

# Hangleton and Knoll Multi Cultural Women's Group



## Building Inclusive Communities

*Hangleton and Knoll Multi-Cultural  
Women's Group*



## Hangleton and Knoll

### Multi- Cultural Women's Group (MCWG)

The MCWG are a flourishing group with an active committee of **25** women who are in touch with over **180** mostly Arabic and Bengali **women**. The group was set up in 2009 and independently constituted by the Hangleton and Knoll Project (HKP) to meet the needs of BME women in the area.

With HKPs support, the MCWG is achieving the community's own goals and empowering their members to individually thrive and succeed.

Building a community from the bottom up requires time but the community development approach brings long term and sustainable benefits.



#### Highlights of the work

**Supporting group members into new roles and responsibilities** including representing the group, volunteering, committee roles, delivering training and gaining employment.

**Providing accessible training** e.g. ESOL to access health care, Life in the UK training to help pass the test.

The group have been supported to **build connections with the wider community**, resulting in intergenerational and multi-cultural projects, popular family outings and new work with BME young people. The MCWG supports reps on The Health Forum and Community Action ensuring the voice of members is heard and embedded across the community. This has encouraged and supported community cohesion and integration

Supporting members to **connect with other voluntary and community sector groups**. Through this they gained recognition and confidence which led to sharing their often unheard voices.

The group's long term **partnerships and collaborations** have played a huge part in their success. HKP have supported them to work with Brighton and Hove City Council, Clinical Commissioning Group, Health Services and numerous community and voluntary sector organisations. This has enabled **service providers to have an invaluable insight into the needs of BME communities and their families**.

**Increased skills and confidence**

**Improved language skills**

**Better access to services**

**Improved health and well-being**

**Engagement with citywide health initiatives**

**Ability to influence service delivery**

**Increased employment, volunteering opportunities and trustee roles**

**Increased community cohesion and integration**

# The Community Development Approach

HKP's approach is to work with the assets, strengths, knowledge and experience that communities already have. This began in 2008, when we sought to understand why people from BME backgrounds were less involved in community activity within Hangleton and Knoll. We found that clearer publicity and special introductory events might make joining something easier. Accessible health and well-being activities along with opportunities to learn English and computer skills were needed too.

With this information, we supported the community to find ways of meeting these needs themselves. At an open meeting we explored the results of research together and the idea of a Multi-Cultural Women's Group was born. The group began to meet fortnightly and together they developed opportunities in the community for women and their families.

This community development approach helps to ensure that the group focus on what matters to them, builds skills, knowledge and confidence and develops the activities in a sustainable way.

Over time the group has gone from strength to strength and the support of the community development worker has been tailored to their needs as their skills and confidence have grown.

At the start the community development worker gave lots of support around setting up and running meetings, fundraising, applying for grants, making decisions and planning activities. Over time the women have taken on more responsibility themselves so that they are now able to do more of their own grant applications, are more financially independent through subscriptions and plan and host their

own meetings. Group members said community development support had made an enormous difference.....

*'We wouldn't have developed without the support'*

*'Priceless'*

*'We would be lost'*

The most valued support is....

*'Help with governance, policies and procedures'*

*'Fundraising and evaluation'*

*'Enabling the group to be successful'*

*'Professional expertise'*

*'Opening up a wider network'*

Once the group was established, members were supported to make connections with other organisations within Hangleton and Knoll and then across the City. This has involved linking with the Council, health and other voluntary sector organisations such as the Food Partnership, the Trust for Developing Communities and Brighton Women's Centre. Citywide networking opportunities such as the ones offered by Community Works have helped develop these links.

The group now offer a way for women from different cultures to join a friendly welcoming and supportive group and to develop links and connections to other activities that would otherwise be too daunting or unavailable. By coming together the women have been able to branch out.

## Group Development

The group are supported to provide an array of health and well-being activities for BME women including peer led Healthwalks, weekly yoga, Zumba and swimming. The group also hold monthly coffee mornings where the group gets together to share information on a wide range of health wellbeing related topics. The group's activities are becoming increasingly more sustainable due to membership and activity contributions making the group are less reliant on grants.

The group have developed hugely over the last six years and now have an active committee of 25 women who are in touch with over 180 women from across the city. The group hold an annual general meeting to elect a committee.



Members of the Multi-Cultural Women's Group at their AGM. 2013

Evaluations around the health and well-being activities the group run are conducted annually. They are valued by the group as an opportunity for the women to identify and reflect on the positive health benefits of the activities they participate in. This is an empowering process which ensures the women feel able to take positive action to improve their own health and well-being and can measure their achievements together as a group.


*'Stress and pressure is gone'*  
(Yoga)

*'Made me feel younger'* (Gym)

*'We can do it together'* (Zumba)

*'Learnt how to swim again'*  
(Swimming)



*'Easy to find time to walk and its free'* (Healthwalks)





Hangleton Community Centre  
Hampstead Crescent, Hove,  
BN3 8BW  
Tel: 200962

St. Richard's Community Centre  
Egmont Road, Hove,  
BN3 7FP  
Tel: 414483

For more information contact  
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Email: [takako18@hotmail.com](mailto:takako18@hotmail.com)  
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**Hangleton and Knoll  
Multi-Cultural Women's Group**

We provide lots of Health and Wellbeing Activities including Yoga, Swimming, Exercise Classes and Health Walks.

**Health Walks**  
We meet at St. Richard's Community Centre  
10am Thursday

September	15 <sup>th</sup> , 29 <sup>th</sup>
October	13 <sup>th</sup> , 15 <sup>th</sup>
November	10 <sup>th</sup> , 24 <sup>th</sup>
December	8 <sup>th</sup>

Just turn up and meet Husnul, Takako and Neena our Health Walk Leaders

**Ladies only swimming**  
£2 per session  
Once a week at:

*King Alfred Leisure Centre*  
Mondays 8-9 pm  
Wednesdays 10-11 am

*St. Luke's Pool*  
Mondays 2:00 - 3:15 pm  
Wednesdays 12:30 - 1:30 pm

For more information about dates of our activities please contact us.

**Coffee Mornings  
September - December 2016**

Please come along and join us at our monthly coffee mornings at St. Richard's Church and Community Centre, Egmont Road, Hove BN3 7FP, from 10am to 12 noon on the following Thursdays:

8<sup>th</sup> September  
6<sup>th</sup> October  
3<sup>rd</sup> November  
1<sup>st</sup> December

All women are welcome. We provide Arabic and Sylheti interpreters.



Taking the Healthwalks as an example, the group have been supported to develop their own walks. There are now four group members trained as leaders and a subcommittee for Healthwalks has been developed enabling the leaders to regularly review the walks and promotion to the wider community. The leaders have now taken more ownership of communicating with the BHCC Healthwalks Coordinator.

In 2013 group member, Husnul, received the 'Most Inspirational Healthwalk Leader' award for the City.



### What do members get from being part of the group?

(2013/14)

*Everybody come as one*

*I like all the different cultures – we are all the same*

*We come for activities and advice, and I know about courses*

*Learning from each other*

*Meeting new people and chatting*

*Gaining information, refreshed*

*Courses to learn skills*

*Feeling young*

*Meeting friends*

## Healthwalks for Women

**All women welcome to meet, talk, walk, support & make new friends on our Brighton Women's Centre & Hangleton & Knoll Multi Cultural Women's Group Healthwalks!**

**Brighton Women's Centre Walk**  
BWC, High St, Kemp Town  
Meet at 11.30am, Wednesdays (2 miles)  
\*\*First walk of 2014: Jan 8th\*\*  
[www.womenscentre.org.uk](http://www.womenscentre.org.uk)

easy/moderate

**Multi Cultural Women's Group Walk, St Richard's Community Centre, Egmont Road, Hove**  
Meet at 10am (1.5 miles)  
Thursdays: 16 & 30/1  
13/2, 13 & 27/3, 17/4, 8 & 22/5, 12 & 26/6.

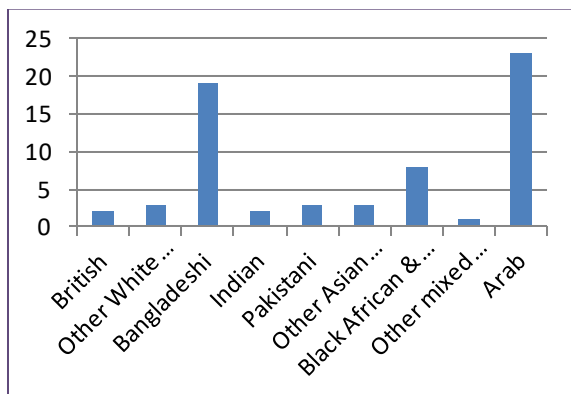
easy

**Enjoy a free cuppa & a chat after the walks!**

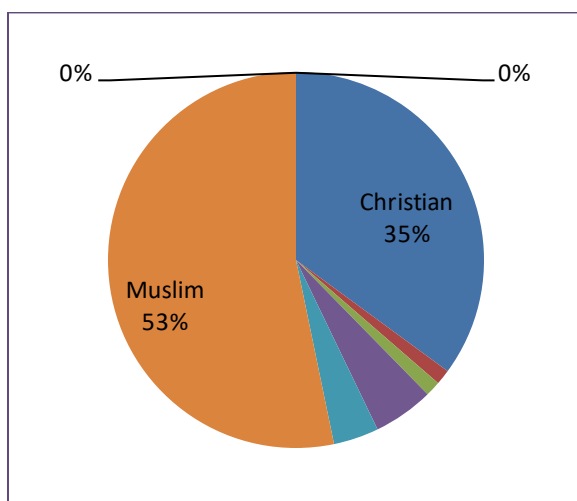
@healthwalksBH  
Brighton & Hove Healthwalks Sports Development  
01273 292564  
[healthwalks@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:healthwalks@brighton-hove.gov.uk)  
[www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/healthwalks](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/healthwalks)

The group is predominantly made up of Bangladeshi and Arabic women and interpreting support is provided through the group at committee meetings and coffee mornings to ensure all women have a voice and collective decisions are made.

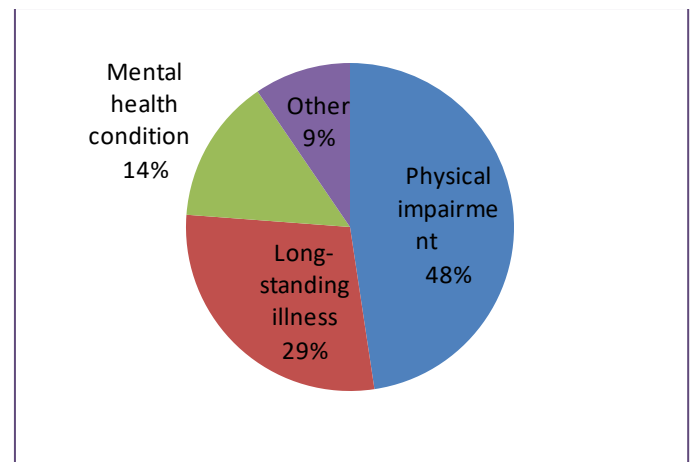
The ethnicity of the group is varied with the majority being Bangladeshi or Arabic.



Members of the group have different religions with the majority being Muslim or Christian.



Over 30% of members have health conditions that limit day to day activity, these break down as



## Training & Employment

The group have always been keen to learn and broaden their experiences. Initially by sharing knowledge and skills within the group and then, as confidence built, this expanded to more formal training which opened up employment opportunities. Training for many of the women was reliant on Bengali and Arabic interpreters and sometimes women only groups to make the courses accessible.

*I feel happier to do more courses, the community are very friendly*

The group began attending formal training in 2013 with courses in **assertiveness, first aid and food safety**. HKP offer these courses through their partnerships with Brighton and Hove City Council and the Trust for Developing Communities. The courses were very relevant to the women's lives and were delivered specifically for the group. They attracted a lot of interest with twenty women becoming qualified first aiders following the first aid course.

*This is the only place where I learn something - otherwise I don't do anything useful all day*

In response to the groups need to run their own **tailored English classes** HKP obtained funding from Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities fund for a group member to become qualified to deliver bespoke English courses open to all women in the community.

As a result, in the following year, three 6-week bespoke English courses were delivered by the newly qualified group

member in partnership with HaKIT. HKP provided advice and helped promote the course and the learners increased their confidence and written and spoken English skills.

### Partnership Workshops in 2015

**5-ways to wellbeing** for 25 women with Brighton Housing Trust,

**Hand massage and meditation** in partnership with Threshold, enabling 24 women to talk more freely about their mental health and wellbeing needs

**Cancer prevention** from the NHS raising awareness of breast cancer amongst 30 women

More recently, we co-developed **Life in the UK Courses**, a first of its kind in the city to help develop confidence as learners prepare to take the citizenship test.

Then four 6-week Life in the UK Courses were run locally with 52 BME men and women attending. All participants said they felt more confident around working or volunteering and had more knowledge about the Life in the UK Test.



## Impact on individuals and community

The group's English classes improved the **language skills** of members, as a result Interpreters are only needed a couple of times per year now compared to around 20 times when the group was set up. The women find it easier to access the services they need particularly making a difference to their healthcare and contact with schools.



The experiences and knowledge shared through the group has increased **access to and information about services**. For example, the group are now familiar with mental health services and know how and when to report a crime to their local PCSO.

Participating in the group has resulted in members having **improved health and well-being** and consequently visiting their GP less. The group has strong links with Hove Poly Clinic through a physiotherapist there and support the recovery of women referred to the group.

Through their networks, group members **engage with citywide health initiatives**

by participating in health focus groups and contributing from a BME perspective.

At a strategic level, the group's partnerships **influence service delivery**. Members offer service providers a better understanding of the key needs of their communities.

With increased skills and confidence, members of the group have taken up **employment, volunteering opportunities and trustee roles**. Three members are now in paid work, two members deliver courses as paid members of staff, one is a HKP trustee, one a domestic violence champion and another a health champion.

Through the group, members feel part of the community and able to express and celebrate their culture resulting in **increased community cohesion and integration**. Members feel confident to access mainstream groups and services and are a visible and welcome part of community life. The wider community have benefitted from attending open events organised by the group celebrating culture and diversity.





## Community Asset Building

As well as providing activities for its members, the group is supported to build wider connections and increase capacity within the Hangleton and Knoll community.

One example of this was a **Good Food Project in 2012** which linked older people, young people and members of the multi-cultural group together to share recipes, cook together and learn something new about food. Here we collaborated with the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership who provided funding and brought expertise about food and nutrition.

The sessions brought people together through their experiences with food. We had fantastic feedback from the group including.....

*I am glad to show what food I cook at home and share my culture and background.*

(Member of multicultural women's group)

Early on the group had identified the importance of **family outings** as an activity that the women found difficult to provide on their own or didn't have the confidence to undertake.

These trips started small and Brighton based such as to the bowling alley at the Marina and have grown over time. In 2013, the group were supported to organise a trip to Harbour Park in Littlehampton with a £250 grant from the Healthy Neighbourhood Fund. 46 women and children attended. They went on to take 150 people to Kew Gardens and then in 2015 they took 84 members and their families went to Windsor for the day.

On the trip to Kew Gardens, the HKP took the opportunity to explore thoughts about youth activities and involvement with a small group. We learnt that young women and their parents were concerned about taking part in mainstream youth activity.



Exploring this further, we started to identify barriers to **BME young people participating in youth activity**. We realised there were historical and cultural perceptions preventing participation. With the group's support, we explored current youth activity and the benefits and wider opportunities available to young people in our community. We were able to demystify historic perceptions and encourage open communication with the HKP youth team.

The outcome of this has been the integration of activities identified by BME young women in the HKP's Youth Programme and the start of a partnership with Hove Park School ESOL group to widen opportunities for BME young people in the area.

*I just feel healthier when I am out*

*My children are happier*

*It reduces my isolation*

## Strategic and Citywide Influence



As the group developed, the women took an interest in more strategic and citywide activity. This began with engaging with Community Works (then the Community and Voluntary Sector Forum, CVSF) through their conferences, networks and information sharing.

In 2012 the group won the 'Small Group Big Achievement' category. This was an important moment of external recognition for everything the group was doing and boosted their confidence to continue building connections and partnerships.

**Health** has always been one of the group's top priorities and the HKP supported them to develop this by sharing their experiences of GP surgeries and eventually joining the local Health Forum in 2015. One member said

*I feel more confident about expressing my views and I am now the Health Forum representative for the group*

The group can evidence their impact on reducing demand for primary health care

services. Over the last four years, the percentage of women who feel they had visited their GP less because of participating in the group's activities rose from 68% to 88%. This is valuable learning for ways of improving health and wellbeing amongst neighbourhood community groups.

In January 2015, 15 members of the group were supported to feed their views into the City's **Fairness Commission**. Key themes included -

### **Strengthening Communities**

A strong consensus to support locally based community and youth activities and the importance of supporting each other in closely connected communities.

### **Housing**

A concern for young people not being able to afford to leave the family home. There were strong views that social housing tenants should not be offered financial rewards for moving, and that it should be a term of the tenancy to move if over occupying a Council property.

### **Children and young people**

Better access to free childcare was a key point to ensure that people with children could access employment opportunities.

### **Older people and wellbeing**

Support for community befriending that is neighbourhood based to ensure local people can engage fully.

### **Employment and skills**

More employment opportunities for young people are needed, especially in the business sector.

## Partnerships

The group are supported to develop meaningful, needs led partnerships. Their collaborative work with many partners has increased the participation of BME women in community based activities and across the City in general. This increased engagement at a more strategic and influential level has helped empower the group.

### Partnerships include

Arabic Church  
BHCC Healthwalks  
The Food Partnership  
Brighton Housing Trust  
Brighton Women's Centre  
NHS - GP Surgeries  
Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)  
HK Community Action & Health Forum  
HKP Youth Team  
Hove Poly Clinic  
Mind and Rethink  
Sussex Interpreting Service  
Trust for Developing Communities

These partnerships began with BHCC Healthwalks. The group deliver two monthly women only Healthwalks in the Hangleton and Knoll area as part of the City's programme. A second partnership developed through a joint walk with Brighton Women's Centre to celebrate international women's day. As a result, a member of the Women's Centre joined the group and the committee.

In 2012, HKP also supported the group to share their engagement techniques at the 'Tackling Inequality through Engagement Showcase'. This helped to introduce the group to strategic city wide organisations, generated ideas for potential partnership working and increased confidence. As part of this event, we supported the group to link with the Trust for Developing

Communities to participate in a short film about their work. <http://bit.ly/1ZWBhKr>

More formal partnerships have developed through links initiated by HKP with Hove Poly Clinic and the Recovery Team at Mill View Hospital. New members are referred to the group and information about the group's activities are regularly shared. In 2012/13 six women joined the group through these routes.

As a way of ensuring their voices are heard at a strategic level, the group was supported to engage in focus groups with the CCG around NHS record sharing, BME hospital inpatient experience, cancer prevention and smoking cessation. The group enjoyed this level of participation and fed into the City's Happiness Strategy.

The group's growing confidence around working in partnership prompted us to introduce them to the Brighton and Hove Black History Group in 2015/16 and a Black History event for 155 people from local and citywide BME families was the result. Activities included African drumming, singing and dance workshops and multi-cultural history exhibitions, films, and talks.



*Great to see the community celebrating*