

# Diversity Matters

North West



Organisational  
Impact Report  
April 24 - March 25

**Diversity Matters North West (DMNW)** is an award-winning, independent charity based in Tameside, Greater Manchester. Since our launch in 2007 we have remained dedicated to our mission to tackle health inequalities, reduce social exclusion, and strengthen cohesion in our local community and across the North West.

## OUR VISION

All women are equal in society, fulfilling their potential, and living their best life

## OUR MISSION

DMNW exists to challenge inequalities in health and wellbeing and to help predominantly, but not exclusively, South Asian women to develop their potential.

We do this by delivering our own services, and through partnership with others. We provide a safe space in which women are supported to empower themselves, and each other.



## OUR VALUES



### EMPOWER

People, individually and collectively, encouraging them to build with confidence on the skills and knowledge they have.



### CULTURALLY SENSITIVE

We are sensitive towards their faith and culture, although we are not faith specific.



### TRANSPARENT & HONEST

Our intentions are honest and clear, ensuring that our community and our partner agencies know where they stand with us.



### ENABLE

We don't do something for people that they can do themselves.



### COMMUNITY

We are community led. We involve community members in decision making, volunteering, training, and paid employment. We listen to their views, and we are informed and led by their expressed needs.



### CHALLENGE

We challenge (racial) inequalities in everything we do; in our advocacy of individual and community needs; in the data we gather and present; our partnerships; and our work in influencing the design of local services.

This impact report focuses on the achievements and impact of DMNW over the period **April 2024 to March 2025** over four key objectives.

- 1 To provide support for women in crisis
- 2 To improve the health and wellbeing of people in our community
- 3 To provide learning, training and employment for women
- 4 To increase the voice and influence of women in our community

# 1 Supporting Women In Crisis

Our programme to support women in crisis offers a culturally sensitive and language barrier free service across Tameside. We provide effective individual and group support, by having Bangla, Urdu, Punjabi and Hindi speaking staff and volunteers.

 **142**  
different women  
have benefited from  
DMNW's support

 **256**  
sessions delivered  
to support women  
in crisis



## Raising awareness and empowering women to access support when in crisis

DMNW takes a comprehensive approach to raising awareness about harmful behaviours in relationships. Through a blend of informal engagement and more targeted support, we have increased knowledge, confidence and reporting around this often hidden crime.

Initiatives include:

### Empowering Local Voices:

Volunteer Champions and Peer Mentors were trained in hate crime awareness, helping to build safer, more confident communities where people feel supported to speak out and stand together.

### Breaking the Cycle of Abuse:

Working alongside the Bridges Partnership and local Police, we contributed to the Break the Cycle campaign — a programme offering understanding, guidance and behavioural support to help individuals and families move away from patterns of abuse.

### Creating Spaces for Connection and Healing:

Through creative sessions and welcoming Tea and Talk events, women came together to share experiences, build friendships and learn about sources

of support. Guest speakers, including counsellors and community safety officers, helped raise awareness around trauma, recovery, and personal safety.

### Encouraging Confidence and Access to Support:

Our Drop-In sessions with Greater Manchester Police offered reassurance and practical advice about staying safe and knowing when and how to seek help — especially for those for whom English isn't a first language.


### Supporting Mothers to Rebuild and Thrive:


The Daisy Chain course provided a safe, culturally sensitive space for mothers to explore the impact of unhealthy relationships on their children' and gain tools to strengthen family relationships.

### One-to-One Support and Mentoring:

Our Peer Mentors and Advice Surgeries offered individual guidance on everyday challenges — from housing and benefits to health and relationships — helping women to regain confidence and take positive next steps in their lives.

DMNW's activities have created a supportive and welcoming environment where women support women and feel more confident seeking support and reporting concerns.

 **98%**  
of women reported increased understanding of unhealthy relationship dynamics

 **98%** of women reported increased awareness of support services available for relationship-related concerns

 **96%**  
of women feel more confident seeking help regarding issues in personal relationships

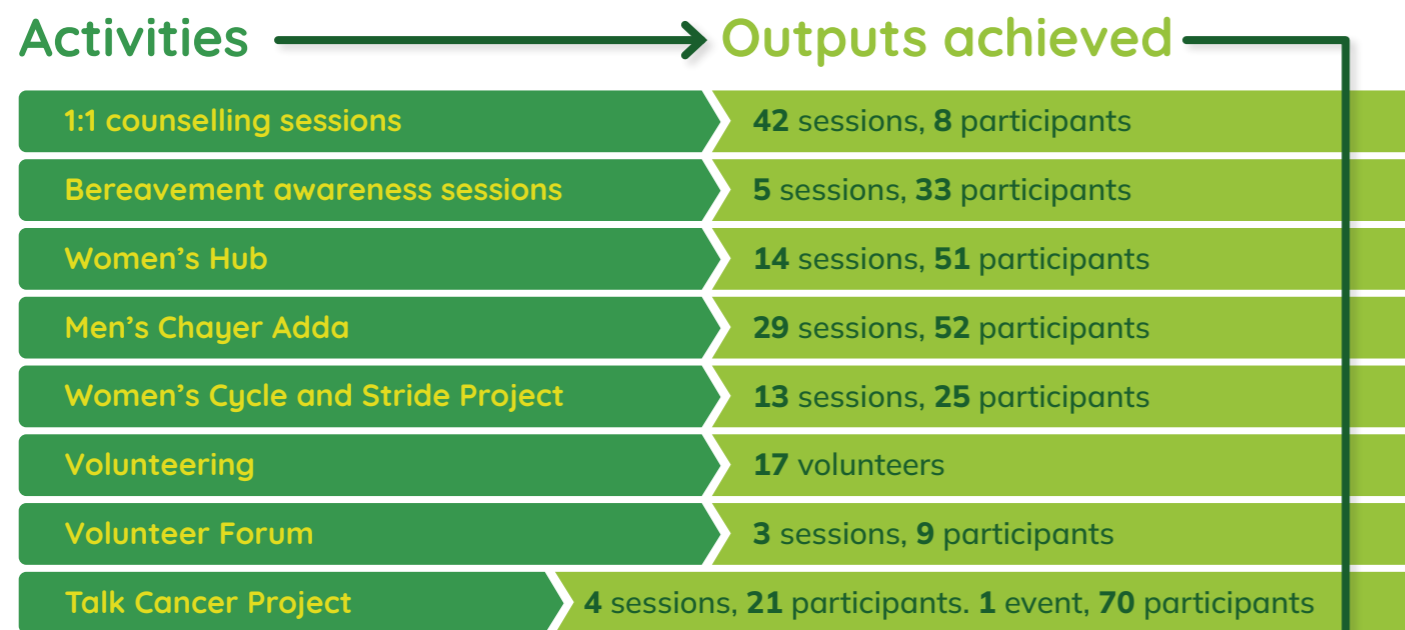
 **100%**  
of women feel more confident reporting harmful behaviours within relationships

## 2 Improving the health and wellbeing of people in our community

Our programme of health and wellbeing support focuses on engaging people in tackling some of the key health challenges facing communities experiencing racial inequality, such as maintaining an active life style, use of niche tobacco and mental health. Volunteers from the community have been recruited to support all aspects of the programme.

**110**  
Health and wellbeing sessions delivered.

**137**  
participants in attendance



### Impacts achieved

- Improved quality of life
- Earlier intervention and prevention
- Reduced costs to the NHS
- Improved peer support networks
- Role modelling of healthy behaviours to younger generations

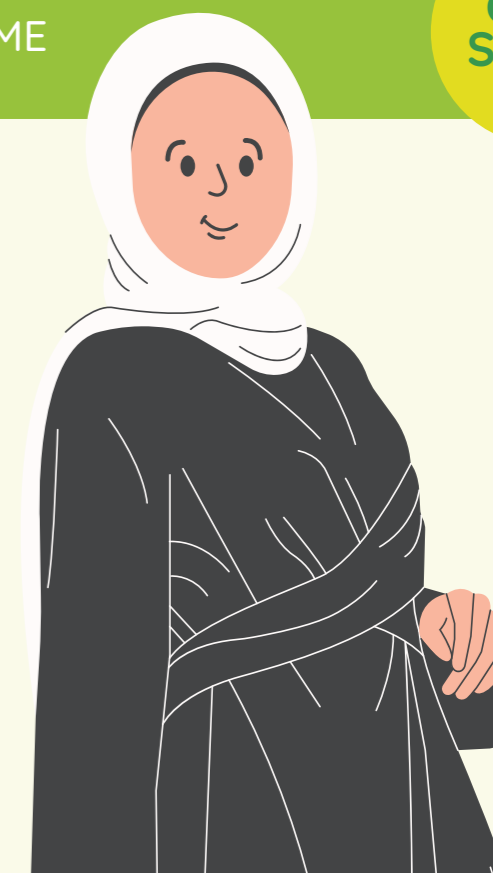
### Outcomes achieved

- Improved mental wellbeing & self esteem
- Improved confidence
- Reduced stigma of death and bereavement
- Participants are more aware of local health and support services
- Increased involvement in community
- Increased access to employment
- Increased feelings of being listened to
- Improved financial management
- Improved awareness and understanding of cancer causes and symptoms
- Increased access to cancer screening programmes
- Sharing of information on cancer with family and friends



## BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMME

CASE STUDY



This programme was designed to provide culturally sensitive bereavement support to South Asian communities in Tameside, responding to community challenges such as stigma around mental health issues and barriers to accessing mainstream services.

Through a blend of one-to-one counselling, awareness-raising workshops, and outreach activities, the programme created a safe and supportive environment for individuals experiencing loss and grief.

The programme engaged directly with **33 participants** through workshops and provided one-to-one counselling to **8 clients**. In addition, outreach activities extended our reach to **more than 200 people**, helping to raise awareness of bereavement support within the wider community.

Initial challenges with inconsistent attendance, often due to domestic and religious responsibilities, prompted our team to adapt their approach. Awareness-raising workshops were introduced to enhance understanding of bereavement support within the community, once trust was built, we were able to encourage participation in counselling sessions.

The impact on participants was clear. Focus groups and case studies revealed that counselling and group support enabled people to develop culturally sensitive tools for coping with loss and grief. Participants valued the safe spaces we created to talk openly about bereavement and mental health, subjects that are often stigmatised. Importantly, wellbeing outcomes improved: **62.5%** of those who completed pre- and post-programme questionnaires using the Mind SWEMWBS scale reported an increase in their mental wellbeing scores.

“I know now bereavement is **loss of other things** in life not only **losing someone.**”

Strong partnership working underpinned the project's success. DMNW collaborated with **Tameside and Glossop Mind** to adapt delivery in response to community needs. Where direct counselling was not immediately effective, alternative pathways were developed to ensure individuals could still access meaningful support. This collaborative approach demonstrated how working together can make services more effective and responsive.

The Bereavement Support Programme has demonstrated the transformative impact of culturally sensitive, community-led approaches to health and wellbeing. By reducing stigma, strengthening partnerships, and improving mental health outcomes, the project has laid the foundations for a long-term model of bereavement support tailored to the needs of South Asian communities in Tameside.

**DMNW delivered Our Women Matter project to raise awareness of early breast cancer detection, symptoms, and screening among South Asian women in Hyde and across Tameside.**

This project recruited six bilingual volunteers from the Bangladeshi community, exceeding targets and ensuring cultural sensitivity and accessibility. Together, we co-designed activities through four focus groups with 21 women, which highlighted barriers such as shyness and fear of judgement when discussing cancer.

A major achievement was the Breast Cancer Awareness and Bangladeshi New Year event, held in May 2025. Co-produced with focus group participants, it attracted 70 women—well above the target of 50. The event combined cultural celebration with vital health information, featuring a talk from a trusted local GP, healthy food demonstrations, and relaxation activities. Bilingual volunteers supported throughout, ensuring all women could take part.

Awareness was further spread via local businesses, Asian markets, WhatsApp

groups, and peer networks led by trained volunteers.

Attendance at our women's hub sessions increased by 75% following the event. Participants reported greater confidence in discussing breast cancer, improved understanding of self-care and screening, and stronger peer connections.

**100% of women reported more in depth knowledge of signs and symptoms, importance of early diagnosis and where to go to for help.**

**100% of women reported continuing to share information with family and friendship networks.**

Volunteers and focus group members gained in-depth knowledge and committed to sharing this learning across their networks.

The project's legacy will continue through bilingual display boards and the advocacy of volunteers and participants, ensuring lasting awareness and stronger community connections.



**90%**

of participants strongly agree that they are now more aware of local health and support services



**87%**

of participants strongly agree that their wellbeing has improved



**83%**

of participants strongly agree that they feel more involved in their community and listened to



**90%**

of participants feel that attending sessions has helped them save money

WHAT OUR PARTNERS & STAFF SAY...



“One of the key benefits of partnering with DMNW has been their cultural expertise and their ability to clearly and powerfully articulate the specific challenges and barriers faced by South Asian women. Their input brought depth and clarity to our projects that we wouldn't have had otherwise. Feedback from our training events has been excellent, and Mahmuda and Nisma's insight has been a vital part of that”

“DMNW transforms the opportunities for the local BME community in Hyde, empowering and encouraging giving a long term resilience for the future”

“To Rehana, Gemma, the staff, volunteers and trustees at Diversity Matters, I deeply admire what you do, how you do it, and the way you continue to lead with empathy, warmth and a big heart”

“DM has played a big role in my personal and professional growth. I started as a volunteer 15 years ago, which was an invaluable experience. It not only gave me confidence but also provided me with strong references that helped me apply for jobs elsewhere. Later, when an opportunity came up, I was able to secure a position as a Development Worker and joined the DMNW team”

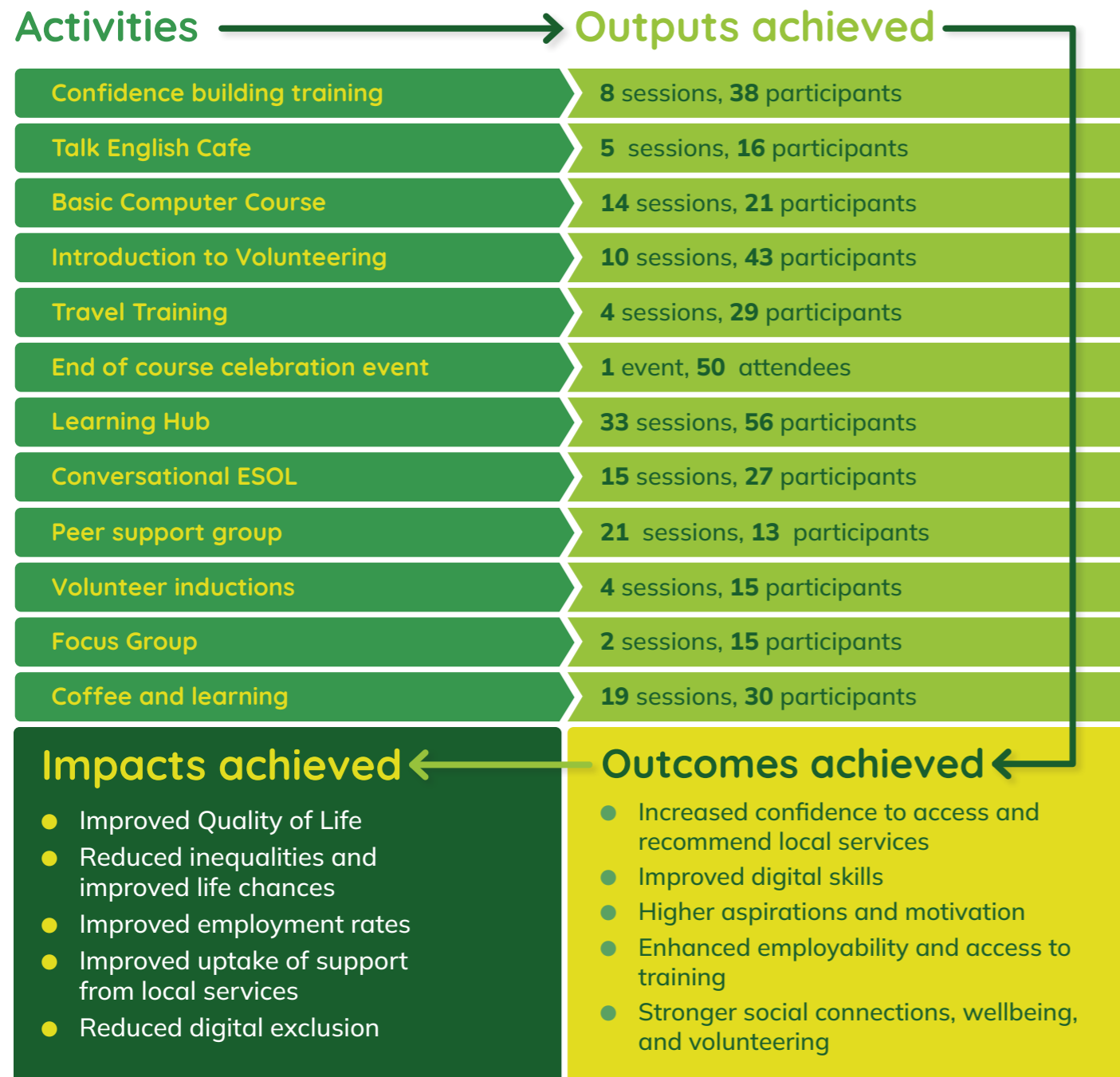
“Skills, expertise, knowledge of the community and racially minoritised people who live in those communities. DMNW knows how to co-produce with people in an equal and reciprocal way. Their approach is grounded in the knowledge and experience of how to engage with communities and move that relationship through to co-production”



### 3 Providing learning, training and employment

Women experiencing racial inequalities in Tameside face multiple barriers to social and economic participation, including language difficulties, low confidence, loneliness, and limited access to services.

The Basic Skills Training and Employment Readiness Project, funded through Know Your Neighbourhood and GMCA, helped South Asian women in Tameside overcome barriers through culturally sensitive training, volunteering routes, and tailored support in Bangla, Urdu, Punjabi and Hindi. Over 1,500 hours of English cafés, ESOL classes, confidence-building, travel training and volunteering workshops helped women gain skills, make friends and move closer to employment. By addressing childcare, travel, and social isolation, DMNW built confidence and connection — recognised with the King’s Award for Voluntary Service.



### BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH BASIC SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT READINESS



**DP, a long-time Hyde resident and member of the Bangladeshi community, spent over two decades caring for her family.**



Becoming a grandmother gave her space to focus on personal growth. Inspired by a leaflet and WhatsApp message, she joined DMNW’s Conversational ESOL classes.

Through the Basic Skills and Employment Readiness Project, DP accessed ESOL, confidence-building, digital skills, and pre-volunteering courses. She overcame language barriers and low confidence, describing the experience as life-changing. At the Learning Hub, she learned to create a CV, search for jobs, and use digital tools—skills that empowered her to navigate services independently.

After completing the pre-volunteering course, DP began volunteering in outreach, events, and admin roles, gaining purpose and expanding her networks. She now confidently uses public transport, communicates in English, and engages with services. Encouraged by community feedback, she even launched a home food business.

Reflecting on her journey, DP said: “I wanted to learn, grow, and improve my chances of employment. I’m braver, more confident, and proud of what I’ve achieved.” She plans to continue learning, gain qualifications, and inspire other women. DMNW’s support has helped her build confidence, independence, and hope—proving growth is possible at any stage of life.



## 4 To increase the voice and influence of women in our community

DMNW is committed to ensuring that the voices of seldom-heard communities, particularly women from minority ethnic backgrounds, directly shape local services and strategies.

Through grassroots consultation, participatory research, and co-produced projects, we break down barriers of language, confidence, and access so that women can actively influence decision-making. Our work on voice and influence empowers local women not only to build their own confidence but also to ensure that public services are culturally competent, inclusive, and responsive to community needs. We have become a trusted partner in the delivery of community consultation to shape both the delivery of our own services and those of others such as Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council and Public Health teams.

As a key partner in the Tameside Racial Inequalities Project, we carried out community research to understand barriers facing South Asian women in Tameside. Our findings — spanning education, employment, health, finances, housing, immigration, and discrimination — have already informed changes to how TMBC delivers its services.



## AMPLIFYING COMMUNITY VOICE ON TOBACCO USE



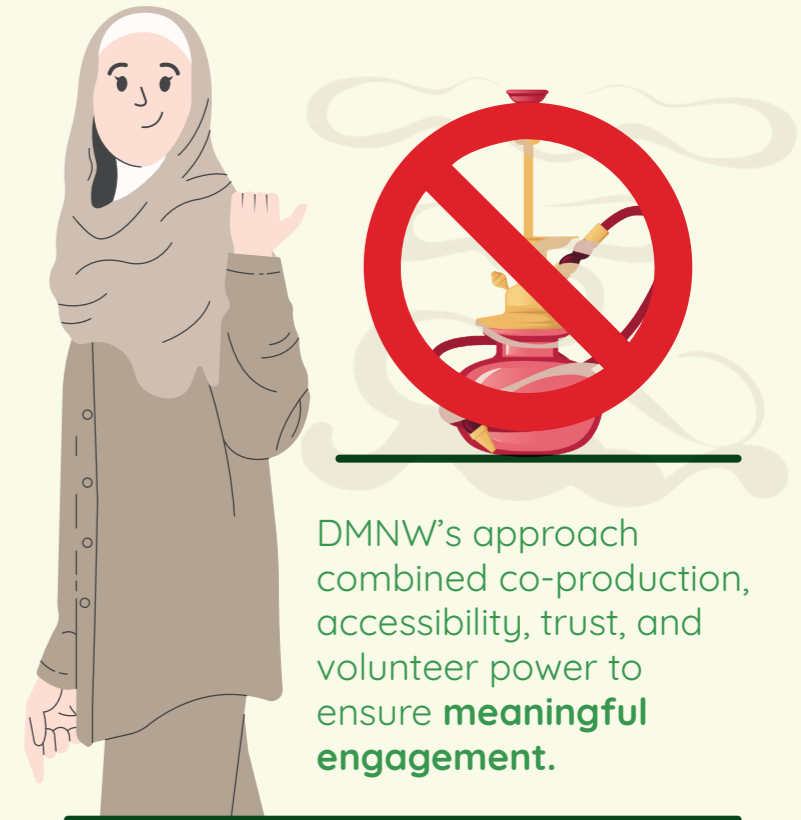
Tameside is one of the most deprived areas in England, with a growing ethnic minority population. Despite higher risks linked to niche tobacco use (e.g. paan, shisha), Tameside's Public Health team had little data on these practices within Asian and Black communities.

Traditional consultation methods often failed to engage seldom-heard groups due to language barriers, cultural sensitivities, digital exclusion, and mistrust of services.

With 17 years' experience engaging Asian and Black communities, DMNW was uniquely placed to address these challenges. The project was rooted in co-production, ensuring community voice shaped the work from the outset.

DMNW's approach combined co-production, accessibility, trust, and volunteer power to ensure meaningful engagement. Focus groups co-designed culturally relevant surveys and validated findings, while outreach took place in markets, faith centres, and community groups, supported by WhatsApp, bilingual interviews, and paper surveys to overcome language and digital barriers. Built on DMNW's trusted reputation, the project offered shopping vouchers to encourage participation in a deprived area. Crucially, 9 bilingual volunteers were trained in engagement and smokeless tobacco awareness, enabling peer-led conversations across multiple languages and ensuring the community's voice was central throughout.

DMNW engaged 175 people (112 surveys, 63 workshops), far exceeding targets, with 95% from Asian and Black communities. This generated in-depth insights on cultural norms, stigma, and service barriers. Findings showed that 84% of respondents



DMNW's approach combined co-production, accessibility, trust, and volunteer power to ensure meaningful engagement.

had never accessed stop smoking services, largely due to lack of awareness, language barriers, and cultural insensitivity.

Crucially, DMNW's work generated community-led recommendations that shaped service improvement, such as expanding local face-to-face outreach with bilingual support, embedding cultural competence within statutory services, using targeted communication through translated materials and community media, and delivering faith-based workshops that recognised faith as a motivator for behaviour change. This consultation exemplified best practice in community engagement, giving racially minoritised communities genuine voice and influence. By removing barriers and co-producing solutions, DMNW not only provided vital data for Public Health but also empowered local people to shape more equitable and culturally competent tobacco cessation services.

# Spotlight on Volunteering



Volunteers are at the heart of DMNW's work, extending the reach and impact of our programmes across Tameside. They support a wide range of activities, from outreach, events, and peer mentoring to running Talk English Cafés, supporting the Learning Hub, and co-delivering health and wellbeing projects.

Many are former service users who, having built confidence and skills through DMNW, go on to give back by supporting others. This peer-led approach not only makes services more accessible and culturally sensitive but also builds trust within communities. Volunteers are trained and supported through initiatives such as the Volunteer Forum, and their contribution has led to stronger networks, increased community participation, and progression into external volunteering and employment.



## FROM LEARNER TO VOLUNTEER TO EMPLOYMENT – RB'S JOURNEY WITH DMNW



**RB, a mother of six from Hyde, had for many years put her own aspirations aside due to her family responsibilities and cultural expectations. After marrying at a young age, she left education before completing her degree and dedicated herself to caring for her children and extended family.**

Although she had always dreamed of learning new skills and pursuing a career, she lacked the time, confidence, and opportunity. When she learned about DMNW's Hidden Gems project through a leaflet and social media, she saw a chance to begin her own journey of personal development.

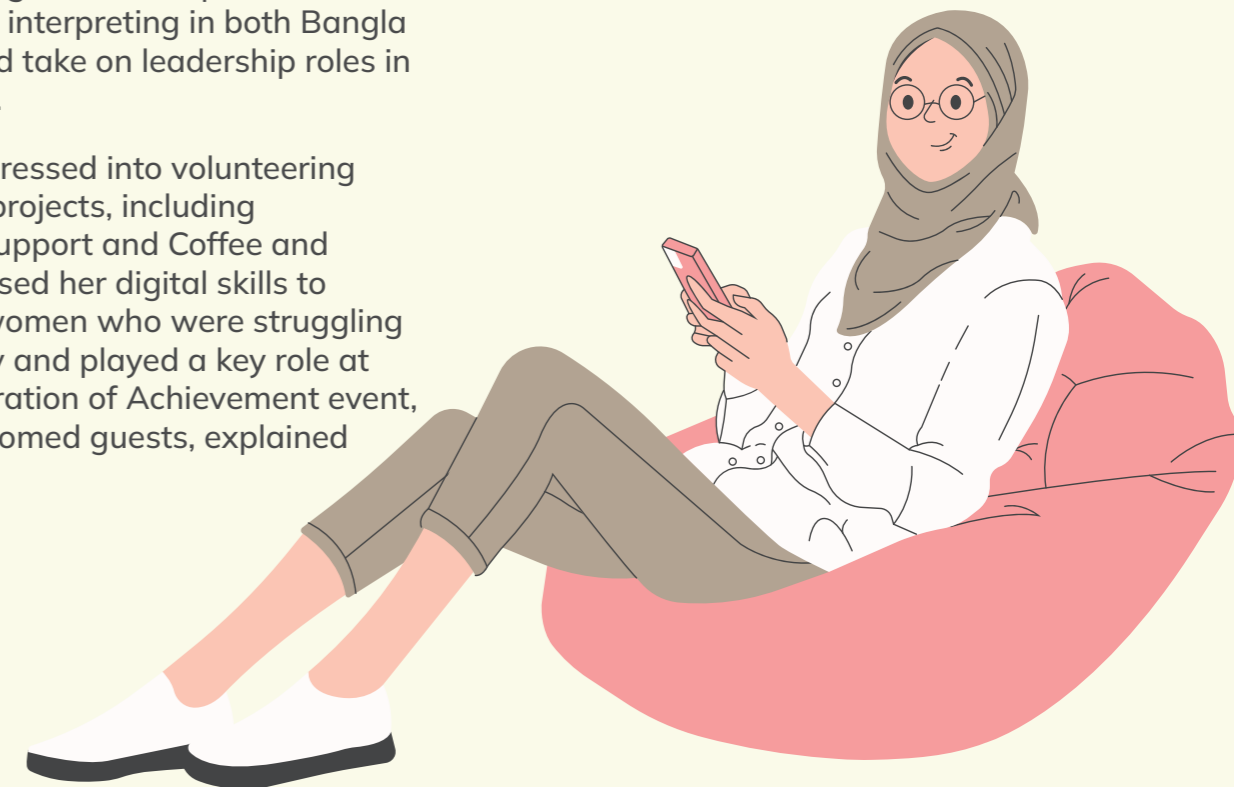
RB enrolled in several courses including Basic Computer Skills, Confidence Building, and Introduction to Volunteering. These sessions not only gave her essential digital and communication skills but also helped her to grow in confidence. The supportive and culturally sensitive environment at DMNW encouraged her to express herself openly, practice interpreting in both Bangla and English, and take on leadership roles in group activities.

RB quickly progressed into volunteering within DMNW projects, including Bereavement Support and Coffee and Learning. She used her digital skills to support other women who were struggling with technology and played a key role at DMNW's Celebration of Achievement event, where she welcomed guests, explained

the programme, and even shared her story in front of 50 people—a milestone she never thought possible. Her contribution was recognised with an Outstanding Achievement and Progression Award, celebrating her commitment, growth, and community spirit.

Through volunteering, RB discovered her ability to contribute meaningfully to her community, while also building transferable skills for the workplace. She describes DMNW as a “safe space” where she felt supported, respected, and valued, and where her confidence flourished. Since completing the project, RB has secured employment in sales, and she now aspires to continue building her career by accessing further training in IT, teaching assistance, and interpreting.

RB's story demonstrates how volunteering not only strengthens communities but also opens new doors to education, training, and work for women who have been traditionally excluded from such opportunities.



# Celebrating our Volunteers and our Vision



This year marked our 16th Annual Volunteer Celebration, where we proudly presented Certificates of Appreciation to 60 incredible volunteers.

Each year, we are privileged to work alongside passionate and dedicated volunteers. Many go on to pursue exciting new opportunities, and we're proud to have played a part in their journey.

In line with our vision, mission and values we are proud of how our volunteering programme transforms lives, building strength, confidence, and resilience. It's more than giving time, it's about growing, learning, and moving closer to personal goals and dreams.

This year we were honoured with the King's Award, the highest recognition a charity can receive. This award belongs to all of you: our volunteers, our team, our supporters. Some of our amazing volunteers even had the opportunity to visit Buckingham Palace!

To our volunteers, staff, trustees, partners, commissioners, and funders—thank you. You are the reason we can do this work.

A special thank you to everyone who supported our fundraising efforts, especially the Women's Hub members who took part in a sponsored walk. Together, we raised £2,200 in 2024–2025, which will fund activities and events for our local community.

## A heartfelt congratulations to:

### Rabeka

Recipient of the **Excellent Performance Award**

### Mahlia

Winner of the **Little Star Award**

### Anisa

Honoured as **Volunteer of the Year**

“Volunteering and helping others gives me satisfaction that I can be useful to someone.”

## My role as Chair of DMNW is one I take great pride in.

I was involved in the setting up of Hyde Community Action in 2007 and have been chair of DMNW for over 12 years. It is an organisation which has gone from strength to strength, weathered some very difficult times, and always stayed true to its purpose.

Working with our local community to provide services and activities which reflect needs and aspirations identified through our local consultations and connections. Where we do

not directly provide services we work with providers to address barriers and improve their services in this community.

The board, who are all volunteers, provide governance and support to the staff and other volunteers.

This sounds very dry but as anyone who has visited us will know there is a joyful and welcoming atmosphere in our building. Our volunteers, trustees and staff do serious and creative work

in a friendly, cooperative and inclusive way.

Measuring impact is important. We want to know we make a difference. We want to know that we are doing what is needed and wanted. We want to see change. We want to see a thriving community.

What we do and who we work with has changed over the years. What has not changed is our commitment to staying true to our vision, mission and values.

**Caroline Gregory - Chair**

## A BIG THANK YOU TO THE BOARD who are also volunteers, for their hard work and dedication.



**Caroline Gregory**  
Chair



**Garry Hall**  
Treasurer



**Asma Begum**  
Vice Chair



**Dr Penny Noel**  
Trustee



**Muzahid Khan MBE**  
Trustee



**Mohammed Nasir Khan**  
Trustee



**Lina Patel MBE**  
Trustee



**Our volunteers are the heart of DMNW.**  
You show up. You care. You make a difference.  
You are what makes us great.

As the CEO's of Diversity Matters North West, we are proud to present this year's Impact Report. The report is a true reflection of the strength, resilience, and dedication of our community, volunteers, trustees and the staff team.

Over the past year, we have been extremely busy continuing to challenge inequalities and empower South Asian women across Tameside and Greater Manchester. From supporting women in crisis to improving health and wellbeing, providing learning and employment pathways, and amplifying community voice, our work has been shaped by the lived experiences of those we serve. This report is a testament to the transformative power of culturally sensitive, community-led approaches and where co-design is woven into the fabric of the Charity.

Our achievements this year have only been possible thanks to the incredible commitment of our volunteers, staff, trustees, and partners. Together, we delivered over 1,500 hours of face-to-face support, signposting and referring over 600 people to services, engaged hundreds of women in meaningful activities, and created safe spaces where confidence, wellbeing, and opportunity could flourish. We are especially proud to have received the King's Award for Voluntary Service—an honour

that belongs to every person who has contributed to our mission. Whether through peer mentoring, advocacy, or outreach, our volunteers continue to be the heartbeat of DMNW, inspiring change and building stronger communities, becoming role models for those who come next.

We have and are witnessing first-hand the impacts of both local and global atrocities and injustice on the people and communities we work with, so it is even more crucial than before that as we look ahead, we remain committed to listening, learning, and leading with compassion. The challenges facing our communities are complex, but our vision remains clear: a society where all women are equal, empowered, and able to live their best lives. Thank you to everyone who has walked this journey with us. Your support fuels our purpose and strengthens our resolve. Together, we will continue to break down barriers and build a future rooted in equity, dignity, justice and hope.

**Rehana Begum & Gemma Gaskell**  
Joint Chief Executive Officers



**The King's Award for Voluntary Service**  
*The MBE for volunteer groups*



# THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS...



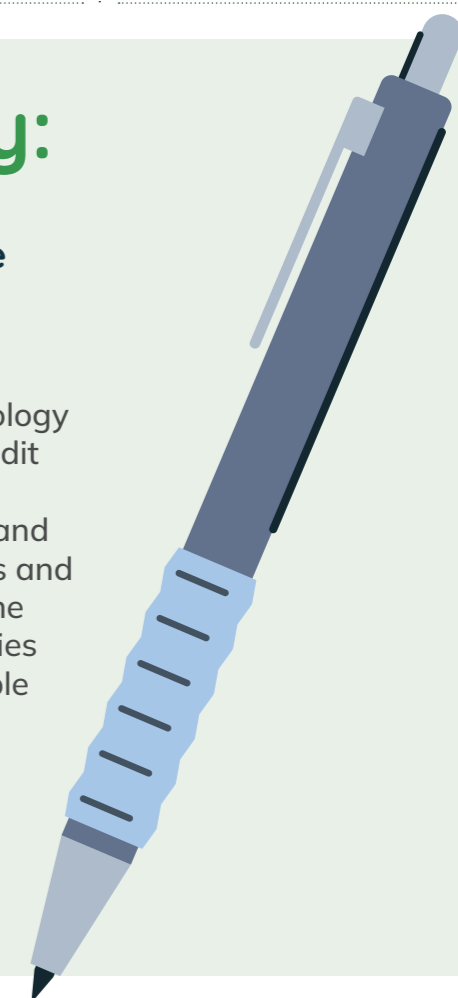
## Report Methodology:

This report was written by Turn Up the Value following workshops with staff and board members at DMNW.

The report is guided by the social accounting methodology and approach ensuring that it abides by the Social Audit network's guiding principles. Data is drawn from both quantitative and qualitative sources including output and outcome data collected by the team across all projects and end of project surveys conducted with participants. The anonymised case studies are drawn from real life stories contributed by our beneficiaries and represent a sample from a number of case studies collected by the team.



Report design by  
**designidge**





# Diversity Matters

North West



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2025 Diversity Matters North West is a registered charity in England & Wales 1125544.