

NEWSLETTER



URI Conference on Reducing Racially Motivated Hate Crime



Baroness Scott of Bybrook, OBE, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Social Housing and Faith, tours the Nishkam Campus

The Last Quarter...

The last quarter of the financial year was an eventful time, with major milestones hit and events taking place. Various events took place, from the **Peace Vigil** during **Interfaith Harmony Week**, the **Start of Life Care Symposium**, celebrating the success of the project and the **United Religions Initiative Conference** to reduce religiously motivated hate crime - not to mention the fantastic work of the CSN team in achieving £4 million in client financial outcomes.

“ —

Surjeet, I wanted to reach out and thank you deeply for all the help and advice you provided during a recent emergency I faced with initially the medication administration for my elderly mother and my disabled brother. Additionally, then extending the support to putting a care plan in place for them both.

I don't know what I would have done without yourselves being available to the community. As you know I live far away and this help was potentially lifesaving.

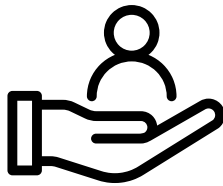
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12 MONTH SUMMARY



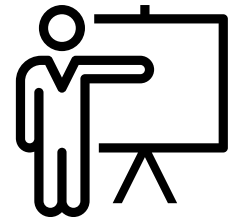
£4,169,456

In client financial outcomes



3,781

People supported



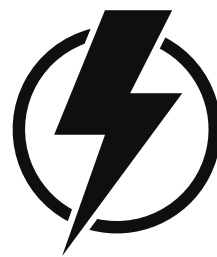
14

Workshops

TOP 3 ISSUES



Housing



Energy Bills



Debt

£4 MILLION IN CLIENT OUTCOMES & THE FUTURE

In the last 3 months, our Community Safety Net (CSN) team has hit a new milestone of £4 million in beneficiary client outcomes in a financial year. This means that through the process of applications, appeals and disputes, they have won £4 million for their clients through successful outcomes, which they ordinarily would have missed out on due to a lack of knowledge of the system or language barriers, as many of our clients are from migrant communities.

The £4 million in outcomes and increased demand for our services shows how much people are missing out on, and in a time when people are struggling with the high cost of living, it also conveys the importance and need for this type of support in the community. When put into perspective against our initial target of **£1.6 million**, it truly shows the ethos and determination of the team to go above and beyond for their clients, striving to make lasting change within the community.

Due to the increased demand, we have expanded the radius of the CSN project from a 1.5-mile radius to a 2-mile radius; this was possible thanks to our **funders** who have enabled us to recruit more caseworkers, going from two full-time caseworkers to four, with two additional part-time caseworkers, increasing our ability to support and empower the community.

In addition to expanding the team, we have built a new consultation room to allow our team to see more clients simultaneously, increasing the rate at which we can help people by reducing the wait for appointments.

ARRS FRAILTY PROJECT



For the ARRS (Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme) Frailty Project, we developed a leaflet of support services available for frail patients and their families, containing various contacts across Birmingham to support frail patients with multiple issues, from mental health to financial support.

We worked alongside GP Practices within the West Birmingham Locality Hub, a network of GP practices within West Birmingham, to contact frail patients, assess their needs and refer them to the appropriate services.

Over the course of the project, we engaged with **1,048** people, making **237** onward referrals to various support services, the remaining **811** patients were happy with the support they received over the phone or already had access to support.

Through this project, we found out that the patients were predominately struggling with issues relating to **benefits, difficulty in paying bills** and **isolation**.

This project has a vital role to play as along with their frailty, the patients also suffer from a lack of digital literacy, making it difficult for them to find out how they can receive support.



Support with Energy



Support with Benefits

HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND



6 Months



5,212 Calls



£328,000 in
financial
outcomes



1,038 people
signposted

For the second year running we were commissioned by the BVSC (Birmingham Voluntary Service Council) to process applications for the Household Support Fund, a one-time payment of £200 to support households with essentials, such as food, energy and essential goods and supplies.

The Household Support fund was open from October 2023 to March 2024, in which we made over **5,212 calls**, successfully submitting **2,183, 1,608** of which were successful and **575** were rejected due to diligence checks.

The successful applications totalled **£328,000** in financial outcomes, pairing with the financial outcomes were the referrals we made to other agencies, offering other avenues of support for the clients. From the 5,212 calls, **1,038** were signposted to other agencies, such as our Energy Redress project, Warm Welcome spaces and more to provide additional support.

INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK



Director of Nishkam Centre, Ajit Singh, sharing a Sikh faith perspective at the World Interfaith Harmony Week Peace Vigil

From February 1st - 7th, we celebrated World Interfaith Harmony Week, a week recognised by the United Nations that aims to provide a focal point from which all people of goodwill can recognise that their shared values and ideals far outweigh their differences, promoting peace and harmony within their communities.

Our Director, Ajit Singh was invited by Nisa-Nashim, a national network bringing Jewish and Muslim women together to inspire and lead social change, to attend a Peace Vigil and share a Sikh perspective on the importance of Peace and Unity. The Peace Vigil brought together individuals from different faith backgrounds across Birmingham to talk about shared values, call for peace and show unity, an integral image as various conflicts around the world continue.

World Interfaith Harmony Week is a significant time for us as a vital component of our collaborative interfaith work is using our shared values and beliefs as a foundation to enhance dialogue and cooperation between faiths.

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE VISIT



Ministry of Justice

On the 14th of February, we welcomed members of the Ministry of Justice's Legal Support Team who declared an interest in visiting the Nishkam Centre to expand their knowledge and gather insight into the delivery of frontline services in Birmingham.

This was a response to the pilot project we were running after receiving funding from The Access to Justice Foundation, through the Ministry of Justice. The pilot was for the Improving Outcomes Through Legal Support (IOTLS) grant programme where we would be providing support for court or tribunal proceedings to help people navigate the appeal process effectively.

We invited the team to visit the centre on a Wednesday when our drop-in takes place so they can get the full scope of our services and what goes on at the centre. On the day of the visit, the team showed the guests around the building and had them sit in on some appointments to see how the team operates and the kind of issues the community requires support with.

The team from the Ministry of Justice described the visit as "eye-opening" and said it was "great to see such a community effort towards social welfare support." This insight into our services and the community we are supporting led to the Ministry of Justice inviting us to a conference in London, bringing together stakeholders to help shape the future policy direction now that could be done to make the legal support system better.

START OF LIFE CARE SYMPOSIUM



Group Photo from Day 1 of the Start of Life Care Symposium

During March, we collaborated with the Nishkam Healthcare Trust to host the Start of Life Care (SOLC) Symposium, a 2-day event celebrating the success of the SOLC programme.

The Symposium hosted a variety of people from faith speakers to healthcare professionals, speaking about the importance of Start of Life Care within their respective areas of expertise.

Healthcare professionals from Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust & Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals gave insight into the challenges mothers face in accessing support services before, during and after pregnancy and how community organisations can work alongside the NHS in overcoming these barriers which include language, access (distance, time slots) and cultural competence.

We also hosted members from the Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care Board (BSOL ICB), the project funders. Dr Satish Rao, Medical Director for Innovation and Transformation at BSOL ICB expressed the need to reimagine the healthcare system to accommodate holistic approaches and wraparound support. Dr Rao also cited a newfound perspective on working with faith organisations as a result of the success of the Start of Life Care project.

UNITED RELIGIONS INITIATIVE CONFERENCE



Patron of Nishkam Organisations & URI UK, Professor Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh Ahluwalia giving a speech on violence

On the 1st of March, we welcomed the United Religions Initiative (URI), a strong, global grassroots network of interfaith groups bridging differences and finding solutions to issues that affect communities and the world, to the Nishkam Centre for a conference on reducing religiously motivated hate crime.

The conference brought together URI delegates from around the world and our partners from around the West Midlands to work together to learn about religiously motivated hate crime and create strategies to reduce it.

Several prominent figures gave speeches throughout the conference, from Superintendent Jennifer Pearson, who spoke about Birmingham's national position when it comes to hate crime and the importance of interfaith collaboration in reducing hate crime, to Preeta Bansal, Global Council Chair of the URI and Jerry White, Nobel Peace Prize winner and Executive Director of the URI, both communicating the importance of Cooperation Circles (self-organising taking action to create a culture of peace, justice and healing) in creating a culture of healing.

The Keynote speaker was our Patron, Professor Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh Ahluwalia OBE KSG, who talked about the juxtaposition between religion and violence and the factors that contribute to creating a cycle of escalating violence.

[Read the Press Release](#)

REDUCING PARENTAL CONFLICT THROUGH VALUES



South Asian Family Support Hub Lead, Rajinder Singh Bhogal, giving a presentation on the importance of values within a family

On the 8th of March, we partnered with Birmingham Children's Trust for the second time to deliver another session on Reducing Parental Conflict through a values-led approach for practitioners to explore how to create sustainable, safe and caring values-led families.

The workshops aim to teach practitioners to appropriately convey the impact parental conflict has on the short and long-term emotional well-being of children and train them to develop strategies to reduce parental conflict. Speakers from Birmingham Children's Trust led the talk on reducing parental conflict. Following on from this, our South Asian Family Support Hub lead gave a talk on values and the role they play in creating a healthy environment within a family.

Practitioners ended the session with great things to say about the training. When asked how the training session was, attendees had nothing but great things to say, ranging from **"Really informative, gave me a different perspective on views of other communities and faiths when supporting families."** and **"It was a very interesting and informative session. Will be implementing the tools both at work and personally."**, showcasing the value people found in the workshop.



MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT FOCUS GROUP



Discussion at the Mobility Impairment Focus Groups

Similar to the Family Hub engagement sessions Birmingham City Council commissioned us to host to gather feedback from the community, helping shape the future of family hubs; **Birmingham's Public Health Division** has commissioned us to host **Mobility Impairment Focus Groups**.

The focus groups bring in those with mobility impairments and parents/guardians of those affected to share their experiences to help make recommendations to improve the public's health and reduce inequalities.

Members of the focus group spoke about the various issues they faced, from the difficulty in accessing support services due to digital, cultural and language issues, to the **"lack of independence"** their mobility issues have given them, impacting "greatly" on their physical and mental health.

We hope this feedback to Birmingham's Public Health Division can act as a catalyst for change to support increased accessibility and independence for those affected by mobility issues across Birmingham.

DIRECTOR OF NCA JOINS BVSC BOARD



the centre for **voluntary action**

On February 7th, the BVSC (Birmingham Voluntary Service Council) welcomed three new trustees to their board, one of them being the Director of the Nishkam Civic Association, Ajit Singh Ubhi.

Upon the appointment of the three new trustees, Jasbir Rai, BVSC Deputy Chief Executive said *"We're delighted to welcome Junaid, Ajit and Andy to the board. Each will bring a unique set of skills and experience as well as a shared passion to help us achieve our overall vision of a city in which people enjoy lives of inclusion, safety, well-being and fulfilment."*