determine their response to the NICE guidance consultation that was being undertaken.

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph50

Vida Sheffield formerly known as the Sheffield Domestic Abuse Forum is a multi-agency partnership of voluntary and statutory sector agencies working together .

Children's Commission

Final multi agency day on developing national guidance for sexual exploitation work' Apna Haq Chief Executive was invited to attend to contribute towards recommendations.

Freedom Without Fear Platform

It was set up in London UK, in solidarity with the anti-rape movement in India. It is an arena for Black, South Asian and 'Minority Ethnic' women to lead discussions on the violence against women and girls; to counter imperialist racist discourse that UK mainstream media bombards us with and; to highlight the co-opting of violence against women and girls issues by various groups who seek to further their own racist/ anti-immigration/Islamophobic agendas.

Chief Executive was asked to join the discussion.

UKREN

The UK Race and Europe Network (UKREN) is a network of local and national organisations across Great Britain and Northern Ireland that work to combat race discrimination within a

European context. It aims to provide policy makers with a UK civil society perspective on European race equality issues and to encourage a positive public debate on race in Europe.

Chief Executive was invited on the question time TV programme to ask questions to the speakers.

International Level Work

WISE-Forced Marriage and Child Bride

The Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality (WISE) is a global program, social network and grassroots social justice movement led by Muslim women

Apna Haq Chief Executive, as part of her role as a WISE Shura Council member has been contributing experiences knowledge and understanding towards Forced Marriage and child bride issues

WISE www.wisemuslimwomen.org/about/shuracouncil

Islamic Channel

With headquarters in Central London, Islam Channel provides alternative news, current affairs and entertainment programming from an Islamic perspective. Viewers come from all over the world from at least 45 different muslim countries including the UK and Pakistan.

A sky TV channel , the Islam Channel ran an hours programme where the subject matter was domestic violence. Apna Haq Chief executive was invited as a guest speaker. Viewers were able to ring in which they did to ask questions regarding domestic violence. The other guest speaker was an Imaam from London, so it was quite a good show, with the Imaam also stating that he had

many women approached him for support for domestic violence issues. He gave examples from Islam that showed that violence was not acceptable.

WAVE Country Report-Case Study Roma Service User

Apna Haq submitted a case study of the experience of a Roma survivor which was included in the WAVE 2013 report.

The WAVE Country Report 2013 brings the experiences of women survivors of violence together with measuring the available services for women survivors of violence in 46 European countries. The report provides stories from women survivors, who have shared their information about their experiences of violence and seeking help. The mapping of women's services in Europe includes information on available women's helplines, shelters, centres and centres for survivors of sexual violence.

The report serves as a monitoring tool for use by relevant stakeholders, including government, NGO and academic experts to provide information on the standards in service provision, pointing to gaps in practice and calling for improvements.

For case study go to the link below:

<http://www.wave-network.org/content/wave-country-report-2013-now-online>

Apna Haq our most recent projects

Apna Haq serving the area of Rotherham south Yorkshire has been established for 20 years now. It provides support and advocacy for women from different minority backgrounds who are or have faced issues of violence which includes domestic violence, forced marriage and honour based violence. 90 % of its service users are from muslim backgrounds. Alongside this it raises awareness with organisations and professionals as well as community groups to the issues faced by these women at a local, regional national and international level.

Women on the bridge event with committee members and others



1. Child abuse awareness raising sessions with the Lucy Faithful foundation

worked with the Lucy faithful foundation on delivering Awareness raising sessions targeting women from the BME communities on child abuse prevalence and how put protective factors into place

Brought out the importance of educating the communities as often women girls those who come forward particularly women and girls are then stigmatised for the rest of their lives, while the behaviour and actions of the abuser go unchallenged. Leads to lack of reporting

Chief Executive Zlakha Ahmed and Nosheen Farouq Chair interview with BBC Asian Radio Sheffield on awareness raising on child abuse issues



2. Muslim girls and sexual abuse

Still building on the excellent piece of work that MWN instigated the report.

'Were Muslim we don't have boyfriends' or 'sex outside of marriage'

Reality is that both of the above is happening and has since time immoral. Due to the silence around these issues young women who are trapped in violent sexual relationships are often trapped and the perpetrators will use us to prevent the young women from feeling they can turn to family community authorities for help.

So Apna Haq has been raising these issues at a local level with services and plans to work with mothers in the future. Sexual exploitation of Asian women use of local case study at Rotherham level strategic groups to highlight invisibility and silencing of Muslim girls experiences.

3. Spiritual healing and related potential of spiritual healing abuse

2 issues linked with this

a. the field of mental health

awareness raising to the potential of abuse within this area of work

Working with related organisations to raise awareness of the above with the long term aim being to enable policies and procedure put into place that give people with a spiritual concern regulated services and safety that come with that

4. Disability and Violence

We know that rates of disability are higher among south Asian communities. Rotherham has a population that is higher in percentage in Pakistanis although overall bme population is lower than England average.

Due to links of disability and domestic violence being high, over the past few years we have targeted our local Asian women's disabled group to raise their awareness around domestic violence and support that is available.

We are currently supporting a young woman with learning disabilities who did not sure with any one the alarming levels of physical emotional and economic abuse that she suffered from her husband. (She has not shared sexual abuse but most women who are abused are not able to until much later.

An arranged marriage had taken place. Within a short while in to the marriage when he refused to allow her to make contact or visit her parents siblings, the parents on advice from other family members withdraw all contact as they wanted to give 'space' to the couple .

4 years later her parents became aware of the full facts of the abuse she suffered.

She was found at her husband's house screaming, with professionals who had gone to a home visit, had entered the house, on hearing the screams coming from the house as they approached it. On entry they found her husband physically attacking her with his shoes on her face and body, she was bruised all over and bleeding.

She was the daughter of highly educated family who are all professionals.

Ethn Health. 1997 Nov;2(4):317-21.

Is there an increased prevalence of severe learning disabilities among British Asians?

Emerson E¹, Azmi S, Hatton C, Caine A, Parrott R, Wolstenholme J.

Author information

¹Hester Adrian Research Centre, University of Manchester, UK.

Abstract

Age-specific prevalence rates for learning disabilities among the Asian communities in three Metropolitan Boroughs in the North of England are presented. These data indicate that: (1) below school age there is little difference in the apparent prevalence of severe learning disabilities between the Asian and non-Asian communities; (2) between 5 and 34 years of age, however, the apparent prevalence of severe learning disabilities is approximately three times higher among the Asian community when compared with the non-Asian community.

Bbc radio sheff