Bangladeshi
Women's Association

CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENTS

APRIL 2019 - MARCH 2024

A community regeneration programme of the Bangladeshi Women's Association funded by the Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council and the National Lottery Community Fund and powered by the Bangladeshi Regeneration Council.

empoweringcommunitiestogether

CONTENTS

1. Infographic 3
2. Chairpersons Message 4
3. Chief Executive Officer's Summary 5
5. Community Regeneration Vision 2030 6

6. Bangladeshi Women's Association 7
7. Tipton People and Neighbourhoods 8
8. Special thanks to BWA's Investors 9
9. Spaces to Connect- Community Centres 10

10. Community Regeneration Programmes
    a. Anti-Poverty Programme 11
    b. COVID-19 Support Programme 12
    c. Community Health Programme 13
    d. Come Dine with Neighbours 14
    e. Outdoor Experiences Programme 15
    f. Community Trips & Funday Programme 16
    g. Net Zero Neighbourhood Programme 17
    h. Youth Empowerment Programme 18
    i. Children's Play Programme 19
    j. Adults Learning Programme 20
    k. Research Programme 21
    l. Evaluation Programme 22

11. People's Personal Stories 23

BWA 5 YEAR ACHIEVEMENTS 2019 - 2024

Attendance at all BWA's Community Services provided over five years

66357

Number of Individual Residents Accessing BWA'S Services Annually

2500

NUMBER OF RESIDENTS:

SUPPORTED WITH **GENERAL** ADVICE & INFORMATION

478

SUPPORTED WITH **EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS**

84

HOURS OF **VOLUNTEERING** TIME SPENT

711

SUPPORTED WITH **EDUCATIONAL** & DIGITAL CLASSES

179

SUPPORTED WITH **VOLUNTEERING** OPPORTUNITIES

75

SUPPORTED WITH **HEALTHY** LIFESTYLE ACTIVITIES

120

SUPPORTED WITH **WELFARE BENEFITS**

568

SUPPORTED WITH **ENGLISH** LANGUAGE SKILLS

67

SUPPORTED WITH **POSITIVE** YOUTH ACTIVITIES

154

SUPPORTED WITH **SOCIAL** INTERACTION

530

SUPPORTED WITH **COMMUNITY** CONSULTATIONS

478

SUPPORTED WITH **COMMUNITY** FUN DAY

3000

FINANCIAL GAINS FOR THE COMMUNITY

£4.3 MILLION

CHAIRPERSONS MESSAGE

Razia Sattar

Chairwoman of BWA Limited

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the Celebrating Achievements Report 2019-2024 for the Bangladeshi Women's Association Limited. I hope you will find this report both informative and interesting and that it will give you a greater understanding of the work undertaken by our association. This report provides just a snapshot of the work that we have carried out in the past five years, and I am delighted to share it with you to highlight the breadth of activity that is undertaken. It is an excellent record of achievement.

In everything we do, we recognise that success is founded on partnership and joint working. We have therefore taken every opportunity to promoting partnership working between all sectors through collaboration, co-production and planning community services. Ultimately, all our work is directed towards changing lives and helping Tipton residents achieve their full potential.

The aspirations and actions set in motion will influence generations to come. We know this well and strive to achieve the maximum impact with the resources entrusted to us by our funders. As this report underscores, BWA is strongly committed to delivering well-targeted programmes and enlisting game-changing partners to accelerate the pace of change. And finally, I would like to thank everyone for their commitment and support which means the world to us. Together we can usher in a new era that is more just, resilient and inclusive of all.

Together we can usher in a new era that is more just, resilient and inclusive of all.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Syeda Khatun MBE

Chief Executive Officer

At the Bangladeshi Women's Association (BWA), we are committed to creating social capital and social change through delivering community regeneration, giving the residents of Tipton free access to advice, information and training whilst providing local venues for all communities to get more connected, empowered and confident to have a real stake in the development of the area. Over the past 40 years, BWA has developed into a community organisation of standing, providing a holistic and integrated package of community services to meet the needs of diverse residents in Tipton.

Supported by core and projects funders, in the past five years BWA has been delivering over thirty community projects related to Anti-Poverty, COVID-19 Support, Community Health, Outdoor Experiences, Youth Empowerment and Adults Learning. According to BWA's client monitoring data, BWA annually provides direct services to an average of 2500 residents, deals with 15000 queries and increases household income by an £1M annually.

In the delivery of BWA's community development services, we have adopted a community regeneration approach where communities are supported to take the lead in identifying and implementing local solutions. The majority of community services are delivered from our two community centres: Tipton Muslim Community Centre and Jubilee Park Community Centre, both of which have now been transformed into thriving community hubs and places of welcome providing a variety of high-quality community development services to residents of Tipton. We hope you will enjoy reading our Achievements Report and will continue to work with us in the delivery of our community regeneration programmes and improving lives of people in Tipton.

COMMUNITY REGENERATION VISION 2030

Anam Choudhury MSc

Director, Bangladeshi Regeneration Council

The first Bangladeshi migration to the UK began in the 1950s, with many coming to create better economic opportunities in the UK's textiles, manufacturing and the catering sectors which had a substantial impact on the country's redevelopment of social and economic fabric. Today, in 2024, the Bangladeshi community is one of the largest and fastest-growing ethnic groups with 652,500+ population of which a significant proportion is under the age of 30.

In the field of economy, Bangladeshis dominate the curry industry, with many having successful businesses. The Bangladeshi community makes significant contributions to British media with notable figures in journalism, arts & entertainment. Young Bangladeshis have made remarkable strides in education excelling in various professional fields, including medicine, architecture, law & politics. The Bangladeshi charitable organisations are providing essential community services to improve lives locally. The Bangladesh High Commission also works intensely to represent and advocate for the interests of the Bangladeshi community in the UK.

Despite progression, the Bangladeshi community continues to face socioeconomic challenges. British Bangladeshis have some of the lowest employment rates and highest levels of income deprivation among ethnic groups. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted health disparities, with British Bangladeshis experiencing higher risks due to overcrowded housing and low skilled work. The community is also disproportionately affected by higher rates of health issues. Overall, the Bangladeshi community continues to be regarded as one of the disadvantaged ethnic groups.

To tackle the challenges, taking a national community regeneration approach, a 20-year vision was founded by an expert group of Bangladeshis from the West Midlands, on the notion that by unlocking the hidden potentials of the Bangladeshi people, by 2030 the Bangladeshi community will no longer be regarded as one of the disadvantaged ethnic groups in the country.

To achieve the 2030 Vision, the Bangladeshi Regeneration Council works to 1) create research & development opportunities to design innovative ways to address deprivation; 2) improve the confidence of women and young people to learn, earn & lead; 3) promote and preserve the Bangladeshi heritage; 4) improve the capability of the emerging digital media platforms to provide better Bangladeshi community connectivity with all service sectors; and 5) build the capacity of the Bangladeshi charitable organisations such as the Bangladeshi Women's Association in the regeneration and renewal of the Bangladeshi community towards achieving the 2030 Vision.

Bangladeshi
Women's Association

The Bangladeshi Women's Association (BWA) is a successful community led organisation based in the Borough of Sandwell. Encountered with multiple deprivation, the association was established in 1984 by a group of enthusiastic women who wanted to meet the social & economic needs of their disadvantaged peers, young people, and families. In 1985 BWA started its activities initially taking the issues of social exclusion, poor access to community facilities and services, women's and child rights through a community development approach. Today, the association is a charitable company, committed to delivering community led regeneration in the alleviation of inequality, poverty and deprivation.

VISION

Improving the quality of life of residents in Tipton and the wider Metropolitan Borough of Sandwell.

MISSION

Provide residents access to advice information and training whilst providing a central venue for all groups to get more connected, empowered and confident to have a real stake in the sustainable regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods.

OUTCOME BASED OBJECTIVES

- Increase access to high quality information advice and guidance enabling residents to make informed choices.
- Increase skills and learning abilities of residents to improve socialising, employment & income generation.
- Increase communication and strengthen citizenship by promoting pride of place and a sense of shared future amongst all residents.
- Increase psychological and physical well-being of residents particularly for women and the elders in the community.

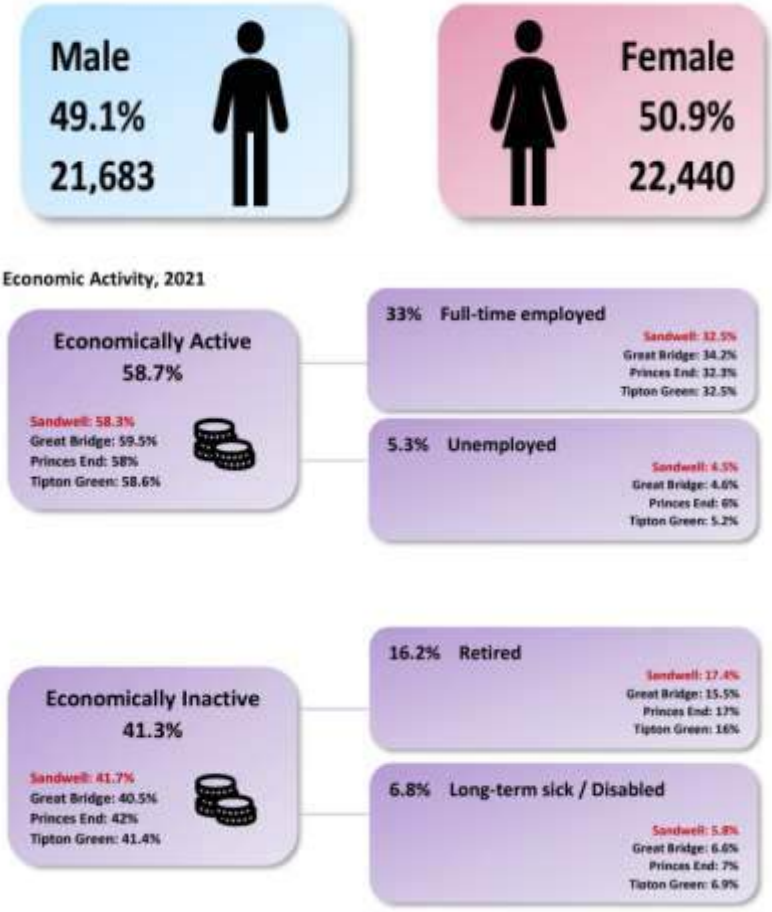
TIPTON

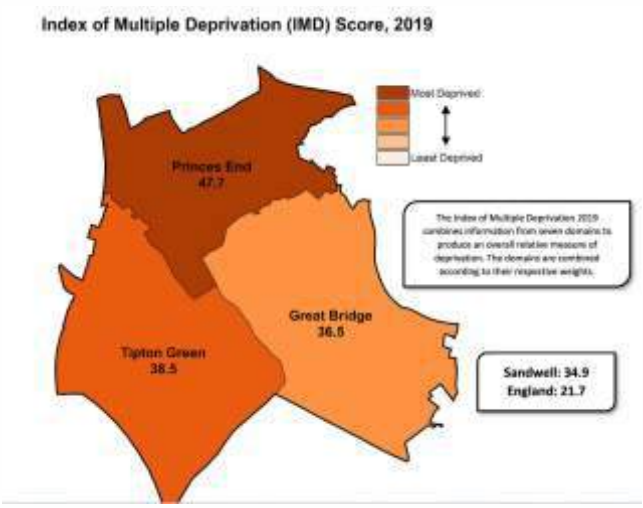
People & Neighbourhoods

The Bangladeshi Women's Association is committed to supporting the residents of Tipton. Tipton is one of six towns in Sandwell and contains the wards of Great Bridge, Princes End and Tipton Green. According to Census 2021, the population of Tipton is 44,125. 36% of the population are from ethnic minorities; 25% living in income deprived households; 27% of children in poverty; and 20% of households living in fuel poverty.

Overall Tipton is more deprived than England and Sandwell and its deprivation score would put it in the 20% most deprived areas in England. The picture of poverty in Tipton is one where there are a significant number of families facing deep seated poverty- being reliant on welfare benefits, not being able to get a job, heat their home, pay rent, or buy the essentials for their children.

Members of Tipton families whom we have worked with over the years have told us that they wake up every day facing insecurity, uncertainty, and impossible decisions about money. The reality is, many in Tipton experience poverty and it is wasting their potential, depriving Tipton economy of the skills and talents of those who have valuable contributions to make.





A SPECIAL THANK YOU

We would like to extend our special thanks to all our investors in the community who have demonstrated a remarkable commitment to our community regeneration cause.

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

BBC Children in Need

COMMUNITY FUND

SMALLWOODTRUST

SANDWELL Consortium

GREGGS FOUNDATION

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

co op Foundation

SCVO connecting · enabling · transforming

Society of the Holy Child Jesus Actions Not Words

heart of england COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

uclan University of Central Lancashire

NEAR NEIGHBOURS BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY

Community Centres

BWA is committed to ensuring long term future, development and success of the Tipton Muslim Community Centre and the Jubilee Park Community Centre. The two centres are thriving Community Hubs and places of welcome providing a variety of high-quality community development services including employment support, welfare advice, health and recreational activities, training, and much more. The facilities include offices, community hall, community library, community kitchen, general meetings, and social rooms.

Tipton Muslim Community Centre

Wellington Road, Tipton, DY4 8RS
Telephone: 0121 557 6766
Opening Hours: 9.00am - 5.00pm

Scan here to watch more about us

Jubilee Park Community Centre

Powis Avenue, Tipton, DY4 ORJ
Telephone: 0121 520 0234
Opening Hours: 9.00am - 3:00pm

Scan here to watch more about us

ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMME

Welcome to BWA's Anti-poverty programme called the Steps Towards Eradicating Poverty STEP. In the delivery of the Programme, BWA is committed to connecting low-income families to anti-poverty services delivered from the two community centres in Tipton. At the first stage of engagement a triage assessment is undertaken to evaluate the level of poverty suffered which determines the priority for participation in services offered including one to one advice information & referrals on welfare rights, debts & housing, educating individuals in financial literacy and management, supporting residents to improve employability & entrepreneurship. The Programme also provides access to community kitchens where families would meet to plan, cook and share cultural, healthy and affordable meals.

COVID-19 SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Welcome to BWA's COVID-19 Support Programme. During and aftermath of COVID-19, BWA continues to meet the increased demand for essential services to cope with the impacts of the pandemic. BWA's Caring for Communities Amid Covid-19 Programme therefore delivered essential services to help Tipton residents, and particularly those 'at risk' with welfare rights advice and entitlements, resources and support for mental health and well-being, including counselling, employability and business restart, referrals to emergency services, food parcels, vaccination clinics, online support and research on the impact of the COVID-19 on families. These programmes were designed to provide relief and support to those most affected by the pandemic, helping to mitigate its social and economic impacts.

COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAMME

Welcome to BWA's Community Health Programme. The Programme is a coordinated effort to improve the health and well-being and address the unique health needs of Tipton residents. Key components of the programme include educating the community about healthy lifestyles, disease prevention, and wellness practices. Offering screenings, vaccinations, and other preventive measures to catch health issues early. Offering counselling, support groups, and mental health resources to address psychological well-being. Helping individuals manage chronic conditions like diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease through education and involving community members in planning and implementing health initiatives to ensure they meet local needs and gain community support. These programs are delivered by a mix of healthcare professionals from the public health, and aim to create a healthier, more resilient community.

COME DINE WITH NEIGHBOURS

Welcome to BWA's Come Dine with Neighbours Programme. The Programme works with community members from different cultures, all keen to cook for their Neighbours' and take this chance to feel empowered about bringing about change in the community. In the delivery of the Programme, participants have access to a Community Kitchen and are given a budget to prepare a buffet meal for all others to enjoy. Prior to serving, the group delivers a short presentation on the culture and the techniques of the meal prepared. This concept brings together different nationalities to share commonality with food and is a brilliant and fun way to enhance the community by bringing people from varied cultures and backgrounds together; to socialize, build bonds and enjoy getting to know more about the cultures around them.

OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES PROGRAMME

Welcome to BWA's Outdoor experience Programme. BWA's Outdoor Experiences Programme involves activities and adventures that take place in natural settings, designed to help participants connect with nature, learn new skills, and enjoy physical activity. The programme includes a wide range of activities such as: opportunities to observe and learn about local wildlife in their natural habitats and growing food in the community allotment. Learning how to set up camp and build shelters. Environmental Education focusing on teaching participants about conservation, and environmental stewardship. The programme is designed to be accessible to people of all ages and fitness levels and provide a great way to experience the outdoors, stay active, and learn new skills.

COMMUNITY TRIPS & FUNDAY PROGRAMME

Welcome to BWA's Community Trips and community Funday. Held annually at the Victoria Park, Tipton Community Funday is a wonderful summer event which sees over 5000 Tipton residents coming together for a fantastic, fun-filled day. The fun never stops with fairgrounds rides, various cultural food stalls, bouncy castle, stage performance and car boot sale, being just a few of the attractions. Community and public sector agencies also run community consultations, information points and demonstrations for their services. BWA's annual community trip is also a fantastic way to bring people together, create lasting memories, and strengthen community bonds.

AFFORDABLE AND SAFE HOMES

PARK LANE ESTATE TIPTON

YOUR NET ZERO NEIGHBOURHOOD

The BWA are excited to introduce the Park Estate Net Zero Neighbourhood initiative, a collaborative effort between us, Sandwell Council and West Midlands Combined Authority. This project aims to create a sustainable, healthy, and affordable living environment for everyone in our community.

What is a Net Zero Neighbourhood?

A Net Zero Neighbourhood is a community where the amount of carbon emissions produced is balanced by the amount removed from the atmosphere. This means we aim to reduce our carbon footprint to zero through various sustainable practices and technologies.

How can this benefit you?

Lower Energy Bills: By improving the energy efficiency of homes, you can save money on your energy bills. This includes better insulation, energy-efficient windows, and modern heating systems.
Healthier Living: Improved air quality and green spaces will contribute to a healthier lifestyle. Cleaner air means fewer respiratory issues and more opportunities for outdoor activities.
Community Engagement: You will have the chance to participate in the planning and decision-making process. Your input is valuable in shaping the future of our neighbourhood.
Sustainable Travel: Enhanced public transport and safer walking and cycling paths will make it easier and more enjoyable to get around.
Retrofit Assessments: We will conduct thorough assessments of your homes to identify the best ways to improve energy efficiency and comfort. This will help us understand your home's needs and tailor solutions that work best for you.

What can you expect?

Advice on Home Improvements: the assessment will help us understand how your home could be more energy-efficient. This could include better insulation, new windows, and efficient heating systems.
Green Spaces: We will consult with you about how we can improve green and the streets for everyone to enjoy.
Community Events: Regular events will be held to keep you informed and involved in the project.
Air Quality Monitoring: Sensors will be offered for installation so that you can better understand the air quality in your home.

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME

Welcome to BWA's Youth Empowerment Programme. Funded by the BBC Children in Need, free positive activities are provided to boys and girls between the ages of 10-18 with free refreshments provided by the Greggs foundation. Weekly sessions include football, cricket, basketball, dodgeball, table tennis, archery, FIFA Tournament, along with arts, crafts & healthy cooking sessions, sewing, crafts, IT sessions, first aid training, leadership and entrepreneurship courses, dance workshops, social action projects. Other initiatives include bushcraft skills and survival training experiences with the National Trust and mentoring sessions with representatives from the National Citizen Service. There is career advice with CV writing and employability mentoring. There is also, encouragement of cohesion and friendship, as the current cohort includes young people from Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Afro-Caribbean and White/European communities.

CHILDREN'S PLAY SCHEME PROGRAMME

Welcome to BWA's Children's Play Scheme Programme. The Programme is designed to provide children with opportunities for play, learning, and social interaction. The Programme is run in partnership with various organisations and include a variety of activities such as arts and crafts, sports, storytelling, and outdoor adventures and access to a play area. The goal is to support children's development in a fun and engaging way, helping them to build social skills, creativity, and physical fitness. The Programme is run throughout the year with a particular focus given during school holidays, providing them with structured activities and a safe environment to play and learn.

ADULTS LEARNING PROGRAMME

Welcome to BWA's Adult Learning Programme. The Programme includes a variety of courses and training opportunities designed to help adults gain new skills, improve their qualifications, or pursue personal interests. The Programme includes access to courses in areas such as IT, Classes in arts, crafts, languages, and other hobbies to promote personal growth and enjoyment. The Programme offer a multitude of benefits that can significantly impact personal growth, professional development, and overall well-being. It plays a crucial role in empowering individuals, enhancing career prospects, and fostering a supportive and engaged community.

RESEARCH PROGRAMME

Welcome to BWA's Research Programme. Over the years, BWA worked with Royal Society of Arts, University of Central Lancashire, University of Wolverhampton, London School of Economics, Locality and Department for Communities & Local Government in delivering Social Research on strengthening community relations and development of community programmes. BWA is currently supporting University of Warwick with the CLARITY+ project which aims to bring together community organisations serving racially minoritised communities to share what they consider their most successful/unsuccessful initiatives. BWA is one of important partners in this project, creating the bridge between communities and university researchers. BWA's own research efforts involves identifying and addressing issues with the community that are important to them such as the impact of COVID-19 and the Cost-of-Living Crises. The goal has been to produce research that leads to tangible improvements in the community, such as better health outcomes, policy changes, or enhanced community services.

Research findings on the Cost-of-Living Crises

Involving 200 individuals in the cost-of-living crises research, the finding shows that BWA has sought to meet the challenges of the cost-of-living crisis being faced by so many individuals and families. By providing benefits, immigration and general advice, exercise and health awareness sessions, employability guidance, education courses and digital training along with community events, the research further shows that the support of the BWA is vital in supporting local people who are experiencing real hardship and deprivation due to the cost-of-living crisis.

Research findings on the Impact of COVID-19 Crises

The Impact of COVID-19 research consisted of a community survey, conducted during the months of October and November 2020, with 113 households contributing to it - 370 residents overall. Five themes of everyday life were investigated: General Health and Wellbeing, Children and their Well-being, Employment, Household Income and Community Relations. Having gained valuable insight into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and social 'lockdown', the BWA has clearly identified the challenges that lie ahead for the community at large and for the organisations assigned with the task of providing assistance and support; whether in terms of advice and guidance, job search, health and fitness, English language classes, computer access and tuition, or youth provision. The research indicates that in the aftermath of the pandemic, people's needs will be more complex, necessitating a wider range of support initiatives than those delivered previously.

EVALUATION PROGRAMME

Welcome to the BWA's Evaluation Programme. The STEP programme was funded in 2019 for five years via the National Lottery "Reaching Communities" programme. An independent evaluation by Compass Community Partnership indicates that the STEP programme has made a significant impact in each of the 101 sample clients examined within this report. Access to both centres was equal, with the staff in both venues highly valued for the time and effort they gave. Comments reflected the ethos of the support, with the reflection that clients were listened to and taken seriously. This was also reflected in the stakeholder workshop. The service ran through the Covid 19 pandemic, and also reflected the principles discovered during the pandemic in relation to vaccination roll out, that is, that trusted people in accessible venues are at the heart of effective service delivery.

The age profile of clients shows accessibility was greater from the older end of the age spectrum with 51% being aged 55 or older and only 27% being aged under 45. Clients identified a range of needs and issues, with lack of employment and the consequences of that leading to food poverty and debt. Access to both employment and benefits was hampered by a lack of digital skills which the programme sought to address. There was a significant number of clients reflecting mental health issues with clients at the older end of the age spectrum identifying loneliness and isolation. Impact was clearly being made in reducing this with 93% strongly agreeing they felt more part of the community as a result of the services received.

The opportunity to be a part of the allotment group and the community kitchen were highlighted as places where new friendships were formed. The support package most accesses was in relation to advice, information and guidance which included income maximisation from entitled benefits and made significant progress in reducing the level of unclaimed benefits. The total amount recorded for the 71 clients where an amount was identified was just under £700,000.

56% of clients said they felt more confident in handling family finances and 48% having their confidence raised in relation to earning a living. The value to the clients was also recorded in terms of support areas and emotional impact as well as financial. Finance, personal support, learning and friendship development were identified as the top four areas. The top two areas of emotional impact related to a sense of gratitude and thankfulness, especially towards the staff team, again emphasising the value of trusted people in accessible venues. The stakeholder workshop confirmed the trends emerging through the evaluation forms, recognising the access to support through local venues and trusted staff (with sufficient time) was essential for effective delivery. Clients also stated that it took courage to ask for help.

In terms of future working, the holistic approach was seen to be effective, recognising that multiple issues will impact on individuals and families. Additionally, a greater emphasis on young people and young adults was needed, reflecting client group accessing this programme.

PEOPLE'S PERSONAL STORIES

"I have been a service user of BWA which has helped me very much in understanding how I can live a better harmonious life with my family by managing my finances and needs. I have been able to find out if i have claimed the right welfare benefits and how to manage my family income which had become a nightmare for me with no financial literacy or understanding on how to budget money.

"I am a single parent with low educational qualifications. I started going to BWA and enrolled on their STEP Project. This has been a life changing move for me. I was an isolated single mother with a toddler, and I never thought that I would have the opportunity to progress myself being a single mother with no support. I have been able to get one to one mentoring. I have also been able get help and advice on my benefit entitlements and support and information on job searches and interview preparation.

"I went to BWA to see what help they could offer me as I was financially struggling to cope. I was so deflated and anxious talking about my financial matters, but the BWA staff made me feel comfortable and offered me a confidential service which I will never forget. They took me through the STEP triage assessment to evaluate my situation.

PEOPLE'S PERSONAL STORIES

"When I went to BWA for help they assessed my needs and created a plan of action for me and advised me on STEPs to take that will give me knowledge and understanding on how to look after my family finances. We are a low-income family with four children of primary school age and English is not my first language as I came to the UK to settle with my husband 12 years ago. Going to BWA has also helped me to better my English and to make friends and now I look forward to making plans to learning maths and English so that I can enter the job market to better our living standards".

"My biggest fear was not being able to support my child independently and respectfully without being reliant on benefits however I now feel motivated to challenge and trial new routes to employment I did not consider before. I am also considering entering into work experience and studying a literacy and numeracy course to better mine and my child's future. The staff at BWA are friendly and easy to approach and I feel privileged being there".

"I am 35 years old, and I go to BWA for advice, guidance, and mentoring support from the staff at BWA. I only have a few GCSE qualifications, but BWA has given me the opportunity to do voluntary work at the centre. I come from a deprived neighbourhood in Tipton and going to BWA has encouraged me to think outside the box and gain work experience so that I can apply for jobs in the future. I enjoy the voluntary experience which brings me closer to everyday people & encourages me to visualise a positive future for myself".

PEOPLE'S PERSONAL STORIES

"When I went to BWA for help they assessed my needs and created a plan of action for me and advised me on STEPs to take that will give me knowledge and understanding on how to look after my family finances. We are a low-income family with four children of primary school age and English is not my first language as I came to the UK to settle with my husband 12 years ago. Going to BWA has also helped me to better my English and to make friends and now I look forward to making plans to learning maths and English so that I can enter the job market to better our living standards".

"I am 22 years of age from Tipton and unemployed. I did not continue my education after leaving school. I was introduced to BWA and started attending the STEP Projects Employability Club which helped me to understand that I had to make changes to my life to achieve a successful career. I gained confidence, motivation, help and support in looking at different pathways which will help me better my personal, social and economic situation. I have since enrolled into Sandwell college to study an Introductory Diploma in Information Technology. I always had an interest in computing but never thought of following my interests until I was encouraged by BWA. Through engaging, communicating and socialising with other service users I was able to understand that I was not alone in needing guidance".

"I moved to Tipton a few years ago. I have small children who go to school and my husband works part time at the local grocery store. I was introduced to BWA through a relative. I met STEP Workers who were very considerate and understanding and they did an assessment of my circumstances, helped me identify my needs and advised me on things I can do to reach my goals. I wanted to learn how to cook different cuisines so that I can cater for my growing children's taste and learn how to cook on a budget. BWA has helped me become more confident with my cooking and taught me different techniques and skills which I never knew. Joining the STEP project has been an inspiring and motivating journey which I would recommend to anyone like me".

PEOPLE'S PERSONAL STORIES

"I live in Tipton, but I rarely used to socialise with anyone due to my depression. I was walking by BWA when they said hello and I was taken back by their friendliness. I enquired about what they did, and they invited me back to the centre for a tour. I lacked confidence but I felt comfortable with them, so I decided to go back to BWA. This became the best decision I ever made as I felt my loneliness disappeared and I began to feel alive. I am very grateful to BWA for providing me with a STEP plan which identified my needs and aspirations. I am of middle age, but I now feel young again and I feel confident to do things I would never have done living in isolation. I now have friends I can go out with; I use a computer to connect with the entire world and I have mentors I can approach for guidance and advice".

"I am a mother of five children and my world has always revolved around my children and household chores. When I came to BWA and met so many ladies who were housewives like me but doing more for themselves I became inspired, and I realised I wanted more in life, and I wanted to positively contribute to the welfare of my family. I joined the STEP plan and underwent an assessment where I identified I could do more with my time. I am a keen gardener with minimal skills and BWA had an allotment which I began to participate in. This has been very exciting for me as I have gained confidence in gardening, made new friends and now I can grow my own vegetables at home and share gardening tips with others".

PEOPLE'S PERSONAL STORIES

"I am a local Tipton resident and I have children attending primary school. I approached BWA with a query relating to my inability to help my children with their homework as I didn't have much English understanding. I saw how my children got frustrated knowing I couldn't help or contribute any ideas or suggestions, and I felt I was lacking as a parent. BWA helped me through their STEP project by assessing my situation and advised me to join ESOL. I have now successfully completed my first year and my English has improved. Now I feel useful, proud and confident that I can contribute to my children's education. This has also helped me to meet other mothers with a common interest and I have been able to make friends. I look forward to continuing to learn English and to using this new found skill to enhance my workability profile. I am looking forward to utilising BWA's employability programme to find suitable employment".

"I live in Tipton with my family. I am a housewife, and my husband is unemployed due to a long-term disability. I have two grown children in their 20's who are out of work and education. I contacted BWA for advice and i was amazed by their help and support. They assessed my situation and gave me invaluable advice. I found out that being my husband's primary carer I was able to receive carer's allowance. This is very mentally and financially rewarding.

"I can now go out with my husband to various locations free of charge as an accompanying carer. This has also helped me to improve my relationship with my husband as we get to spend more meaningful times together. I was also able to take my son's to BWA for support, advice and guidance which was fantastic as now one son is going to Sandwell College and one son is on an apprenticeship programme all thanks to BWA".

"They invited me on to the financial workshop where I was able to learn about financial management, how to tackle my debts and how to budget my spending. This was an eye-opening time for where I learnt so much about how to manage money more efficiently. Now I am more money conscious and my debts have diminished slowly. This experience has given me confidence and increased my self-esteem".

Tipton Muslim Community Centre

Wellington Road, Tipton, DY4 8RS

Telephone: 0121 557 6766

Opening Hours: 9.00am - 5.00pm

Jubilee Park Community Centre

Powis Avenue, Tipton, DY4 ORJ

Telephone: 0121 520 0234

Opening Hours: 9.00am - 3:00pm

www.bwa-org.co.uk

E: info@bwa-org.co.uk @BWALIMITED2083 𝕏@BWALIMITED

Registered Company No. 08085962 Registered Charity Number: 1151816