



## **Roshni Sheffield Asian Women's Resource Centre**

### **Annual Impact Report - 2017/18**

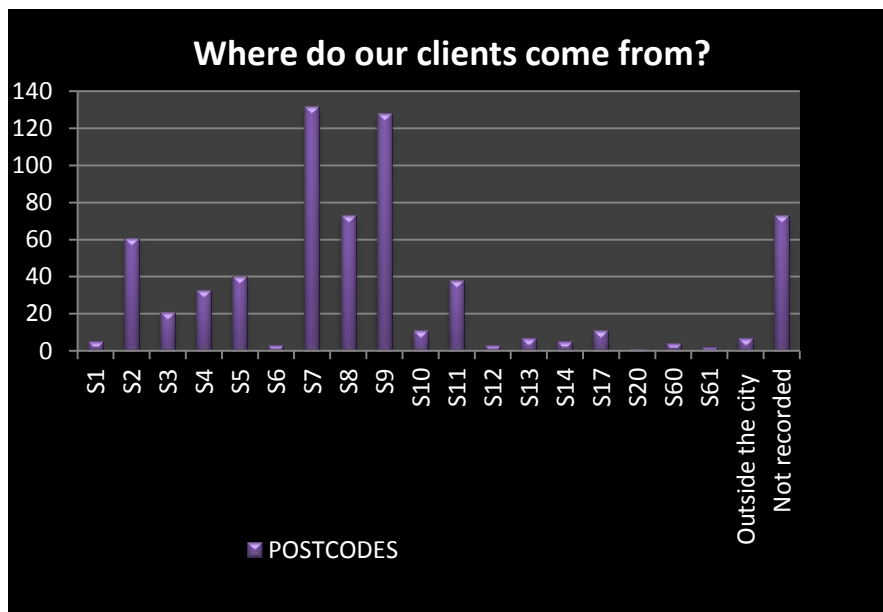
Roshni (meaning 'light') is a resource centre for South Asian women who are living and working in Sheffield. Roshni is a not-for-profit charity. It was set up in 1992 to address the needs and aspirations of Asian women living and working in Sheffield. South Asian women are regularly cited in research as a minority group experiencing multiple barriers and disadvantage. The women are often experiencing isolation because of cultural readjustment, racial prejudice and urban deprivation. They are also disadvantaged by low self esteem, lack of self confidence, a lack of information about the workings of society and by a lack of knowledge of social agencies and how best to use them.

The Roshni centre aims to create a dedicated facility in Sheffield for the delivery of new and innovative services, which complement existing provision. The centre's role is also that of a facilitator, a bridge for women to access mainstream opportunities and improve access to mainstream services. Our reach into the Asian community allows us to access the most marginalised of women and support them to identify their own needs, create their own solutions and make their own choices. Our principle objective being to ensure that there are lasting improvements to the quality of their life, and that they are able to take up social and economic opportunities available to them in the City of Sheffield.

***Roshni is a language and female specific resource centre that provides a range of services and activities for vulnerable Asian women across Sheffield.***

This report outlines the services we delivered in 2017-18 and the positive impact we had on our clients. The report is part of the monitoring requirements of a three year Core Service Grant agreement we have with Sheffield City Council. This grant provided core funding of £43,601 in 2017-18 to support 658 women with the following services and activities:

- One to one advocacy support for 300 beneficiaries
- A counselling service for 23 beneficiaries
- To engage and support 81 lonely and isolated Asian elders in the city
- To run café group sessions for 194 Asian elders
- Mental wellbeing courses for a total of 35 participants
- A weekly sewing class for a total of 41 participants
- An accredited ESOL Entry level class (delivered by Sheffield College) for a total of 37 learners
- A weekly conversation/drama class for 49 participants
- A wide range of social, cultural, skills and information based events and training activities run throughout the year which includes parenting courses for socially isolated women, day trips to the sea side in the summer holidays for disadvantaged families, and the celebration of events such as International Women's Day for all to learn and enjoy.



Our funding is linked to the following three outcomes:

**Outcome 1 - Women accessing Roshni services have improved wellbeing and mental health.**

The Roshni Empowerment service provided 352 women with practical and emotional support over the year. This entailed the provision of practical and emotional advocacy support, a counselling service to reduce anxiety and improve mental wellbeing, and mentoring and tailored wellbeing sessions to help women learn techniques and skills and progress towards their personal health goals.

To help facilitate our client's progress, we help them to access mainstream services and opportunities. This year 35 women attended mental wellbeing sessions which were delivered in partnership with Sheffield Mind. These courses were specifically targeted towards South Asian women to increase their mental wellbeing and tackle social isolation. All the women completed a short questionnaire to indicate their awareness of mental wellbeing before and after the activity. Their awareness had improved in all cases. Comments from clients after attending the mental wellbeing sessions indicated that they were able to use various stress management techniques to calm themselves at times of stress e.g. breathing exercises and exercises they had learned during the class.

An exciting development has taken place within our counselling service this year. Our paid counsellor could only offer three appointments a week. To extend our service we have recruited two bi-lingual volunteer counsellors. Our paid counsellor is currently completing a diploma in counselling supervision, which enables us to attract trainee counsellors looking for volunteering to attain their counselling placement hours. We are now able to offer counselling to 9 clients every week due to the value added by our volunteers.

We use the anxiety questionnaire, GAD 7 (Generalised Anxiety Disorder) with all our empowerment clients to screen them for anxiety and to measure the impact of our service. We also measure and track wellbeing changes by using the Warwick and Edinburgh Wellbeing questionnaire with 80 of the new 125 clients that we aim to engage with the service each year. These questionnaires are completed at the first point of access into the service and then at a twelve month interval. As we are still in

the process of analysing the data for Year 1 this data will be available and fully reported on in Year 2 of the service.

The following comments have been recorded following analysis of feedback received from our Empowerment service clients:

- *At a crisis point in your life you can fall or stand up. You need some support which can make all the difference. That's the support Roshni gave me.*
- *I cried at every problem. I never believed I could carry such a big responsibility to be a single parent, but with Roshni's support, now I am totally different. Now whenever I have a challenge, I think this can be sorted out. I have so many friends, I feel confident.*
- *I have learned that even as an uneducated women I can do things, understand legal things and take care of my family.*

***"Staff at all levels of the organisation demonstrate high levels of professional integrity in the service. They show strong ethical values and are client centred. Client needs and interests are seen as paramount and drive delivery of support throughout the organisation"*** (Matrix report 2017).

The 'matrix' Standard is a unique quality framework for organisations to assess and measure their information, advice and/or guidance services, which ultimately supports individuals in their choice of career, learning, work and life goals. Roshni was successful in passing the quality mark standard again this year and it has been secured for a further 3 years.

**Case study:** Client Y is a widow; she lives by herself and has no social interaction or family support around her. She comes along to our BME Elders sessions and this is the only opportunity she has to meet with others and interact.

This client has made steady progress with her self-confidence as she was initially very hesitant to talk amongst others. As time has progressed her social skills have developed and her anxiety issues have also been overcome. She is getting more involved in the group and is more active and vocal in sessions and has made several new friends. As a result of her attending, this client engages and learns about health and wellbeing issues and local services that are available to her. She has stated that this service is invaluable to her as there is no other mainstream service that offers this support to her in her native language.

### **Outcome 2 - Women accessing Roshni's services take control over their own life and take responsibility for their own wellbeing by making good life choices.**

The women that Roshni supports are often isolated and marginalized from access to mainstream services by various barriers, including lack of ability to communicate in English, low self esteem and confidence and lack of knowledge about what is available, as well as strongly held views in communities about the traditional role of women as being in the home. It is often a very long and hard battle for the women who do come out of their homes – we ensure that we have the right platform in place to assist that process.

Individual action planning has been completed with 70 women this year. As most of our clients come to us in a state of crisis and low level of skills, it takes well over a year before there is any real change and development. Here are three examples of SMART goals set for the clients through action planning:

1. Client will go to 10 different shops in next two weeks and will hand in her CV, also she will keep a log of when and where she has given her CV.
2. Client will go to St Luke's Hospice on her own and will find out if her volunteer application has been processed. If not she will request another application form. She will also go to the charity shop on Abbeydale Rd. She will do this this week. This will help her to overcome her internal barriers to approaching charitable organizations.
3. Client will fill in an application form for a cleaner's job herself, and will take the application to the school. She will also enrol herself for a Teaching Assistants course at the Children Centre.

At Roshni we encourage women to develop their confidence and skills and to take control over their own life by trying out activities that are new to them, for example:

- Mrs A has started to drive on the motorway after being petrified of motorway driving for a long time
- Many women have been supported and encouraged to successfully apply for jobs.
- Many women have learned to travel within the city and beyond using public transport.
- Women who were imprisoned in their houses due to restrictions to freedom imposed by family members are now getting out and about. They are taking up services and opportunities in the city, attending classes/courses and are being supported to learn and develop.
- We ran three blocks of 10-week sewing courses, attended by a total of 24 women. All of them learned new sewing skills.

Roshni leads by example, and seventeen of our unemployed women were supported this year to undertake training with a mainstream organisation called "One to One Support Services. All seventeen women achieved a full accredited City and Guilds Qualifications in Health and Social Care/Children and Young People alongside a City and Guilds Accredited Employability Qualification. Both qualifications are recognised nationally by employers and covered Safeguarding, Health & Safety, Communication, Person-centred care, Dementia and Child development through play. All seventeen women passed the course, which also embedded functional Maths and English skills within it. The course was a huge success as three of our clients then went onto secure paid employment. This is a huge achievement for these women, and a good example of how Roshni can help to bridge the gap between the local Asian community and mainstream services and opportunities.

### **Outcome 3 - Women accessing Roshni services become more active citizens.**

Our Age Better service is an excellent model of good practice for encouraging older women who are aged 50 plus to become more active citizens through the vehicle of volunteering. This year we recruited 14 older women as volunteers for Roshni, most of whom who then went onto volunteer with other voluntary sector mainstream organisations. These are all new women who had never formally volunteered before; and who now had time on their hands as their children had grown up. All of these women were traditionally very hard to reach and were not engaging with the life of the city. The additional spin off to this programme is that many of these older women have now joined our Conversation English class which is focussed on

developing vocabulary and conversation skills around day to day situations and all the women have reported an increase in their ability to speak English in common situations practiced in class.

### **Case studies:**

Client A had never made an appointment with her GP herself. After practicing making appointments in the class, the following week she enthusiastically reported that she had phoned the GP surgery and successfully made an appointment.

Client B was able to describe her symptoms to the doctor herself.

Client C was able to attend her appointment at the Job Centre Plus without the need of an interpreter, and was able to manage her conversation successfully.

***“Clients gave examples of being signposted to other relevant services, such as health services, welfare and benefits advice, drug and alcohol support services, debt advisory services, housing organisations, education and training providers and other community organisations. This demonstrates effective local partnership working. Partners restated the benefits of the network for community members and said that the alliances they were building added credibility for all parties involved”*** (Matrix report 2017).

**Case study** - Client X, of Pakistani origin, is 33 years old and married with 4 children. The Client came to the UK on a spouse visa 14 years ago, and due to her circumstances has been unable to return to visit her parents since. This is very distressing for her as her parents are old and frail and keep asking when she is going to visit them. For many years the client suffered from domestic abuse from her husband and in-laws. It took many months for X to open up to the staff team and disclose the abuse that she had been through as she was still very scared to talk about her experiences. She was still with her husband and no longer experiencing any violence; however, the abuse had completely destroyed her confidence and self-esteem.

X initially accessed Roshni through the ESOL classes that we run. With our help she gained an ESOL level 3 qualification, and was then supported to take up her first ever formal volunteering opportunity within Roshni. She accessed external training to help her develop her knowledge and skills for this role, not only learning skills to improve her own mental, physical and emotional wellbeing but also helping other clients to work towards their own personal health goals.

X also desperately still wanted to visit her elderly parents back home and knew that this was only possible if she found work and saved up money for the trip. She had an interest in working with children, so we helped her to complete an action plan where smart goals were set for her to help her in her journey towards finding employment. She was then helped by us to start volunteering at a local nursery for six months where she went on to complete a level 1 course in Childcare. In order to help her to develop her confidence with her language skills she then went on to volunteer at a local charity shop. At the same time she continued to come to Roshni to develop her employability skills and took up a six weeks in- house Employment training programme. She was also referred to the Careers Advice Service in Sheffield for specialist support. X states that she now feels happier and more settled. Her mental

wellbeing has improved as she feels more confident and empowered to do things for herself independently; she continues to volunteer and is hopeful that in time she will secure a job and visit her family back home.

**Volunteers at Roshni are doing very well** – We had a total of 62 volunteers supporting the work of the organisation over the past year. Of which 32 were Empowerment project volunteers, of which 11 went onto secure paid work and 9 went onto take up further training and/or educational activities including English classes, computer classes, food courses with Food Cycle and one joined a WEA volunteering course. Our work with volunteers was acknowledged this year when we won the **Voluntary Sector Organisation of the Year Award 2017** for Sheffield from the Sheffield University Volunteering Committee. This achievement is certainly a proud testimony to the support and experience we give to our volunteers, and the personal and professional development that comes alongside it.

### **Volunteer Case Study – Kumari Balaramaiah**

Kumari started to volunteer with Roshni in November 2016. She decided to volunteer with us as an advocacy worker as she was interested in working in the community. Kumari is originally from India, where she trained as a lawyer. After moving to England with her husband, she had been busy in raising her family.

Kumari's contribution to our organisation had been exceptional. She volunteered on two days of the week and her support was invaluable. Not only was she always punctual and regular in her attendance, but was also really efficient and focused in the way she worked. To top it all up, she also had a wonderful positive attitude - always friendly, considerate, and helpful.

The work she had done with Roshni, has gone on to help Kumari to build her confidence to take up a further volunteering opportunity with the Citizens Advice Service, where she trained as a general advice worker with a special immigration focus. In September 2017, Kumari was finally successful in securing two part time posts at Roshni. This was a really positive outcome for her as it is her first steps into the world of work. It is also testimony to the change people can bring about in their lives with the right amount of support, guidance and direction.