



Roshni Sheffield Asian Women’s Resource Centre Sheffield City Council Core Service Grant: 2022-23 Annual Impact Report

Roshni is a resource centre for South Asian women living and working in the city of Sheffield. The centre aims to empower women from disadvantaged backgrounds, by providing a wide range of culturally specific services and activities, to enable them to improve their wellbeing and achieve economic stability.

The Core Service grant of Sheffield City Council of £34,744 provides much needed core funding for Roshni and is awarded as a contribution to the delivery of 3 key beneficiary outcomes that we strive to deliver for our clients. This report provides a service overview for 2022-23 and reports on the achievement of these outcomes and the positive impact we continue to have on the lives of our clients and volunteers.

2022/23 Service highlights

The centre delivered services to **600 women** in the city and **92 children received support** through the following services and activities:

- **One to one Advocacy support** was provided to **328** marginalised Asian women in the city, through our Empowerment service. Demand for Advocacy support has continued to grow and has been made worse by the rising cost of living crisis and our clients high needs for advocacy due to language barriers and a very low level of education.
- One to one **Bilingual cultural counselling sessions** were completed by **33 women**, and in addition **22** women are currently in counselling. The majority of these women have experienced either domestic abuse, multiple traumas and/or some form of crisis in their lives.
- **43** New **domestic abuse** cases were supported over the year. Only **8** of these domestic abuse clients were fluent in English.
- **31** courses were delivered this year, engaging a community which is traditionally hard to engage/motivate. In addition **99 women** were supported to complete **self-development plans** helping them to clarify their goals and reach their aspirations of whom **19** women took up volunteering and **15** women were supported into paid work.

Education & Training courses delivered 2022/23	No. of women attending
Creative Conversation English	53
Life in the UK preparation course	18
Digital skills	50
Employment skills preparation	21

Self-Advocacy course	28
Art & Movement therapy	59
DIY skills training	8
Literacy class	12
Parenting skills	7
Diya - empowering young girls training	36
Budgeting & Cost of living workshops	18

- **Elder Café** group sessions and activities were accessed by **57 clients** to alleviate loneliness and/or isolation, of whom **40 were elders from the Bangladeshi community** in Sheffield.
- We supported **43** women through our **Live Lite adult weight management programme** delivered to women in the Darnall and Tinsley areas of the city.
- **Holiday Activities & Food Programme (HAF)** sessions delivered to **56 children** in receipt of free school meals in the school holidays. Most of these children from single parent households and most have experienced some form of Domestic Abuse.
- **Walks for Wellbeing** were accessed by **50 women** across the city to help them come out of their homes after the Covid-19 lockdown.
- Weekly Exercise classes delivered to **76 women** to improve physical and/or mental health as part of our Move More project of which **58 were Bengali women** from the **Darnall** area of the city.
- Day trips, events and a conference for girls was organized and delivered throughout the year. This included a day trip for **22 Asian women** to see the Great Yorkshire Show in Harrogate.
- Delivered group activities to **36 girls in 3 secondary schools** providing them with opportunities to develop their confidence and self-esteem.

Outcome 1 - Women accessing Roshni’s services take control over their own life and take responsibility for their own wellbeing by making good life choices.

The **Empowerment Circle project** was designed to create a shift in our service, with more focus on **enabling** the vulnerable women we support. We aimed to reduce our advocacy work and hands on support, putting more resources into one-to-one coaching sessions and group work. It proved to be challenging both for the project staff and for our service users. We aimed to provide Advocacy to only **100 clients this year** but ended providing **support to 328 women**. Nonetheless, we have gone ahead and done all our planned activities for this

year with some amazing progress by our service users. The cost of living crisis has been the biggest change. We find ourselves completing household support fund forms almost daily for clients in need, which is useful to the clients but at the same time, it is time consuming. The workload for the staff team has increased due to this consecutive higher demand for advocacy support.

Case study - : Client A - single mother of 3, experienced domestic abuse from her ex-husband and in-laws for most of her adult life. She suffered from severe depression, stress and anxiety. During Covid 19 she became bed bound. Roshni staff helped her to build her confidence and self-esteem by providing her with 1-2-1 advocacy support, counselling and by encouraging her to attend Roshni courses such as Wellbeing and Preparation for Employment.

Client A’s feedback: “Roshni was supportive, kind and understanding. As I was in an abusive relationship for over 4 decades, I did not know any better, I did not know what was right and wrong. Roshni staff me helped me recognise that I was enslaved in domestic abuse; they helped me to build my confidence and self-esteem; to become myself again and re-claim my freedom. Now I volunteer in the community and help other women to attend classes and learn new skills so they can become empowered to enjoy their life. Roshni empowered me and now I want to repay back by becoming a community support worker who helps women who suffer in silence from domestic abuse. I learned a lot about myself from the Roshni Wellbeing course and Preparation for Employment. Thank you, Roshni, for your support!”



Case study – Client X, a single mum of 2, has been living in the UK for over 10 years. She had an arranged marriage with her cousin. Her husband never accepted her and started having extra-marital affairs whilst she was used as a domestic servant to serve all the in-laws. She initially attended our Preparation for Employment training and then decided to follow it up by taking on more courses. She also began volunteering in a local charity shop and then with the help of the Empowerment Circle worker she applied for a cleaner’s job in a school. A few months ago she applied for a new school job as a lunch time supervisor, and she was successful. With our training and support she has learnt many skills including how to fill out a job application form, where to search for jobs etc. She has since been able to apply for several posts independently. . Client X is ambitious, motivated and focused to become successful in her life. She has now passed her driving test; saved money and bought a car and continues to work and learn new skills despite having issues with her ex-in-laws.

This is what she had to say: “Roshni opened my eyes to new opportunities; I was very unhappy in my relationship, did not know what to do with my life and where and who to turn to; by chance I found out about Roshni. You have inspired and motivated me to become independent and empowered; thank you for your kindness, support and professionalism. You have given me a new meaning to my life!”

Outcome 2 – Women accessing Roshni services have improved wellbeing and mental health.

This year **33 women** completed their **Bi-lingual and Cultural specific Counselling** with us and **22 women** are still in receipt of counselling. Results collated from our end of counselling evaluation showed that:

- 87% of the women responded that counselling had helped a great to deal with their worries;
- 93% of women rated their mental wellbeing after counselling as better than before.
- 91% of the women said that they found counselling to be very helpful.

Feedback from Counselling clients 2022/23:

Counselling has helped me change my lifestyle, who I am, the way I think, imagine and act. Nothing feels difficult because I am willing to give it a try. When you believe in yourself, you can do anything. I had let myself go. I felt I was nothing. Now I know what I want for myself....I have also set some long terms goals for myself, and I am already thinking about how to get there”.

“I was dying inside when I came to you. Counselling has given me my life back”.

“You reflected saying my daughters were starting to repeat the same patterns of behaviours as me. That hit so hard! I knew I had to break the cycle for my girls”.

“I was so reluctant to disclose much in the beginning. Later, I used close my bedroom door, sit and wait for your call. Counselling offered me a space where I could be myself. There was no judgement. At times I was surprised as to how much I had disclosed”.



85%
of women **agreed**
or **strongly agreed**
that their wellbeing had
improved

“My children are noticing the changes in me. My daughters are so happy for me. It is as if they have got their mum back. My friend said I sounded so different...in a nice way!

We also worked in partnership with MIND, and delivered **9 wellbeing courses in Art and Movement therapy to 59 women**. Women were read out a set of 4 statements at the end of each course. The statements and the responses recorded are:

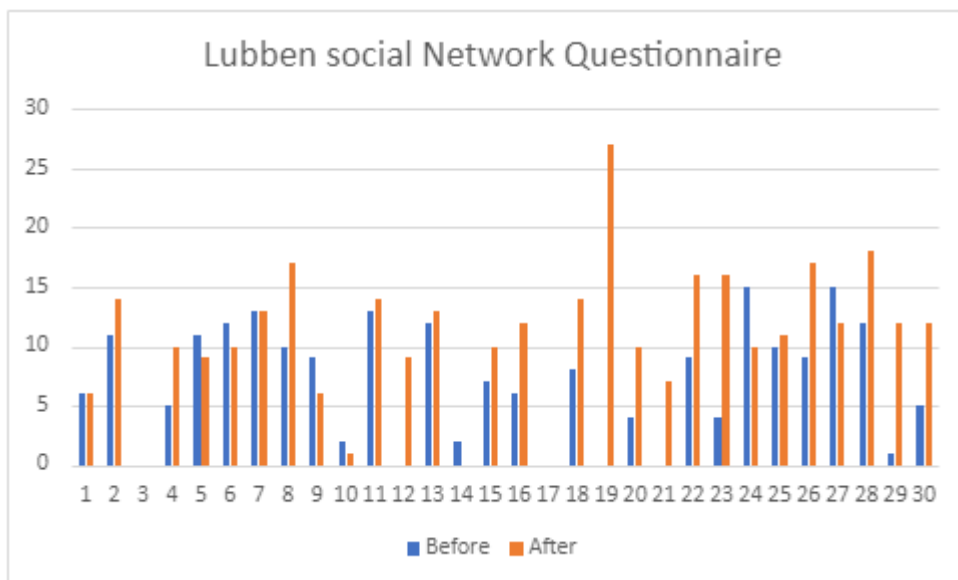
I feel my wellbeing has improved (wellbeing question) - 85% of the women either agreed or strongly agreed.

I feel my mood has improved (wellbeing question) - 82% of the women either agreed or strongly agreed.

I feel more connected to others (social connection question) - 85% of the women either agreed or strongly agreed.

I feel my self-esteem has increased (self-esteem question) - 82% of the women either agreed or strongly agreed.

We have also tried to record and measure the impact of our **Empowerment Circle Service** on the mental wellbeing of our clients by using the **Lubben Social Network questionnaire**. This is a brief instrument designed to measure social isolation in older adults by measuring perceived social support received by them. This was completed with 125 clients at the beginning of our service and was then completed with 30 of the clients who had then gone on to leave the service. The remaining clients are still using our service. The graph indicates that **24 out of 30 clients reported that their social networks had improved after using our service**.



Outcome 3 – Women accessing Roshni services become more active citizens.

The **BME Elders project** aims to support older people by improving their wellbeing, reducing social isolation and loneliness and in reducing inequalities in their access to services. This year, we undertook Digital training with the Bangladeshi women living in the Darnall area of the city. These sessions proved to be very popular, providing an opportunity to **develop skills as well as providing a means of reducing isolation and loneliness amongst elders** in the city. We have also been undertaking weekly chair aerobics over zoom in response to women's health concerns and feelings of isolation/depression. Anecdotally many women talked about how the project has helped them feel less isolated & that they enjoyed the health benefits of exercise. Most recognised the benefits of being more active and more said they didn't feel confident coming out alone to exercise (issues with transport, language, where to go). All the women had benefited from coming together as a group, albeit on zoom, and building their confidence together. Many of the women we work with want to become more active citizens. However, their lack of belief in themselves is often a big barrier as is their poor educational backgrounds.

Case study: K is a Bengali client in her 40s; her 2 children are now grown. K has a lot of health issues such as depression, diabetes, high BP, arthritis and recently she had a frozen shoulder, because of which she cannot move one side of her shoulders and arm properly. Through our encouragement, despite all her setbacks, K began to attend classes, group sessions and other activities with other Roshni projects we do. As she saw the benefits from attending these sessions, she became really punctual, and she also began to encourage other clients to attend too. K received Roshni counselling, attended movement therapy and some of the Empowerment circle courses such as preparation for employment and the digital class. She attended the ESOL open day we did in Darnall (her neighbourhood) for clients to be assessed for ESOL classes through Sheffield city council. After attending the assessment day, K started to attend the ESOL entry level 3 classes in Wicker(area of Sheffield bus ride away for her) where she travels to attend the classes. K said that she plans to carry on with the ESOL classes and hopes to go on to the next level of ESOL level 1 next year. K also attends exercise classes and walks with us. K has massively improved the quality of her life. Instead of being depressed, she is now motivated to learn new skills, do new things, keep active and not let her health issues stop her from doing things. K said that she feels good and happy attending our group sessions and the ESOL classes and enjoys meeting and socialising with others.

We have also worked in partnership with 'Ignite Imaginations' over the past year. Assisting women to access mainstream opportunities to engage in creative and therapeutic activities and show case their work with other groups from around the city. We ran the Covid Memorial project with them, supporting women from the community who had experienced loss and bereavement over this period. The activities were thoroughly enjoyed by all, using clay as a medium of expression.

Case study – Client H regularly brings her daughter to the Roshni Holiday Play Scheme. This child is the only child of her single mother who is a survivor of Domestic Abuse and being

abandoned by the family members, both mum and daughter lead a very isolated life. When H's daughter started attending our session earlier in 2022, she was very shy and reticent and instead of playing with fellow children, she would always be hiding behind her mum refusing to take part in anything. The mother however said that despite this, she would still want to come. At our recent Christmas Play Scheme, we saw a massive improvement in her behaviour. The first day she was a bit hesitant to let go of her mum but when we encouraged and led her to doing fun activities, she let her mum go. From then onwards she gradually opened up with other children, made new friends and did all the activities with them. Later on the mum told us that this time her daughter was really happy as she would bring home the crafts that she created with her friends and would talk about her time at the scheme even at home. She said that they both loved going to the theatre for the first time in their and her daughter was in awe of the bright, colourful and lively show the whole time. The mother further added, "I'm really happy that she has opened up and was not clingy with me for the first time as its good for her confidence building and for me to have some time to do my personal stuff which she wouldn't let me do in her presence."

Once engaged with Roshni, women are supported to access a range of mainstream services relevant to their needs. We often hear from them that what keeps them engaged with our organisation is our values of respect, kindness, warmth and commitment to our service users. A phrase that we hear over and over again from our service users is that Roshni feels like home to them. Considering that we are serving women who are often displaced and socially isolated, it means a huge deal to them that they can come to our project where they are totally accepted and offered all the support that they need.

Case Study - Client Z had no recourse to public funds. She had suffered DA/coercive control from her husband and in-laws, who threw her out, keeping her baby. Z knew nothing about her rights and was frightened to even report the abuse. We made her aware of her rights and the law; we liaised with the police and social care, referred her to an immigration solicitor and family lawyer, helped her apply for Universal Credit, open a bank account, showed her how to self-travel and continue to support her to access contact with her child and to become independent.

Roshni also did some partnership work with the Sheffield Environmental Movement (SEM) this year to enable Asian women to access the green spaces surrounding Sheffield and benefit from all that it offers. It was also an experience for them to visit the Great Yorkshire Show in summer, one of the best agricultural shows in the UK. This was also a great opportunity for those women to share their own stories of growing up and living in rural areas in their native countries. The visit was a great success and the women involved seemed to really value the experience. Staff and clients also went to a meeting at the town hall to share their experiences of partnership work with SEM (Environmental Volunteers Event), an event at which some of our clients participated in and shared their experiences.

Feedback at our AGM 2022 from a partner organization:

"I was really impressed by the number of women who attended the meeting. It spoke to me how valued Roshni is to the community that so many would make the trip to come down and celebrate its 30 year anniversary. All of the staff spoke highly of each other

and the women that attend and it clearly showed how important each are to one another which is amazing to see. I really enjoyed all of the entertainment such as the dancers and singers and I appreciate that Roshni may have had a part in giving the women confidence to perform and the support the crowd gave. Personally, I was really interested in the success of the weight loss management course as it showed engagement with women that I believe other services may have missed. Honestly, it was the best AGM I have seen and I want to let you all know how impressed I am with your services and how valuable it really is to Sheffield”.

I would love to come down and speak to you all in the near future!

Looking forward to 2023-24

In the coming year we are planning more focused work with women around volunteering and employment. Our new Social Enterprise arm, Roshni Kitchen, will be up and running which and we will utilize it to train women in an array of skills, opening up their interest and opportunities to the world of work. We will also be working with SEM to deliver a series of residentials with clients interested in becoming Environmental Champions and Ambassadors in their respective local communities. We also plan on developing our Roshni garden this year and utilize local women and children to participate in its setting up and maintenance. We are also hoping to set up a new helpline service specific for young South Asian women and girls aged 13-25 who are at risk of suicide. We will be providing one to one support to enable the provision of mental wellbeing support/counselling to girls in the city at risk of suicide