

The Muslim Women's Collective:

The Muslim Women's Collective (MWC) was formed in 2006/7 and was a major step forward for Muslim Women's organisations in Tower Hamlets. It created a unique grouping of 12 voluntary and community organisations that engage at grass roots level with all members of the community in Tower Hamlets and in particular with the Muslim population.

As an umbrella organisation it seeks to:

- Plan and co-ordinate community based programmes between Muslim women's groups
- Act as a strategic point of contact for partner organisations interested in working with these groups to develop specific programmes
- It has grown from a budget of £30,000 in 2007 to a budget of £330,000 in 2009/10 through its reputation for consistency of delivery and engagement with 'hard to reach' groups

The overall aims of the Muslim Women's Collective:

- Supporting and empowering the Muslim community in Tower Hamlets and in particular Muslim women working and living in Tower Hamlets
- Inspiring integrity and respect for the Muslim community
- Building long-lasting and mutually beneficial relationships between different sectors of the local communities, businesses and third sector organisations and
- Educating the Muslim community about their overall social, health and environmental responsibilities

What we are looking for in partner organisations:

We are looking for partners that are experienced in working with survivors of domestic violence and also have experience of working with women and children with mental ill-health. Both the proposed projects feature issues around the mental health of DV survivors although the second one is aimed more at children and adolescents and in particular from BME communities, so if the partner organisations have experience of working with BME women and children that would be an advantage, although we would be happy to share our knowledge and experience and build their capacity in this area.

Proposed DAPHNE III Projects:

1. A project to explore and understand the impact of Domestic Violence (DV) on the emotional and psychological well-being of women, children and adolescents and the development of tools and strategies to help care professionals better support DV survivors with mental ill-health [this would be aimed at all women, children and adolescents with some focus on Black Minority Ethnic (BME) communities and on the cultural impacts of violence].
2. A project that looks at ways to increase the number of age-appropriate therapists who engage with children and adolescent females from [in particular] the South Asian community. One of the characteristics of domestic violence in the South Asian community, regardless of faith group, is that the DV is perpetrated both by men and women. When the MWC has worked in the DV sector in the past, several of the young women that they were supporting refused to engage with psychiatrists and therapists because they were the same age as their mothers/aunts who in many cases were the perpetrators of the violence. The London Borough of Tower Hamlets DV team (who will be working with the MWC on this project) have had the same problem with lack of engagement. MWC are keen to find out if other partners in the European Union have experienced this and/or whether the concept of advocates could help young girls and women to engage more.