

Annual Report



28th February 2020

Al-Hasaniya
Moroccan Women's Centre

Welcome

Being challenged in life is inevitable, being defeated is optional or so goes the unknown saying, which I find totally resonate with our work at the centre.

Having been one of the architects of this wonderful organisation and still involved, more so now than at any other time since its inception in 1985, there is not a single day that passes by and that I'm not grateful to all those who have over the last 35 years, given so much to ensure its continuity; above all those who within the statutory sector, who have believed in us and our ability to deliver from day one and have continued their support and provided the resources.

A special thank you to the Royal borough of Kensington and Chelsea and all the wonderful Councillors who remain staunch supporters of the work we do.

I'm truly humbled by the dedication of our chair that has for the past 25 years, given so much to this organisation and continues to do so.

As with previous years, our myriad of projects allows us to continue to offer an all-inclusive and holistic service to those most in need.

A one to one service delivery; combined with first class policy work means that we continue to play a vital role in ensuring our voices are heard through our participation in public debates, organised events and indeed open dialogues with all partners and stakeholders. This in turn helps the overall tailor-made and culturally sensitive service delivery within both the statutory and indeed voluntary sector to our client group, to grow and improve.

Strategic work as with fundraising and capacity building, are vital components that ensure our continuity as an organisation that delivers despite the austerity measures imposed, combined with the increase in demand. Our work remains under resourced and as an organisation we need to investigate alternatives, to ensure this work is properly resourced for the survival of the organisation.

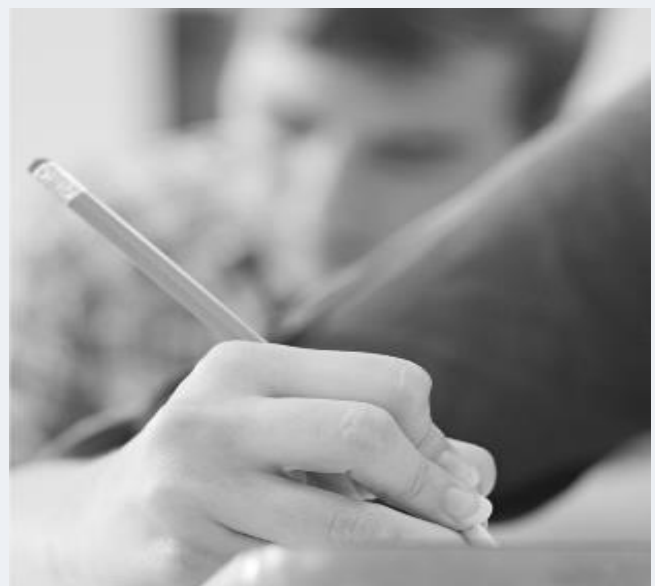
Established to serve the needs of Moroccan women back in 1985, Al-Hasaniya remains a beacon of hope for both Moroccan and Arabic speaking women and their families. We remain an undisputed service both, as first and last port of call for so many thousands of women that come through our door each year.

For the first time this year, Al-Hasaniya has equally opened its doors to the older Moroccan and Arabic speaking men in the community. Initially sponsored by the Council for Moroccans Abroad, a pilot project proved the catalyst to combating loneliness and eradicating exclusion and isolation. We are grateful to the Kensington and Chelsea Foundation for providing vital resources to continue with this important project which runs on Sundays.

We hope that our work will continue to the next 20 years and beyond.

May 2020, be a happy, healthy and peaceful to all.

Souad Talsi MBE



At our AGM held on 8th March 2019 to coincide with the International Women's day, our friend, supporter; the unstoppable and inexhaustibly energetic former MP for Kensington, Victoria Borwick had this to say about our organisation.

C Congratulations for holding your AGM on International Women's Day!

As that is what you do – you celebrate the achievements of women, and you have been doing that for over 35 years – across all communities across the Borough and further afield and today we are here to celebrate that achievement.

The local community has also helped with the re-decoration, and I was delighted to play a small part in that.

As a Borough and as fellow local residents we congratulate you on openly tackling Mental health, domestic abuse, helping people achieve their potential and making sure that you focus on the needs of the Moroccan and Arabic-speaking women. You have helped generations of women and families integrate and participate fully in their communities, and you have tackled isolation and encouraged people to continue to improve their education and thus their employment opportunities

Last year the deputy Mayor and I, and your guests were humbled by listening to the problems that your members had overcome, and we celebrate with you today and salute all your achievements. Whatever life brings you are here to provide support and friendship just as you have done to support the Grenfell survivors and others who have escaped tragedy and conflict.

You have been so successful, that you decided it was about time to also help the MEN! I am delighted to help you raise the profile of this work – helping older men with support, discussion and therapeutic workshops, and I have no doubt this work will also continue to flourish

“Today we mark your AGM and we are all delighted to be here with you - at the heart of the local community, bringing us all together, to make sure we listen and appreciate the work that you do and we can say thank you to all the team at Al Hasaniya.”

Chair's Forward

2019 has been exceptionally challenging for me as Chair, trying to balance the ever-increasing demand with the limited and often scarce resources we have. Once more the tireless team of staff both, paid and volunteers alike have proven that no issue is a problem but indeed a challenge that can be overcome.

A year fraught with long term staff sick leave, limited resources and increase of serious casework meant our resolve was truly tested and I'm deeply grateful to all those who worked incredibly hard to ensure we always deliver.

A year that saw so many changes and challenges both nationally and internationally meant that as our client group is both, local and from afar, we had to be prepared and ensure the door remains OPEN despite the limited and often restricted funding for a specific "catchment area".

I'm truly grateful to all those who gave their time and expertise to support our work, not least my colleagues within the board of trustees, Mr Mims Talsi, our volunteer IT engineer for his professionalism, patience and amazing speed and dedication in bringing us to the 21st century; allowing us to be fully compliant within the national GDPR, and last but not least our volunteer staff members who support our team to deliver.

Thank you all who make this organisation a great one.

Fatima Mourad Msc

Chair's Forward

Once again, I'm deeply honoured to be part of this great organisation with a team that not only delivers but remains positively committed to the ethos of serving those in need. 2019 was a year like no other. 2019 as stated by our chair, Mrs Mourad was exceptionally challenging yet the loyalty, commitment and solidarity of the staff, both paid and volunteer meant the service delivery to our client group remained first class and true to its promise.

Austerity measures coupled with uncertainties due to recent political changes combined with the continued needs of our clients have not phased the fantastically strong team that maintains its support to those most vulnerable, when they need help the most. However, no one is ever so desperately vulnerable as those with no recourse to public funds and enduring domestic violence of all forms. **These women are exceptionally vulnerable and need a concerted effort to ensure justice does prevail.**

Whilst we continue to support on a one to one basis, all those who come to us despite the limited and restricted resources we have, within the Angelou partnership, our campaign will forge ahead together with other partners to raise awareness of this client group and find a lasting just solution.

I'm proud to see that 2019 marked one of our yet highest successes in DWP reconsiderations and income maximisation for our clients. A total of over **£50,000.00** was secured in back payments. Partnerships with both CAB and North Kensington Law Centre mean that our clients' rights are secured and in turn contribute, to the overall well-being of our clients and their families.

And whilst we believe in ensuring that benefit and legal rights for our clients are fundamental to our work, we also strongly believe in civic responsibility and we continually ensure that all our workshops and activities do include this important element. Our clients receive educational workshops on rights and responsibilities on an up to date and regular basis. Workshops on how to find work are an equal part of our civic role as an organisation and it is wonderful to see some stay-at-home mums go back to work and once more become active within the bigger society.

We campaigned very hard at the last General Election by inviting different parties to speak to our women. We held debates within our organisation and explained the democratic system and process we are blessed to be a part of, and I'm pleased to see so many made the effort and voted according to their beliefs.

I have great feeling that our work will go from strength to strength this coming 2020. Our staff is dedicated, loyal and 100% committed. Our centre will be open 7 days a week, combining our usual programme with the Saturday Club and Ayam Zaman on Sundays. We hope to be part of a greater partnership in 2020 delivery locally whilst working extremely hard nationally and indeed internationally.

And finally, a huge thank you to all the staff for keeping the organisation going and to the trustees for holding us to task and ensuring we remain compliant and on track.

Resources remain scarce and funding a huge a challenge, however we do hope that those who know us and appreciate our work will continue to lend their support to ensuring the continuity of our service delivery.

Nadia Elbhiri

Domestic Violence Outreach Project

The scale of Violence against Women and Girls has reached an all-time high. In November 2009, it was estimated that providing public services to victims of VAWG, costs the UK £36.7bn annually (Home Office, 2016). Also, in 2014-2015, the Crime Survey for England and Wales estimated that 1.3 million women and 600,000 men (aged 16-59) experienced any type of domestic abuse in that year. It should also be considered that numbers could be much higher as a lot of cases go under-reported.

The Domestic Violence Outreach Project is a service that provides ongoing support to survivors of domestic violence in Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster and Hammersmith and Fulham. It is a crucial part of our overall support to those who are victims of Domestic violence. It provides the much needed after emergency care and support. It offers education, empowerment and engagement to the victim who often comes to us broken and with zero confidence.

And whilst some of the clients are centre client from the main domestic violence project once the initial intervention is complete, others are either self-referred or indeed signposted to us from other service providers both, within the statutory and voluntary sector.

The aims of this project include:

- Using a range of interventions to help women overcome barriers that often affect their day-to-day life (such as culture, language, and confidence)
- To suggest and help find long term support including; looking at educational/training schemes, finding full or part time employment, attending activities at centres like Al-Hasaniya.
- To provide one-one support to empower and support women to build their confidence and take control of their lives.

The project is making a significant change in these women's lives after their experiences of abuse ends and their risk has decreased. It is aimed at reducing isolation and empowering women by supporting them by making them aware of resources available to them and to improve their lives and giving them choices, they didn't previously have. We provide a service that is culturally sensitive and aims to meet the client's needs by listening to what they want.

Domestic Violence Project - Angelou Partnership

“An estimated 35% of women worldwide (around one in three women) have experienced domestic or sexual violence. It’s a percentage that many experts find staggering, saying it reveals a global crisis of violence against women.

“I find it very sad that in every society we have violence against women. In every society,” said Marceline Naudi, the President of the Council of Europe’s Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO).”

EURONEWS/NOV 2019:

2019 was certainly the year where domestic violence in all its ugly forms was exposed and took centre stage. No one was spared and rightly so exposed for the devastation domestic violence victims are left in remain one trauma like no other.

The Domestic Violence project continues to support hundreds of vulnerable women and their families by providing them with advice, practical and emotional support. However, this year has seen the project face many challenges, ranging from financial constraints to extremely demanding and complex client cases.

As well as supporting over 80 women this year, we have seen over 100 enquiries made from vulnerable women and their families outside of the tri-borough. That is, over 100 women and children facing various forms of abuse and in need of a culturally sensitive service to provide them with advice, emotional support and assistance. In line with our policy, we do not turn anyone away and with each case, we have sought to provide the victim or survivor with the necessary advice and signpost them to a service that can provide them with the level of support that they need.

The support provided to clients within the tri-borough ranges from providing emotional support, to exploring their rights and options in the UK to supporting them find accommodation after fleeing an abusive relationship. We continuously work closely with the Police and Social Services and other agencies, so our clients are aware of life in the UK and are better integrated. In order to ensure that we provide a service that is of the highest quality to our clients, our Arabic Speaking Domestic Violence Advocate successfully completed her Independent Domestic Violence Advocate course accredited by SafeLives. This means that we can provide an even more holistic and tailor-made support package to victims or survivors with varying risk levels and needs.

As a BAME organisation, we are aware of the responsibility of not only providing the best support to our clients who are marginalised in multiple areas in society. We work hard towards having our voice and their voices heard within the relevant fields and public forums so that key changes can be made. This can include improving services for victims or survivors so professionals can support them without judgment, whilst validating their experiences and make changes within policies to improve better practical support to survivors and their children.

As part of the drive to have our views heard, this year we participated in many interviews, surveys and meetings. Examples include, ‘Are MARACs (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) still fit for purpose?’ Our IDVA also participated in an independent evaluation run by SafeLives exploring frontline Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) services and approaches. We also attended the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees to explore ‘Droughts and Deserts: A report on the immigration legal aid market and access to Justice.’ Additionally, we attended the recent London Assembly Police and Crime Committee discussion on Domestic Abuse.

Domestic Violence is being spoken about more publicly and the Queen’s Speech on 14th October 2019 touched on how victims and survivors should receive support and justice as necessary to them. We were also pleased by the appointment of Nicole Jacobs as the UK’s first Domestic Abuse Commissioner. Having

come from a background of direct work with victims and survivors of abuse, we hope that Ms Jacobs will bring her knowledge, skills and experience to the role of supporting survivors of abuse, improving the system and accessibility and working towards ensuring perpetrators are brought to justice.

Perhaps one of the most important areas we have worked hard on with our partners is on the Domestic Violence Bill. Last year saw us participating in various focus groups and consultations with our partners, including Imkaan and Women's Aid to put forward our views as a BAME charity, supporting BAME women. Although the bill was being discussed in parliament, due to the elections being held in December, parliament will be dissolved in November meaning the bill will be postponed until a new government is formed.

We will continue to advocate for our clients and some of the key areas which we believe and have asked to be changed as they disadvantage victims and survivors of abuse and particularly BAME women are

(1) Priority housing for victims and survivors of abuse. We are calling that the same policy should be applied to all victims and survivors, with priority given to them, regardless as to whether they have dependent children or not.

(2) Migrant women, which is a significant group that we support. Their cases tend to be more complex as they have No Recourse to Public Funds, added to this is their insecure immigration status. Although support is available for women married to British nationals, there are different rules for those married to EU nationals which may result in women not being able to have access to recourse, rough sleeping or women returning to perpetrators. The period in which a woman is granted recourse also needs to be much briefer. We therefore request that all migrant women are given equal opportunities in applying to have temporary recourse to public funds for a significant period to help support them.

(3) Secured funding for domestic violence services, particularly BAME services. The threats of cutbacks due to austerity has been present the last few years and the implication of cutbacks means a decrease in specialist staff availability which means a decrease in services available for victims. If the client cannot find the support, they need at the time they need it, there is a risk of them returning to perpetrator.

Lastly, as we do every year, we participated in the United Nation's International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The 16 days of activism focused on 'Orange the World: Generation Equality Stands against Rape!' For each day, we used social media as a platform for our survivors to post a quote or inspirational words about their experiences. We want to empower women and what better way than to give them a platform to thousands of people.

Zainab Al-Shariff

Mental Health Project 2019

World Health Organisation's comprehensive mental health action plan 2013-2020 was adopted by the 66th World Health Assembly.

It is no surprise therefore that our local borough, continues to support our work in this field and provide the needed resources to ultimately minimise the causes of mental health by allowing us to work hard and offer tailor-made support to prevent and encourage social interaction and eradicate isolation.,

This service continues to support all Arabic-speaking women living and/or working in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. It aims to act as a bridge between the service users and the statutory service providers.

The Mental Health Project supports the wellbeing of women who are experiencing mental health and emotional health problems. We support all Arabic speaking women living in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Many of the women we support suffer from depression which leads to isolation and loneliness. Many have a mixture of complex issues that sometimes need additional support from statutory services; we usually facilitate this support making sure our clients are accessing the right service. One to one centred support is offered to the women, through this we can identify anyone that needs more in-depth support ie: therapy, counselling, housing support and much much more.

For the more complex cases we refer our clients to our trusted partners at North Kensington Law Centre, North Kensington Citizen Advice Bureau and Toltops Solicitors. The women also are given many opportunities to participate in a variety of health talks and health & wellbeing related programmes to raise awareness on health issues. Through this project women and their families can also access mainstream mental health services as well as support with practical difficulties.

In brief, by supporting their wellbeing we are encouraging better integration at large and indeed empowering these women to take charge of their own lives and reduce medication intake. Too often anti-depressants and other such medications taken over a long period of time, leave these women debilitated and unable to think clearly for themselves. Through the many workshops offered jointly with other partners we do succeed in weaning them off these addictive medications and support their long term recovery to independence, empowerment and at times to full time employment.

2019 saw our project support 478 women.

Dr Margaret Chan, the WHO Director-General, described the new Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013–2020 as a landmark achievement: it focuses international attention on a long-neglected problem and is firmly rooted in the principles of human rights. The action plan calls for changes. It calls for a change in the attitudes that perpetuate stigma and discrimination that have isolated people since ancient times, and it calls for an expansion of services in order to promote greater efficiency in the use of resources.

The GAPS: The Grenfell Arabic Psychotherapy Service at Al-Hasaniya Moroccan Women Centre was born out of needs in September 2017 as part of the “Together for Grenfell model “to accommodate the psychological needs of the Arabic Speaking community affected by the Grenfell Fire.

Through collaborating with other partners and sharing resources, we were able to identify and respond to the needs of the Arabic Speaking community in a more meaningful and holistic way.

Two years on we feel this project has been incredibly excellent value for money. Providing a culturally sensitive psychotherapy service to the bereaved and their families.

As with last year’s aims and objectives, we have continued to work with all those affected in partnership with other professionals, resulting in support being provided both professionally and culturally.

Through our project, we are able to challenge the stigma by exploring what mental health is and what therapy involves, normalising psychological difficulties, providing psycho-education on trauma and grief responses, inviting and answering questions about therapy.

What we have also found in this project which assisted over 100 women this year, is that the Grenfell trauma whilst a major one, has in many cases underlying if not hidden traumas such as domestic violence and other social difficulties that can be a spring board for a myriad of mental health complications and problems such as anorexia, depression and other issues.

We feel that by combining our skills of therapy and working with other projects within the centre, we are able to truly offer an all-inclusive holistic support to those who most need it.

Imane Bouzir

Arabic Speaking Psychotherapist

Older People's Project

The Mayor of London focused especially on improving the lives of our older citizens this 2019. Statistically 39% of our retired population in London remains active and volunteer. It is therefore important that we do support this client group and learn from their experiences by supporting them to be more engaged and empowered to contribute to the bigger society.

The Mayor signed up London to the World Health Organisation (WHO)'s global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities. Through the network, London has been very busy working with other age-friendly cities and communities in both the UK and internationally, to share learning and best practice to make our London a more age-friendly city and we would very much like to think that we are doing our "bit" serving our older people from the Arabic speaking communities, in line with these honourable international guidelines..

This client group remains exceptionally isolated for several reasons, culturally, sociologically and economically too. The language barrier remains a formidable hurdle to pass for our older people. Our tailor-made programmes are designed holistically to ensure wellbeing, integration and empowerment. The security of another year's resource to provide a hot cooked meal for our average 25-30 women every Friday means our programmes are well attended too.

Intergenerational work is a crucial part of our endeavours to ensure civic participation and inclusive citizenship, and we hope to forge ahead with more sessions now that we have secured funding for the Saturday Club. Bringing the three generations together offers attachment, kinship and inclusive communities. Closing the generation gap is as important as supporting these different groups individually.

2019 witnessed our women attending museum outings, dancing with the Mayor at the great celebrations of Silver Sunday which brought over 150 men and women across the religion and race divide, to our centre. Participations in talks about the general election and what it means, co-joining other groups of younger age to learn from each other and much more.

Our one to one support is vital to ensuring their bills are paid and up to date, their post is read, and their homes are kept safe for them to enjoy.

The post is part time one and so when there is a home visit to make, it does make the job somewhat challenging as one home visit South of the borough can take much of one's working day. We hope that those who do support our work will see it necessary and overdue to provide adequate resources to continue to serve our older people on full time basis.

Our service is indeed a great saving to the statutory service provider, and this must be recognised if we are to continue to serve more holistically and in culturally sensitive manner.

Basma Yeslam

Ayam Zaman

Like other projects that are provided at Al-Hasaniya, Ayam Zaman was born out of a need and a demand presented by a few elderly men in the community who come for support to the centre and could not be turned away due to their vulnerability. As our service and projects during the week are primarily for women and their families, it was decided to open the centre on Sundays to provide a discreet and targeted provision for the elderly men.

The aim of the project is to promote wellbeing and provide a tailor-made programme that reduces loneliness and isolation through delivering specialist workshops and sessions that are often difficult to access in the wider community due to cultural and language barriers presented by the men. Social and economic factors and the lack of funding and availability has made it difficult for the men to obtain the necessary support and services they require, which is where Ayam Zaman stepped up to meet this demand.

The project has collaborated with local healthcare organisations and mental health professionals to raise awareness and alleviate the demand from statutory services and to also ensure these men are accessing services that they would otherwise struggle to do so without the additional support provided by the project.

A range of informative workshops have been carried out, such as mental health awareness, body composition testing and collaborative sessions with Diabetes UK and Bowel Cancer UK. These workshops have provided service users with the confidence and knowledge to take control of matters pertaining to both their mental and physical health.

Our expertise and knowledge within this community has meant that we are able tackle a range of barriers through culturally sensitive talks, a first of its kind in our community. Ayam Zaman aims to continue to provide advisory workshops on health, dental hygiene benefits and financial talks.

Al-Hasaniya also provides a traditional home cooked meal, which goes a long way, with many of the men residing alone due change of family composition, family breakdown and estrangement of family members. Some simply want to come together and talk over traditional mint tea. As small as it may be, sharing tea and a meal together creates family and friendship relations and invites dialogue, and provides familiarity to the men.

The progress of the project has been significant for many of the men, with men being signposted to in housing aid projects for further assistance in legal matters, assistance in translating documents and general inquiries regarding housing and benefits. With the little funding, Ayam Zaman has acted as an intermediary body to assist with enquiries and concerns that are often too complex for service users to access independently through statutory services.

Sophia Mourad

Inspire project

This Project was developed by Midaye and Al-Hasaniya for Somali and Arabic speaking women living in The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

This project has 3 elements of delivery, one to one support, and physical activity and to run a 15-week Peer Support Group.

It is a formidable compliment to the work we do on the mental health project. We have been working in partnership with Midaye for the past 8 years and have reached out to thousands of women, supporting them with health and wellbeing programmes, confidence building, empowerment programmes, physical activities and one to one support. The Inspire Project has been very successful over the years; delivering tailor-made programmes resulting in happier and more emancipated women.

Measuring outcomes is vital to the project in order to record behaviour change. These are measured by pre and post questionnaires. This information is collected and projected on a chart at the end of the year to show evidence of improved wellbeing.

Zohra Davis

Well & Alive Saturday Club project

Like all our projects, this one came out of the need to support those affected by the Grenfell inferno. Both the statutory and the voluntary sector remain absolutely 100% committed to those affected by the unprecedented national tragedy of June 2017.

The initial Well & Alive project was funded by the big lottery Awards for all as an emergency response, to support families living in hotels and offer a semblance of home life by providing child and parent activities at our centre, including home cooked food once a week for 13 weeks. The programme proved an instant success not only in terms of offering much needed comfort and support to those attending but as the weeks went by, it became evident that the programme must continue as both mothers and children needed structured sustenance and therapy. The impact of the inferno was becoming more and more evident. We were therefore absolutely delighted when the continuity of this vital programme was made possible through the Grove Trust grant. And so, the second phase of the programme started in earnest in January 2019. It was decided to reinforce what we had learnt within the first phase and deemed it sacrosanct to a successful outcome and that was to empower the mothers.

The second phase as funded by the Grove trust included three elements:

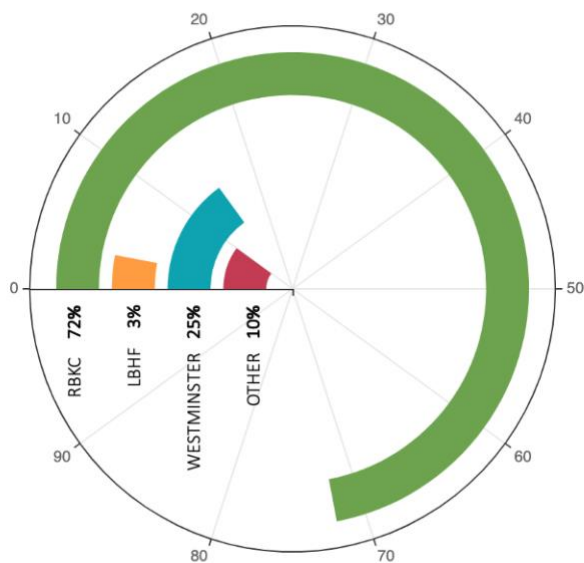
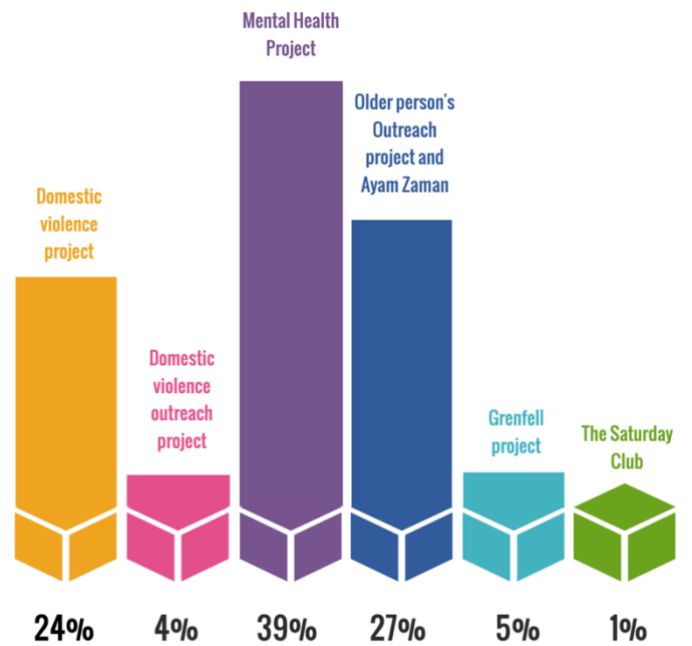
- Mothers empowerment session. A key activity to engage, educate and empower the mothers; enabling them to support their children better and become a positive role model to those who rely on them.
- Mother & child interaction group therapy. Allowing mother and child to work together, play together in the presence of 2 appropriately qualified professionals to guide them and support activities to build better relationships.
- One to one therapy sessions. Where necessary, we organised for our in-house qualified psychotherapist to see mother and child separately and then together to support their specific needs.

We are grateful to the Tudor Trust for supporting us to produce this short film on this vital service on Saturday, and we very much hope that our subsequent application for funding will be approved to continue the programme in 2020 and beyond.

Lama Zomlot

Al-Hasaniya in Numbers

Al-Hasaniya has been an important part of the community's wellbeing in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, and surrounding areas



Although based in RBKC, Al-Hasaniya has helped hundreds of vulnerable women in various boroughs in London.

Al-Hasaniya Events 2019



Event pictures

Audited Accounts