FATIMA WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

35th Annual Report

September 2025 – August 2026



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Charitable Incorporated Organisation Number 1160027

INTRODUCTION

Aims

Fatima Women's Association (FWA) is dedicated to enhancing the wellbeing and opportunities of women, children, young people, and families throughout Oldham, particularly within Glodwick, Alexandra, Roundthorn, and neighbouring communities. Our aim is to empower individuals, reduce inequalities, and support communities to reach their full potential.

We achieve this by:

1. Delivering training programmes and educational opportunities that help women and young people develop skills, build confidence, and progress into further education, volunteering, or employment.
2. Providing health and wellbeing activities that promote healthier lifestyles, mental wellbeing, emotional resilience, and positive social connections.
3. Organising community, recreational, and leisure activities that reduce loneliness, strengthen relationships, and encourage community cohesion.
4. Delivering engaging activities, workshops, and support programmes for children and young people to aid their personal and social development.
5. Creating volunteering and employment pathways through partnerships with local organisations, offering practical experience and support into work.

Our work is supported by dedicated staff, strong partnerships with local agencies, and the outstanding commitment of volunteers who generously contribute their time and skills to benefit the community.

During the past 12 months, FWA has continued to strengthen its role as a trusted community organisation for women, children, young people, and families. We have maintained a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment that reflects and celebrates the diverse cultures, backgrounds, and needs of the communities we serve.



Chairperson's Report

As Chair of Fatima Women's Association (FWA), I am delighted to present our 35th Annual Report and share the achievements, growth, and positive impact our organisation has made over the previous year.

The past year has brought both opportunities and challenges, but through determination and commitment we have continued to move forward. While many individuals, families, and voluntary organisations have experienced increasing pressures, FWA has remained resilient and responsive to community needs. Thanks to the dedication of our Management Committee, hardworking staff team, and committed volunteers, we have expanded and enhanced our services, enabling us to provide meaningful support and opportunities for women, young people, children, and families across Oldham.

This year we have delivered a wide range of new and innovative projects, many of which were designed in direct response to the needs and aspirations identified by our community. Listening to our members continues to be central to our approach, and their feedback has enabled us to develop services that are meaningful, accessible, and beneficial.

Some of the highlights of the year include:

1. The delivery of new training and educational programmes.
2. An expanded programme of health and wellbeing activities.
3. The growth of recreational, youth, and children's activities, ensuring that they can participate in safe, supportive, and enjoyable opportunities.
4. Stronger collaborative partnerships with local agencies and organisations.

We demonstrated resilience, adaptability, and innovation during a period of ongoing challenges.

Our organisation continues to provide a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment where women, children, young people, and families from all backgrounds can access support, encouragement, opportunities, and friendship.

Looking ahead, our priority remains focused on sustainability, development, and achieving greater community impact.

For the latest information about our activities and services, please visit our website at www.fatimawomens.org.uk, which is regularly updated with details of current and future projects. We warmly encourage residents to register their interest in our training courses, educational opportunities, health and wellbeing programmes, volunteering opportunities, and activities for children and young people.

Our website is now fully multilingual, making our information, services, and opportunities more accessible to people from diverse backgrounds within our community. We have also introduced a dedicated Donate page, enabling individuals, grant makers, philanthropists, local businesses, and supporters to contribute directly to our work. The donation facility is linked to our JustGiving page, providing a secure and convenient way for people to support Fatima Women's Association and help us continue delivering vital services, projects, and opportunities for women, children, young people, and families across Oldham. Through the generosity of our supporters, we can expand our impact and reach even more people in need.

On behalf of Fatima Women's Association, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all our members, staff, volunteers, partners, funders, and supporters who have helped make this year another success. Together, we are creating stronger communities, brighter opportunities, and better futures for women, children, young people, and families across Oldham.

Strengthening Communities



At Fatima Women's Association (FWA), we believe that strong partnerships are the foundation of strong communities. Over the past year, our team have placed significant focus on building and strengthening relationships across the voluntary sector, community groups, the NHS, educational establishments, and statutory services.
By working together, we have not only enhanced the quality of existing provision but also created integrated networks of support that bring together diverse skills, resources, and expertise. This collaborative approach has enabled us to design and deliver services that are more responsive to the needs of our beneficiaries, ensuring that women, young people, children and families can access the right support at the right time.

A key part of this partnership work has been our monthly consortium meetings, hosted at FWA. These meetings provide a valuable platform for organisations to share best practice, coordinate services, and develop new initiatives collectively. By fostering open dialogue and joint planning, we are helping to reduce duplication, fill service gaps, and maximise the reach and impact of community resources.

We are proud to work in close partnership with a wide range of organisations, including:

- Local and regional voluntary and community groups such as Action Together, Into Films, and the Centre of Wellbeing, Training and Culture.
- Educational and training providers including Get Oldham Working, Oldham Lifelong Learning, The Oldham college, and The University of Manchester, who support pathways into education, skills, and employment.
- Health and wellbeing partners such as The Christie NHS Foundation, Answer Cancer Manchester, Turning Point, and Horizon LGA Greater Manchester, who help us improve physical, medical and mental health outcomes.
- Sports, arts, and cultural organisations including Oldham Greenhill Community Sports and Recreation Club, and Lancashire Cricket Foundation, who support recreation, engagement, and creativity.
- Statutory and interfaith bodies such as Oldham Council's Get Oldham Working initiative, Oldham Interfaith Forum, and Salford CVS, who help us address wider social challenges and promote inclusion.

Through these partnerships, FWA has been able to:

- Widen access to services and opportunities for local women and families.
- Strengthen community resilience by building networks of support across different sectors.
- Provide holistic services that address not just education and employment, but also health, wellbeing, recreation, and cultural needs.
- Ensure sustainability by pooling resources and working collectively to deliver greater impact.

Looking forward, FWA is committed to deepening these partnerships and forging new ones, with the shared vision of building stronger, healthier, and more inclusive communities across Oldham and beyond.

Activities/Training

We are committed to ensuring that all of our projects and services are shaped by the community for the community. Over the past year, we have actively engaged in consultations with local women, young people, and children, as well as regular networking with partner agencies. This ongoing dialogue has enabled us to design and deliver new projects that truly reflect the needs and aspirations of the communities we serve.

Building on our past experience and successes, the FWA team continues to refine and expand our programmes, helping the organisation move closer to its full potential as a hub of learning, wellbeing, and empowerment.

Membership and Participation

Our reach and engagement remain strong. During the past year:

- 550 adults and 133 young people and children completed membership forms to join FWA.
- Across a 52-week period, an average of 134 individuals accessed our sessions each week, highlighting the consistent demand for our services.
- FWA was supported by 20 dedicated volunteers over a 12-month period, who contributed their time, skills, and enthusiasm to enrich the delivery of our programmes.

Range of Activities

Our activities and training sessions have spanned a wide variety of themes, designed to address educational, social, health, and recreational needs. These have included:

- Training and educational courses that improve skills, open pathways into further education, and increase employability prospects.
- Health and wellbeing programmes focusing on fitness, mental health awareness, nutrition, and self-care.
- Creative and recreational activities such as arts, crafts, and cultural events that encourage self-expression and social connection.
- Youth and children's sessions, providing safe, engaging opportunities for younger members to learn, play, and grow.

Impact

The success of our activities is not only measured by numbers but also by the positive changes in participants' lives. Women have reported greater confidence and motivation, young people have expressed new aspirations for education and employment, and families have benefited from strengthened relationships and reduced social isolation.

Our volunteers have also experienced personal growth, gaining valuable skills, confidence, and in many cases progressing towards further opportunities in education and employment.

Funding

It has been another successful year for Fatima Women's Association (FWA) in raising the funds required to deliver high-quality projects, carry out community research and consultations, run workshops, maintain our overheads and resources, and sustain staff positions. We are proud to report that the new projects undertaken this year have met their outcomes and, in many cases, exceeded expectations. These projects have not only strengthened our core delivery but also created a wider impact across the community, ensuring that our work continues to make a meaningful difference to the lives of women, young people, and families in Oldham.

Looking Ahead: The Funding Landscape

As we move into 2026/2027, we are conscious that it will be a challenging year for fundraising. At present, FWA relies on a balanced mix of long-term and short-term grants, alongside small-scale commissioning and contracts. Our fundraising strategy has historically been successful, allowing us to build a strong reputation for delivering value and impact.

In recent years, many major funders have refined their criteria and priorities, with an increasing emphasis on:

- Domestic violence and safeguarding initiatives
- Systemic or structural change programmes
- Large-scale advocacy and campaigning work

While these are critical and valuable areas, they do not fully reflect the core focus of FWA, which is providing grassroots, community-led education, training, health and wellbeing programmes, recreational activities, and practical support that responds directly to the everyday needs of local women and families. This means that opportunities which previously would have been a good fit are no longer as accessible.

Commitment to the Community

Despite the challenges ahead, FWA remains deeply committed to ensuring that no woman, young person, child or family is left behind. Our resilience as an organisation is rooted in the trust we have built within the community over three decades, the dedication of our staff and volunteers, and our ability to respond creatively to changing needs and circumstances.

With continued determination, collaboration, and support from our funders, partners, and the wider community, we are confident that FWA will adapt to the changing funding environment and continue to deliver services that empower women, strengthen families, and build thriving communities.

FWA would like to thank the following for their financial support from April 2025 to March 2026:

- Asda Foundation
- Breast Cancer
- Cancer & Inequalities
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority Strand 1
- John Mason Family Trust
- Manchester Guardian Society
- Manchester University
- MMR Campaign
- NHS Greater Manchester
- Peter Kershaw Trust
- Postcode Neighbourhood Trust
- The National Lottery Awards For All
- The National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund

On behalf of the Management Committee of Fatima Women's Association, I would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to every member of staff for their outstanding dedication, professionalism, and commitment throughout the year. Their passion, hard work, and determination have been instrumental in ensuring that our organisation continues to deliver high-quality services and meaningful opportunities to women, children, young people, and families across Oldham.

Day after day, our staff go above and beyond to support those who rely on our services, often working tirelessly to ensure that individuals feel valued, included, and empowered. Their contribution remains the foundation upon which the success and continued growth of FWA is built.

We are equally grateful to our trustees, whose guidance, leadership, and strategic oversight help shape the direction of our organisation. Their unwavering commitment to our vision and values ensures that we remain focused on meeting the needs of our communities whilst maintaining the highest standards of governance and accountability. The expertise, experience, and dedication they bring to the organisation play a vital role in helping us respond effectively to challenges and embrace new opportunities for growth and development.

A special and heartfelt thank you must also be extended to our volunteers, who generously give their time, energy, skills, and enthusiasm to support our work. Volunteers are at the heart of everything we do, providing invaluable assistance across a wide range of projects, activities, and events. Their willingness to help, support others, and contribute to the wellbeing of the community has made a significant difference to the lives of many people. Whether assisting with community activities, supporting educational programmes, helping at events, or offering practical support to participants, their contribution is both remarkable and deeply appreciated.

We would also like to acknowledge our funders, partners, supporters, and donors whose continued confidence in our work enables us to deliver services that have a lasting impact. Through collaboration and shared commitment, we have been able to create opportunities, address local needs, and strengthen the wellbeing of the communities we serve. The relationships we have built with local organisations, agencies, businesses, and community groups continue to enhance the quality and



It is with great pleasure, pride, and gratitude that I present the 35th Annual Report of Fatima Women's Association, covering the period from September 2025 to August 2026. This report highlights the achievements, progress, and positive outcomes that have been delivered over the past year. More importantly, it reflects the resilience, determination, and strength of our organisation and the people we serve. Despite ongoing challenges faced by the voluntary sector and local communities, we have continued to adapt, innovate, and respond to emerging needs, ensuring that our support remains relevant, accessible, and impactful.

As we look towards the future, we remain committed to empowering women, supporting families, creating opportunities for young people, and strengthening community cohesion across Oldham. Together, through partnership, dedication, and a shared vision, we are helping to create stronger communities, brighter opportunities, and a more positive future for generations to come. I would like to thank everyone who has been part of this journey and look forward to continuing our work together in the year ahead.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to our vision of empowering women, young people, children, strengthening families, and fostering inclusive communities.

Parveen Akhtar

Chairperson

Our Strategic Objectives

Education and Training

Empowering Women Through Education

The 2025-2026 programme year has been one of the most successful and impactful periods in the history of Fatima Women's Association. Funding from GMCA WEA enabled us to deliver the Basic Essential Skills Programme and the funding from The National Lottery Reaching Communities fund enabled us to deliver Pre-Employment Skills Programme, alongside a range of wellbeing projects, community events, outdoor activities, and children's initiatives. These programmes provided learners with extended opportunities to develop their skills progressively, build confidence, and achieve positive outcomes over time.

The fundings also enabled us to engage volunteers and support workers who provided valuable one-to-one guidance, encouragement, and personalised support throughout the learning journey. This additional assistance played a crucial role in helping learners overcome barriers to education, training, and employment. As a result, many women were motivated to continue learning and pursue further training opportunities, demonstrating the ongoing demand for more learning hours and tailored educational provision.

Through targeted English language support, practical skills development, and community-based learning activities, participants gained essential knowledge, confidence, and competencies that helped them move closer to employment, further education, and greater independence.

Learners benefited from hands-on guidance, reassurance, and practical support in a welcoming, inclusive environment. The programmes not only enhanced employability skills but also improved self-confidence, communication abilities, and community engagement. This has created positive and lasting impacts for individuals, their families, and the wider community. Participants reported feeling more empowered, connected, and able to achieve their personal and professional goals.

Overall, the programs have demonstrated the importance of accessible, learner-centered provision in supporting personal development, reducing social isolation, promoting wellbeing, and empowering participants to reach their full potential. The success of these initiatives highlights the value of continued investment in community-based learning opportunities that enable women and families to thrive. The inputs were:

- 300 women benefited from a range of community projects.
- 258 educational sessions were delivered across all programmes.
- 108 wellbeing sessions supported women aged 50 and over, as well as those under 50.
- 306 educational learning hours were provided.
- 216 hours of leisure and social activities were delivered.
- Ten outdoor trips and community visits were organised, including visits to Skegness, Sale Water Park, Karak Chai Oldham, an Indian Temple, Delph Church, Green Gate Mosque, and the Bury Women's Event.
- Women attended job fairs, providing opportunities to explore employment, training, and career development options.

Employment and Skills Development

The project has equipped women with practical skills for employment and self-employment. Many participants have secured jobs, while others are pursuing further education to improve their employment prospects. Increased confidence has enabled learners to apply for jobs, attend interviews, and consider starting their own businesses.

Holistic Support and Community Engagement

Alongside employability training, participants received career guidance and emotional support, helping them build confidence and resilience. Regular community events, consultations, and learner feedback have ensured the programme remains responsive to community needs. Community engagement remains a key priority. We regularly host events, consultations, and research activities with external partners. Community members are invited to the AGM and centre activities, while learner feedback continues to shape programme improvements, ensuring services remain relevant and responsive to participant needs.

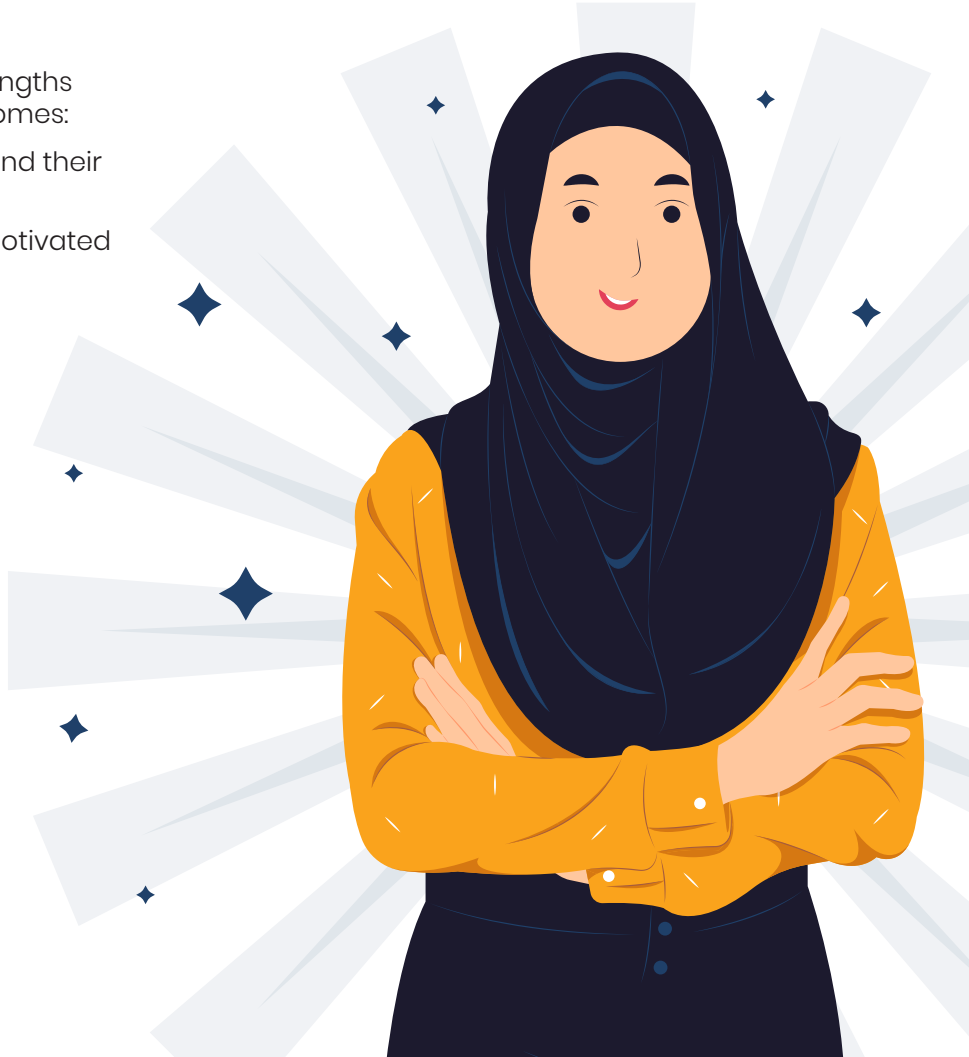
Strengths of the Projects

The project demonstrated several key strengths that contributed to strong learner outcomes:

- Staff consistently went above and beyond their formal roles.
- Their dedication helped learners stay motivated and engaged.
- Teachers worked exceptionally hard to ensure learners understood the programme content

Pre-Employment Programme Impact

Participants have improved their English, confidence, and understanding of local services, enabling them to become more independent and active within their communities. Many have progressed to further education, employment, and British citizenship courses, and have passed their driving theory tests. The programme has helped women identify their strengths, set goals, and build more secure futures.



Enrichment Activities

Outdoor visits and enrichment activities encouraged personal development, increased confidence, and helped learners discover new interests and aspirations beyond the classroom.

Long-Term Progression

Long-term outcomes demonstrate the program's lasting impact. Two women who joined four years ago are now studying Health and Social Care degrees, with one already working as a support worker and due to graduate next year. Their journey highlights how the program develops the confidence and transferable skills that lead to sustained educational and employment success.

Emotional Support and Crisis Response

The organisation has never turned away any woman seeking help or advice. Staff have provided emotional support to many learners, including those experiencing significant distress or considering leaving their homes. These women often do not want to disrupt their families; they simply need someone to listen, reassure them, and, at times, share their emotional burden.

We have engaged 90 learners.

- **230 hours** of centre-based learning
- **108 sessions** delivered under Reaching Communities
- **33 additional progression sessions (Basic Essential Skills Program funded by GMC and WEA)**
- **30 hours** of external visits and learning experiences



Courses Delivered

Our courses were shaped directly by the needs and requests of women in the community. Courses included:

- Driving Theory (36 weeks)
- English and Improved English (36 weeks)
- B1 Citizenship Course (36 weeks)
- Volunteering Opportunity Sessions (Action Together)
- IT Skills (WEA – 22 weeks)
- Speaking & Listening (24 week progression with Oldham Lifelong Learning)
- Numeracy and English (11 week progression at WEA)
- IT Progression (11 weeks at FWA, followed by higher level IT at Oldham Lifelong Learning)
- Sewing and Numeracy(22 weeks)
- Fifteen women received laptops to strengthen their digital learning and independence.



Engagement and Community Participation

- 60 women attended the AGM and provided valuable feedback on the project.
- Women participated in educational visits, including trips to Llandudno and The Lowry, helping them build confidence, explore new environments, and experience public transport such as trams.
- Additional projects were introduced for learners who needed more than two hours of weekly learning, ensuring extended opportunities to develop language skills and confidence.
- MMR Event (Mumps, Measles and Rubella) — all participants attended, supporting improved health awareness and vaccine uptake.
- Job Fair Attendance – 5 women attended the job fair (3 submitted job applications).
- Community Engagement – Women attended a job fair at Spindles, Oldham, and took part in events at Oldham Library. We shared publicity for these activities on social media, including the WhatsApp group.
- Course Registration at Oldham Library – 10 women registered and enrolled.
- Four women successfully secured jobs — two at Park Cake Bakery, one at JD Sports, and another secured a career.

Community Building

Women attending classes formed friendships, shared experiences, and supported one another. Tea and coffee breaks became important social moments that helped reduce isolation and build trust. Many women were referred by Jobcentre Oldham and other organisations, helping us reach communities experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

We also strengthened our relationship with Glodwick Primary School by delivering a presentation that led to many new enrolments on the same day.

Inclusive and Accessible Teaching Techniques

- Teachers used clear, structured explanations and adapted their teaching styles to match learners' needs.
- Practical, hands-on activities were incorporated to help learners understand and apply new skills.

Collaborative and Supportive Learning Environment

- Activities were designed to help learners apply new skills both inside and outside the classroom. Examples and tasks were linked to everyday life, employment, and family responsibilities.
- 15 Laptops have been given to women from Get Oldham Learning



Case Study

X came from Romania ten years ago with very little English and initially struggled to communicate. She relied on her daughter for support at that time. She has been referred to FWA by the Job Centre. X explained "Since joining FWA, my vocabulary has improved, and i feel much more confident when speaking English. The teacher was very good at explaining and helping me to understand new words and phrases. I no longer receive help from any family members for translation and I am now able to manage independently"

She has now joined English and Maths classes at Oldham College, as well as an IT class at Lifelong Learning. She has also attended the Maths class at FWA as part of her progression.

Y came to the UK from Pakistan many years ago after getting married. She has no children and has spent most of her adult life as a full time carer for her husband. When she joined FWA two years ago, she was experiencing severe depression and anxiety. She could not speak English, felt isolated, and had very little confidence. When reflecting on her journey, she said "I have learned English, built confidence, and I don't feel shaky anymore. My life has changed. I feel better about myself. I have learned how to email."

With FWA's support, Y progressed from a beginner level to attending English and IT classes at Oldham Lifelong Learning. She now feels more independent and more in control of her life.

Z came from Spain, could read and write, and had no IT skills. She joined the course two years ago. She attended the Citizenship, Driving Theory, and IT Skills courses at FWA. She said, "I had no family here, and I had no confidence to speak English. I was struggling with my accent." In the last two years, she has passed her Driving Theory test, completed the British Citizenship course, and progressed to a higher level English class. She learned Spanish while living in Spain. She will be joining the IT class at Lifelong Learning. Now she can enrol herself in courses independently. She has improved her speaking skills, built her confidence, and learned about British culture. She now speaks English with her children.



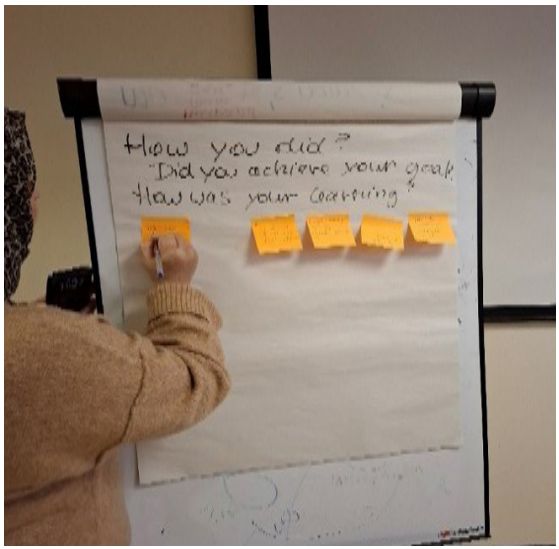
Basic Essential Skills Project

The Basic Essential Skills Program supported women in the community through three learning pathways:

IT with literacy

Numeracy with literacy

Sewing with Numeracy/ Fashion and Design



The programme aimed to improve essential skills, build confidence, reduce social isolation, and support progression into further learning, employment, and community participation. An Open Day was introduced to present the project and encourage enrolment. Initial assessments showed that many learners had limited English proficiency, limited prior education, and low confidence. Bilingual support workers played a key role in helping learners engage fully.

Programme Delivery

The program provided interactive, learner-centered sessions focused on literacy, numeracy, IT, sewing, and personal development. Lessons used practical vocabulary and real-life situations, including healthcare, school communication, employment, and everyday tasks. Regular assessments, quizzes, and ongoing practice enabled learners to progress at their own pace, while bilingual support ensured the programme remained accessible for learners with limited English or additional learning needs.











Sewing and Numeracy Program Outcomes

Skills Development

Participants developed practical fashion and sewing skills, including stitching, cutting, pattern making, garment construction, measuring, fabric selection, and sourcing materials. Many progressed from having no prior experience to producing high-quality garments and accessories.

Language, Communication and Confidence

Learners improved their speaking, listening, and everyday English, including sewing, shopping, and measurement vocabulary. They became more confident asking for help, communicating with others, and working collaboratively, reducing social isolation and building friendships.

Personal and Social Development

The programme increased learners' confidence, independence, motivation, and wellbeing. Participants took pride in their achievements, practised skills at home, and many expressed interest in further learning or starting small businesses.

Numeracy and Literacy

Learners gained practical numeracy skills through sewing and everyday activities, improving their understanding of measurements, money, budgeting, mathematical vocabulary, and problem-solving. Hands-on learning made the sessions accessible for those starting from very low levels.

Support for Learners with Additional Needs

Tailored support enabled learners with disabilities, specific learning differences, and limited literacy to participate successfully. The project also highlighted the need for a nationally recognised ESOL-specific assessment tool to ensure fair assessment, placement, and progression for learners with complex needs.



Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

Learners received high-quality support in essential skills (maths and digital), careers guidance (CEIAG), wellbeing, childcare, transport, local services, and progression into further education and vocational training. The program helped participants recognise their existing skills, explore future opportunities, and build confidence.

Key Outcomes and Impact

Skills Development

- Improved literacy, numeracy, digital, English, and sewing skills.
- Developed practical garment-making skills from beginner level.

Personal Growth

- Increased confidence, self-esteem, and motivation to learn.
- Improved mental wellbeing and reduced social isolation.

Community Impact

- Built supportive peer networks.
- Increased independence and engagement with local services and community activities.
- Participants took pride in creating finished garments and shared their skills with others.

Additional Learning and Enrichment

- 20 women attended an Introduction to Volunteering session.
- Lifelong Learning delivered a 5-week Prepare to Work programme and five Speaking and Listening sessions.
- Community visits included the Lowry, Morecambe Beach, Scarborough, and the local library.

Conclusion

The programme provided an inclusive and supportive learning environment that empowered women to develop essential skills, improve wellbeing, and plan for future education, employment, volunteering, or enterprise. The project highlights the continued need for accessible ESOL, essential skills provision, specialist support for low-literacy learners, and integrated wellbeing services

Additional English Classes for Individuals with Low Levels of English

To support women with very limited English language skills, three additional English classes were delivered for individuals who were unable to read or write in English. Dedicated volunteers and staff members of Fatima Women's Association (FWA) facilitated these sessions, providing learners with a



The sessions produced positive outcomes, with several participants making strong progress and advancing to higher-level English classes. Improved language skills have enabled them to communicate more confidently, interact with their children's schools, access healthcare services independently, and take a more active role in their local community. The classes have also reduced social isolation, increased self-confidence, and encouraged participants to continue their learning journey and work toward greater independence and future employment opportunities. FWA staff and volunteers have played a vital role in helping these women overcome language barriers and build the skills needed to improve their quality of life and community participation.

Tackling Health Inequalities

Many participants from the Pre-Employment Skills project engaged in the FWA Health & Well Being Programme, which included weekly fitness sessions. These activities:

- Improved physical health
- Reduced stress
- Helped women build healthier routines
- Strengthened social bonds
- Climate change awareness sessions
- Encouraging active travel, with many women walking to the centre
- Reducing waste and reusing household items
- Connecting with nature and understanding how environmental choices support health and community.









Reducing Isolation 50 plus project

Overview

The Reducing Isolation Project continues to deliver exceptional outcomes for women aged 50 and over in Oldham. Engagement remains consistently strong, and the programme has demonstrated clear improvements in participants' well being, confidence, and social connectedness. The project has become a trusted, safe, and supportive space for women who are at risk of loneliness, social isolation, or declining mental and physical health.

Participation and Engagement

More than 50 women have now taken part in the programme. Their commitment and enthusiasm have been central to the project's success. The group includes:

- Widowed women (approx. 30%), many of whom were experiencing significant loneliness before joining
- Vulnerable older women, including those living with disabilities
- Women living with dementia who benefit from structured, supportive activities

The diversity of needs within the group has shaped the programme's design, ensuring it remains inclusive, accessible, and responsive.

Activities and Sessions Delivered

Participants have engaged in a wide range of activities that promote physical health, mental well being, and social connection:

- **Exercise sessions** delivered before lunch, helping women maintain mobility and stay active
- **Hot lunches** at every session, reducing food insecurity and encouraging social interaction
- **Creative activities,** including multiple poetry workshops, supporting self expression and confidence
- **Social outings,** such as a group meal at a local restaurant, strengthening friendships beyond the centre
- **Health awareness events,** including:
- **Cancer awareness sessions** (Christies Hospital)
- **MMR vaccination information** (Public Health Oldham)
- **Dementia awareness sessions** (Dementia UK)
- **Mental health workshops** delivered by Mind, helping women understand and manage emotional well being
- **Active involvement in the organisation's AGM,** where women shared ideas for future sessions



Case Study 1: Increased Confidence and Social Connection

X joined FWA with a disability that left her extremely isolated. She uses a wheelchair and relies on her daughter to bring her to the centre each week. Her involvement has supported her emotional well being, increased her independence, and helped her feel more connected to others.



Since attending, X has:

- Made new friends and feels welcomed and comfortable
- Taken part in chair based exercise sessions suited to her mobility needs
- Gained confidence through creative and social activities
- Developed a weekly routine she looks forward to
- Enjoyed the hot lunch each week, valuing both the meal and the sense of community



Case Study 2: Building Digital Skills and Social Confidence

X was introduced to the centre by a friend. As a widow, she had not been very social before joining the group.

Since participating, she has:

- Become more mobile and physically active
- Made new friends
- Gained confidence in social settings
- Received a laptop from FWA, motivating her to begin learning digital skills
- Committed to joining IT classes in September to continue her development



She reports feeling "much better" and more connected since joining the group.

The Reducing Isolation Project continues to meet its core aim: ***reducing loneliness and isolation among older women.*** Through physical activity, social opportunities, creative expression, digital inclusion, and health education, the project has created a community where women feel valued, heard, and supported.

Strong attendance and enthusiastic participation demonstrate the ongoing need for this work and the significant positive impact it is having on the lives of local women.

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The group was taken to two popular shopping destinations:

- **Bradford – Cannon Mill** A favourite spot for Asian fashion, fabrics, unstitched suits, and home textiles. The women had plenty of choice and time to browse, compare styles, and pick items they needed.
- **Blackburn – Town Centre & Market** Ideal for accessories, abayas, jewellery, scarves, and everyday shopping. The variety of shops meant everyone could find something that suited their taste and budget.

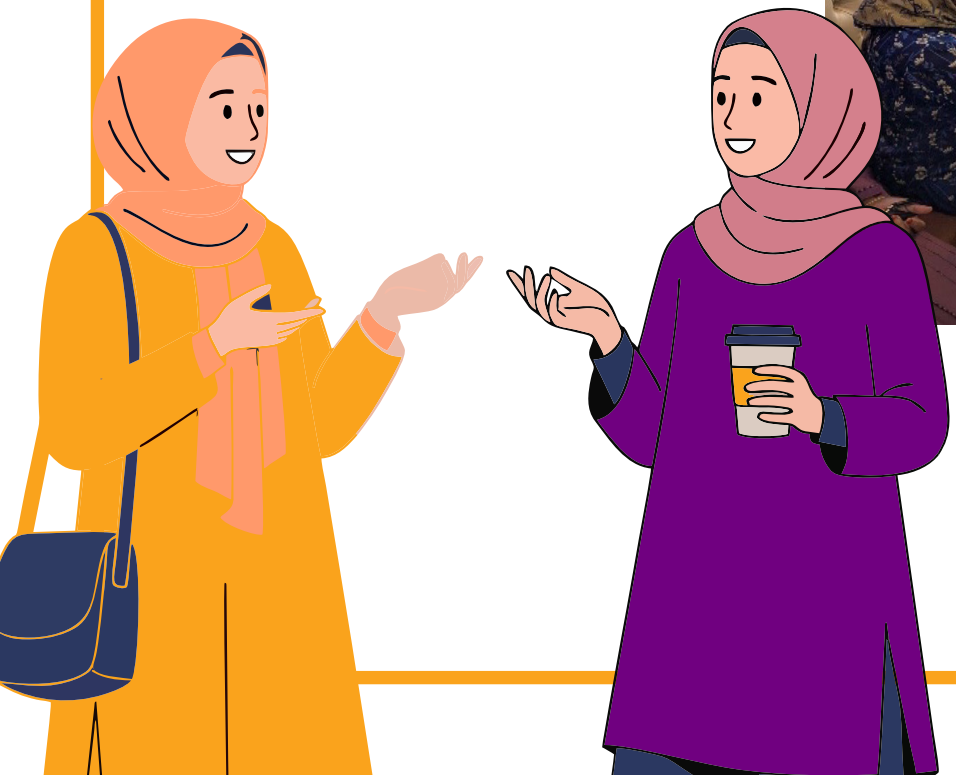
This combination of locations gave them access to **both high street brands and cultural clothing,** making the trip practical and enjoyable.

After shopping, we took them to a local restaurant for a relaxed meal. It offered a chance to:

- **Sit down and unwind after the shopping**
- **Enjoy good food together**
- **Socialise and chat in a comfortable setting**
- **Strengthen group bonding and create a pleasant end to the day**

The meal added a warm, social touch to the outing, turning it from a simple shopping trip into a complete day experience.

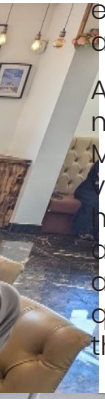




MMR Awareness Event

We organised an MMR awareness event in partnership with Public Health Oldham to raise awareness about the importance of the MMR vaccine and to provide accurate information to women in the community. A total of 60 women attended the event.

To create an engaging and welcoming atmosphere, we included a range of health and well-being workshops alongside information stalls. These activities encouraged women to stay engaged, enjoy the event, and feel comfortable asking questions throughout the day.



A key focus of the event was addressing common myths and misconceptions surrounding the MMR vaccine, particularly the false belief that the vaccine causes autism. We invited experienced health practitioners and a GP to answer questions and provide evidence-based information. Many attendees asked thoughtful and important questions, while others benefited from listening to the discussions and learning from the answers.



The feedback from participants was very positive. Several women reported having little or no prior knowledge of the MMR vaccine and said the event significantly improved their understanding of its safety and importance. They appreciated the opportunity to speak directly with healthcare professionals in a friendly, supportive environment.

The health and well-being activities were also very well received. Participants particularly enjoyed the facials and hand massage sessions, which helped create a relaxed environment and encouraged them to spend more time engaging with the information stalls and workshops. Overall, the event was a great success in raising awareness, improving knowledge, and building confidence to make informed decisions about childhood vaccinations.

Summary

The telephone campaign resulted in approximately **80 booked appointments** from **475 patients contacted**, demonstrating a positive response rate among the eligible cohort. The project also identified several barriers to vaccine uptake, including difficulties contacting patients, uncertainty about prior vaccination history, concerns about vaccine safety, and limited appointment availability. Improving the accuracy of patient contact details, offering more flexible appointment times, and providing clear instructions.

Sewing Group

The Drop-in Sewing Group remains one of the most popular and well-attended activities at Fatima Women's Association. The group provides a welcoming, friendly, and supportive environment where women can learn and develop practical sewing skills while building meaningful social connections within their community.

Participants can learn a range of sewing techniques, from basic hand stitching and clothing alterations to more advanced sewing projects. These skills not only encourage creativity but also help women build confidence and a sense of achievement. Many participants take pride in creating their own items, repairing clothing, and supporting their families through their newly acquired skills.

The sewing group plays an important role in reducing social isolation and improving wellbeing. Women from diverse backgrounds come together regularly to share experiences, support one another, and build lasting friendships. For many participants, the group offers a chance to leave the house, connect with others, and feel more connected to their local community. The positive and inclusive atmosphere helps improve mental well-being, confidence, and self-esteem.

Beyond its social benefits, the sewing group supports participants' economic empowerment. By developing practical sewing and textile skills, many women gain the confidence to explore self-employment opportunities, take on small sewing and alteration projects, or pursue further training in tailoring, fashion, and textiles. Some participants have expressed interest in starting home-based businesses, enabling them to contribute to household income while balancing family responsibilities. Through the sewing group, Fatima Women's Association continues to provide valuable opportunities for learning, personal development, community engagement, and increased independence. The group's ongoing success demonstrates the importance of accessible community-based activities that empower women, enhance wellbeing, and create pathways towards education, employment, and self-employment.







Children and Young People Objectives

Number of Children and young people benefited: 156

Age Group	Number of Sessions	Average Attendance	Total Benefited
5–11 years	40	16	80
11–15 years	56	13	55
15-25 years, with Special Educational Needs	12	12	21



We delivered a wide range of activities across three age groups. We consulted children and young people throughout the year, and tailored sessions to their interests and needs. Activities focused on building confidence, developing new skills, improving communication, enhancing wellbeing, and supporting mental health.

Many workshops were delivered in partnership with external organisations, and several sessions were also led by young people seeking to develop their presentation and leadership skills.

Younger Cohort (5–11 years)took part in:

- Arts and crafts, learning recreational and creative skills.
- Learned about environmental care and the importance of clean, safe surroundings.
- Participated in ice breaking activities and health walks to build rapport and support wellbeing.
- Engaged in community events featuring face painting, games, arts and crafts, henna, and bouncy castles.
- Developed new skills such as cake decorating, jewellery making, recycling, slime making, dancing, resin keyrings, and T shirt designing.
- Enjoyed healthy walks, outdoor sports, and group games.
- Oldham Library Story Fest



Creative, Practical and Skill Based Workshops for young people age 11-20

- Henna art
- Card making
- Walk leader training
- Storytelling
- Culinary skills/food hygiene
- Arts and crafts,
- Filming and editing
- Media skills
- Hair and beauty
- Digital skills
- Recycling and environmental awareness
- Mental health awareness,
- Multisport
- Visual art
- Drama
- Photography
- Jewellery making
- Event planning
- Fashion and design
- Sewing and pattern making
- Candle making
- Budgeting
- Young leaders training
- Gold Arts Award
- Zine writing
- Flower pressing
- Cultural identity crisis workshops
- Badge making
- Interview Techniques
- Conflict resolution and exploring cultures, bullying, grooming, drugs, conflict, and accessing support services.
- Young people gained a deeper understanding of mental health and healthy relationships.
- Group discussions helped bridge communication gaps between parents and the children and young people
- Multisport and hiking for physical health



Trips and outdoor activities

Alexandra Park, Hartshead Pike, Dove Stones, Crocky Trail, Southport, Trafford Centre, roller skating, Ashton bowling, indoor rock climbing, Northern Roots, Heaton Park, Odeon Cinemas, Gourmet Restaurant, Café East, Scarborough, Arndale Centre, Central London, Cockfield Farm, Lancaster Farm, Heaton Park, Castleshaw, and Chinatown Manchester.





Recreational activities, learning innovative skills

- 14 young people were nominated for a national film award and travelled to London in June for the ceremony. Their film was selected as one of the top three from over 400 submissions nationwide, and they won the best documentary award in 2026.
- One young person delivered workshops as part of their work experience.
- Ten young people developed volunteering skills to enhance their employability and future opportunities.
- Improved mental health through dialogue whilst on residential and signposted 3 young people to seek support for their mental health issues from Mend and their GP

Partnership work

Oldham Youth Services, Peshkar, Into Film, Oldham Gallery, Oldham Boxing NXT Gen ABC, Action Together, The Mayor's Charity, Northern Roots, Castleshaw, Oldham Leisure Centre and Action Together.



Progression and Volunteering

- Several young people progressed from participants to volunteers and community champions.
- They identified strengths and weaknesses, learned safeguarding principles, and supported safe session delivery.
- Community feedback was overwhelmingly positive, boosting young volunteers' confidence and sense of achievement.
- Trips such as the Manchester Museum visit helped young people learn to use public transport and explore cultural spaces.
- A colour walk project encouraged creativity and produced impressive artwork.
- 14 young people participated in the "Every Child is a Filmmaker" programme, producing a culture based documentary nominated for a national award.
- Young people with limited social interaction due to cultural restrictions were supported to explore diverse environments and express concerns in safe spaces.
- A night walk at Castleshaw provided a unique wellbeing experience and increased awareness of local outdoor opportunities.

Celebrations

Eid, Ramadan, Easter, Christmas, New Year, End of Project celebrations, Achievement Awards, and Young Filmmakers Award events.



















Case Studies

Y, From Screen Time to Sports and Self Belief

Y is a generally confident young person but showed little interest in physical activity. His mother expressed concern about his increasing obsession with gaming and lack of movement. After joining the multisport programme and receiving consistent encouragement, Y began engaging in dodgeball. Although competitive, he struggled with self belief and often withdrew from group activities.

Staff supported him by giving him small leadership responsibilities, such as managing equipment. This helped him become more alert, responsible, and engaged. Positive reinforcement enabled him to thrive, and his confidence grew steadily. Y's mother has noticed a holistic improvement, he now looks forward to Saturday sports sessions, is more physically active, and interacts more positively with others. He has even joined a local football club, improving his overall lifestyle and wellbeing. "I love coming here to play with my friends. My garden is too small to play dodgeball, and my sister doesn't know how to play. Can we have another session on Sundays?"

"I love coming here to play with my friends."
Said Y

X, A young person experiencing mental health challenges

X was a quiet and withdrawn individual. She had recently moved to Oldham from Spain. She was facing culture shock and barriers to meeting people. X was creative but had few opportunities to demonstrate her skills. Her mother asked if we could deliver some sessions for the older girls. X joined for the Gold Arts Award. She rarely spoke in the classroom and appeared very quiet and sad.

During the jewellery-making workshops, she created some unique pieces. We praised her work and asked her to take a leadership role in delivering some sessions to the younger group. This opportunity boosted her confidence, and she began expressing interest in volunteering more at the centre. With the resources, X has led art workshops and used these sessions to build her confidence and share her views more openly. She now seems more at ease, and her mother is pleased with her progress, often thanking staff for supporting X to become more confident. X has managed to secure a part-time job in a charity shop. She is much happier and more vocal amongst her peers.

"X has led art workshops and used these sessions to build her confidence and share her views more openly"

Summary of Financial Activities, April 2025 to Match 2026

INCOME	£
Action Together Vaccination Programme	700
Asda Foudation	1,000
Awards for All	20,000
Breast Cancer	6,330
Dementia	9,500
Eleanor Peel Trust	6,000
Garfield Weston Foundation	10,000
GMCA Community Grants, Strand 1	38,190
Greater Manchester Crime Reduction VRU	8,905
Lloyds Bank Foundation	25,000
Manchester Guardian Society Charitable Trust	2,500
MMR Campaign	11,619
Peter Kershaw Trust	2,000
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	83,010
Other Small Funds	8,153
Activities for generating funds	1,789
Total Income	**234,696**

EXPENDITURE	
Events/Trips/Projects	33,000
Insurance	1,006
Management and Finance	4,934
Miscellaneous	261
Office & Communication Costs	7,864
Payroll Service and Index	1,735
Property Expenses	15,984
Training	260
Travel	540
Staff Costs	117,996
Volunteers	1,871
Total Expenditure	**185,451**
Total Surplus/ (Deficit)	**(49,245)**
Balance brought forward FWA 01/04/25	**160,045**
Restricted Funds at 31/03/26	**117,490**
Unrestricted Funds at 31/03/26	**91,800**



Staff Members

Fauzia Chaudhry
MANAGING DIRECTOR

Uzma Khaliq
FINANCE OFFICER/FUNDRAISER

Farhanda Qadeer
WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT WORKER

Shabana Parveen
CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT WORKER

Arjam Sadiq
CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORT WORKER

Farhanda Qadeer
CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORT WORKER

Management Committee Members

Parveen Akhtar
CHAIRPERSON

Tabasum Kausar
VICE CHAIRPERSON

Samina Iqbal
SECRETARY

Sylvia Akram
SECRETARY

Nasreen Shabir
Maria Nessa
Rahela Khatun
Aisha Nazir



Fatima Women's Association is extremely interested in recruiting new Management Committee Members and volunteers. Interested individuals should contact F.W.A for further information.

Please visit our web page
www.fatimawomens.org.uk
for up-to-date information.

COMMUNITY FUND
POSTCODE LOTTERY
POSTCODE COMMUNITY TRUST
GMCA GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY
Garfield Weston FOUNDATION
LLOYDS BANK FOUNDATION ENGLAND & WALES