



**mums
united**

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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LEARN

ENGAGE

ACT

RAISE AWARENESS

NOT GIVE UP HOPE

Chairs Report

2023 has been a significant year for Mums United as we have successfully established a home for young people and mothers in our community. This has been made possible through our dedicated efforts and hard work. We are proud to announce the completion of our community centre and anticipate the completion of our community gym shortly. We have transformed an unused derelict building into a vibrant centre. Despite these achievements, it is disheartening that the statutory authorities have failed to recognise and understand the severity of youth violence. According to the latest ONS figures, knife crime in England and Wales has increased by 5% in 2023.

BBC News reported half of the homicide inquiries in Yorkshire in 2023 were the result of fatal stabbings. Knife attacks accounted for 27 of the 54 investigations made public. A further two people were shot dead. In total, 13 of those fatally stabbed were males aged 21 or under, with five of the victims under 18. A report from Chief Superintendent Lindsey Butterfield of South Yorkshire Police stated that between November 2022 and April 2023, 493 knife crime incidents were recorded in Sheffield. This equates to almost three daily reported incidents involving a blade in the city.

The Sheffield Star reported on a total of 16 stabbings alleged to have taken place on Sheffield Streets over the last year. This equates to the equivalent of one stabbing taking place every 3.3 weeks. Two of the stabbings sadly proved fatal.

At Mums United, we recognise that youth violence does not happen in a vacuum. Knife crime is not a stand-alone problem but a manifestation of underlying issues. To effectively tackle knife crime, it is crucial to address the root causes. This means recognising and addressing the trauma that is hidden beneath the surface. If these issues are not addressed, it becomes difficult to break the cycle of violence and criminal behavior.

This is why prevention is the key to tackling youth violence. We must invest in our youth and create opportunities for them to thrive. By providing them with positive outlets and supportive resources, we can build protective factors that will steer them away from the path of violence.

Our facilities will offer young people a safe and positive environment to engage in constructive activities, develop skills, and form meaningful relationships with peers and mentors. Providing such opportunities can create protective factors that shield our young people from negative influences and steer them towards a brighter future.

We also call on the government to allocate more resources towards youth programs and community development initiatives. Cutting funding in these areas will only perpetuate the cycle of violence and make our communities more vulnerable. We must invest in prevention and early intervention rather than just reacting to incidents after they have occurred. We must be proactive, not reactive. We must be measured and consistent in our approach.

In 2023, Mums United has also focused on empowering our young people to become community leaders. They can become change agents and advocate for a safer and healthier

environment by giving them a sense of purpose and responsibility. We urge all families who may have lost their children to the culture of violence and gangs to reach out to us. We understand the pain and loss that come with such tragedies, and we are here to offer support and work towards preventing such incidents from happening in the future. We urge the public to reject the normalisation of violence and aggression in our communities.

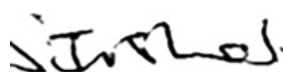
We must teach our children the values of empathy aspect, and non-violent conflict resolution. We must also actively support and participate in community initiatives promoting positivity and helping at-risk youth.

As we reflect on our accomplishments in 2023, we want to express our gratitude to all the volunteers who have wholeheartedly supported us in our endeavours. This would not have been possible without their selfless efforts and unwavering support. Together, we have created a home for our community, a haven for our young people, and a promising future for our mothers. Let us continue to work together to tackle our challenges and build a better tomorrow for future generations.

We are proud to have created a community centre where young people and parents can come and share their experiences. We are unique because, as mothers, we have stood firm and have squared the misogyny that we face. We should be proud and hold our heads high because, as women, we have accomplished something very special.

At Mums United, we will always work hard for our children. They are the future, and they are our legacy. Our responsibility is to create a better world for them, free from the fear of violence and crime. We have been calling upon authorities to take notice, but the message has fallen on the ears of those who choose not to listen.

As mothers, we must step up and be leaders—we will create change within our communities. Our stories are our truth, our footprint in history. Our voices must be heard. We will stand on our two feet, and our footprints will lead to change. Who will join us?



Sahira Irshad
Chair of Mums united

MUSYC Mums United Sheffield Youth Club

Mums United recognises the importance of providing a safe and supportive environment for young people to come and engage in positive activities.

Youth clubs are crucial in promoting young individuals' well-being and preventing them from engaging in harmful behaviours. More investment is needed to support youth clubs as they significantly impact the youth and their communities. We urge local councils to recognise the importance of youth clubs and adequately invest in them to provide a safe and supportive environment for young individuals to thrive and contribute positively to their communities. Your support in this advocacy is invaluable and can make a significant difference in our youth lives and our communities future.

Mums United Youth clubs provide more than just a safe space for young people. They offer various activities such as sports, arts and crafts, music, mentorship programs, and educational workshops. These clubs serve as a platform for young individuals to develop social skills, build relationships, and gain new experiences. According to the National Youth Agency, youth clubs have been proven to positively impact young people's mental health, self-esteem, and overall well-being. They allow young people to explore their interests, passions, and talents in a supportive, non-judgmental environment. Most importantly, they provide a profound sense of belonging and community for young people struggling with social isolation or lack of support at home.

This sense of belonging is crucial for their development, and your understanding and support can help foster it.

Youth clubs serve as a crucial preventive measure against crime. When young people are engaged in positive activities, they are less likely to be drawn into destructive behaviours that could harm their communities. Moreover, youth clubs foster a sense of social cohesion and community involvement. By investing in youth clubs, we are nurturing a sense of belonging and social responsibility among young people and contributing to a safer and more cohesive community. Your investment in youth clubs is an investment in the safety and well-being of our community, and your active involvement can make a significant difference.

Here is some of the work we have carried out at the clubs:

Healthy Activities & Food

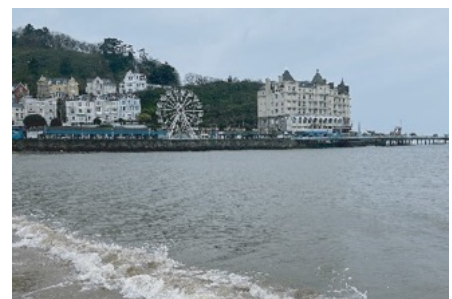
In 2023, over the course of seven days, we filled 238 places and brought positive change to the lives of many.

One way we achieved this was through our arts and crafts session, which profoundly impacted a shy child in particular. Through the use of various art supplies and materials, this child was able to express themselves in a nonverbal way. They communicated their thoughts, feelings, and experiences through their artwork, using colours, shapes, and textures to convey their message.

As the child became more comfortable with the group and their surroundings, they opened up and shared their love for art and painting.

This session not only allowed them to express themselves creatively but also provided a space for them to collaborate and work on projects with their peers. Each child's creation was not just appreciated, but celebrated, creating a strong sense of pride and accomplishment among the group. This sense of community and collaboration is what makes our initiatives truly impactful.

In addition to promoting self-expression, our organization also prioritized healthy living by incorporating physical activities and nutritious food choices. As part of our efforts, we organised a trip to Barry Island for over 50 young people. This was not just a trip, but a thrilling adventure for many families, for whom this was their first time leaving Sheffield.



It was an eye-opening and exciting experience filled with laughter, new friendships, and unforgettable memories.

We also provided healthy and balanced meals, educating young people on the importance of maintaining a balanced and nutritious diet. Through these initiatives, we were able to positively impact many individual lives, promoting self-expression and healthy habits. We hope these efforts will continue inspiring and empowering individuals to lead healthier and more fulfilling lives.

Meals & More

Over the holidays, we organised and held the MUSYC (Mums United Youth Club) at both Meersbrook and Wicker locations. **We have provided over 600 meals**

This initiative aimed to provide a fun and engaging environment for young people in the community during their break from school.

Throughout MUSYC, we offered diverse activities to cater to different interests and talents. One of the most popular activities was boxing. Under professional supervision and guidance, young people learned basic boxing techniques while improving their physical fitness levels. Boxing provided an excellent outlet for self-discipline, confidence-building, and encouraging a healthy lifestyle among our youth.

In addition to sports-based activities, we recognised the importance of nurturing creativity in young minds. Therefore, we included arts and crafts sessions in our program. These sessions allowed children to explore their artistic abilities through various mediums such as painting, drawing, sculpting, and more. It was truly inspiring to witness their imagination come alive as they created unique artworks that reflected their personalities.

‘I loved being part of MUSYC over the holidays!’

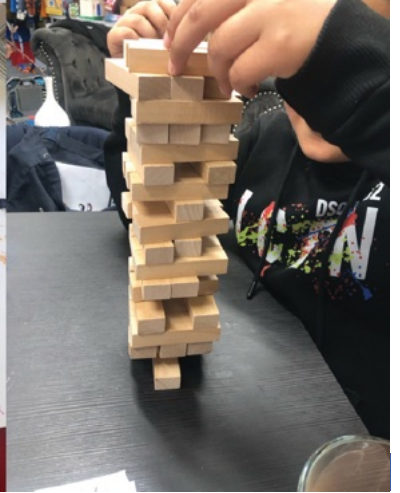
‘I love coming and making new friends’

‘I also enjoyed trying out boxing for the first time; it made me feel strong and empowered. And when it came to arts and crafts, I discovered I love painting I never knew I had!’

‘I always look forward to the holidays so that I can come here and have yummy food!’

Thank you to Meals & More for our day out at Peaks and Go





MUSYC Continued

The treasure hunt was a unique and exciting activity that captured the young people's interest and enthusiasm. They were thrilled to be part of an adventure that combined physical and mental challenges.

As they explored the beautiful surroundings, the young people could take in the breathtaking views and bond with their team members. They were encouraged to communicate effectively and work together to find the hidden treasure coins.

Through this experience, the young people acquired practical skills such as problem-solving, teamwork, and communication. They had to think creatively and strategize to successfully complete the treasure hunt, skills that are not only useful in the game but also in real-life situations, instilling confidence in the educational value of the activity.

Furthermore, the treasure hunt was a fun and interactive way for the young people to learn about their surroundings. They discovered new places and learned interesting facts about the area's history and geography. This hands-on approach to learning was engaging and encouraged the young people to actively participate and retain the information they learned.

The treasure hunt was a memorable and rewarding experience for the young people. It allowed them to have fun while developing essential skills and gaining knowledge. It was a perfect blend of adventure, education, and teamwork, leaving a lasting impression on the young participants. They will look back on this day as a thrilling and meaningful experience.



Thank you to Ignite
Imaginations for coming
to our club



Ignite imaginations

The craft workshop conducted by Ignite Imaginations was a huge hit among the young participants. From start to finish, the experience was filled with excitement, creativity, and a sense of accomplishment. The workshop was designed to teach the participants how to create beautiful lanterns using simple materials, and the result was truly astounding.

The first thing that struck the young attendees was how organized and well-prepared the Ignite Imaginations team was. From the array of colourful papers, scissors, glue, and other crafting supplies to the step-by-step instructions and demonstrations, everything was set up in a way that was visually appealing and easy to follow.

As the workshop commenced, the young participants eagerly got to work, cutting, folding, and sticking their materials together under the guidance of the Ignite Imaginations team. The atmosphere was filled with laughter and chatter as the young minds explored their creativity and put their individual touches on their lanterns.

The workshop not only taught the participants how to make lanterns but also encouraged them to think outside the box and come up with unique designs. The Ignite Imaginations team encouraged the participants to let their imaginations run wild, and the results were truly impressive. Each lantern was a beautiful representation of the individual personality and creativity.

As the workshop ended, the participants proudly displayed their lanterns, and the room was transformed into a magical space filled with vibrant colours and glowing lights. The sense of achievement and pride emanating from the young attendees was heart warming and inspiring.

Through this workshop, Ignite Imaginations provided a fun and engaging activity for the young participants and fostered their confidence, imagination, and artistic abilities. The experience left a lasting impact on the young minds, and they couldn't wait to show their creations to their families and friends.

Christmas Party with Meals & More

Thank you to Meals & More for donating gifts for the young people. Their generosity and thoughtfulness made a significant difference in the lives of the young people and their families. The festive afternoon that was organised was a huge success, filled with joy, laughter, and love.

The event was made even more special with the addition of great music, party games, great food and a surprise visit from Santa himself.



The children were overjoyed to receive beautiful presents, and the parents were grateful for the opportunity to see their childrens happy faces.

We are also grateful to MC Nige, who was instrumental in ensuring that all parents and young people were involved and had a great time. His energy and enthusiasm made the event even more memorable.

Meals & Mores contribution not only brought smiles to the faces of the young people and their families, but it also spread love and



happiness throughout the community. Their kindness and generosity did not go unnoticed, and their actions will have a lasting impact on all those who were present.

We cannot thank Meals & More enough for their support and kindness. Their dedication to making a positive difference in the lives of those in need is truly inspiring, and we are grateful to have such an amazing organization in our community. Their actions remind us of the true meaning of the festive season and the joy that comes from giving selflessly to others.



Gullivers Theme Park

Thank you to South Yorkshire Community Foundation for providing free tickets for families to go to Gullivers Christmas Bonanza, tickets included entrance to the park, followed by Christmas tea and Christmas pantomime.



Covid Memorial Fund

Sheffield City Council and Compassionate Sheffield launched the Covid-19 Community Memorial Fund.

Mums United Sheffield Youth Club worked with young people and parents to ascertain how COVID impacted them;

We carried out workshops where young people were able to express themselves. The craft workshops also provided a sense of purpose and productivity for young people who may have felt isolated and unmotivated during the pandemic. They allowed them to channel their energy into something positive and creative.

We created a memorial tree where everyone could write their thoughts down. They could also write messages of hope and solidarity for those who had lost their lives during the pandemic. These activities allowed young people to express their emotions and grieve in a safe and supportive environment.

The following is a You Tube link which demonstrates the great work that the club carried out

<https://youtu.be/7ctkU7fVi4Q>

MUSYC Continued

Celebrated Eid

The club came together to celebrate Eid! We had a brilliant time playing musical chairs and getting together, and we wanted to create a sense of community and celebration among the club's diverse members.

Volunteers and young people decorated the venue with colourful balloons, lights, and traditional Eid-themed banners and posters. The party started with a delicious spread of conventional Eid foods, including savoury samosas, sweet treats, and refreshing drinks. The youth club ensured that there were options for everyone, including those with dietary restrictions, to ensure that everyone could enjoy the feast. There was music and party games. Everyone had a lovely time.



Social Ark

We had the pleasure of meeting people from Social Ark. Around 20 people came from London; Social Ark is award-winning charity that empowers young people to develop social businesses. Mc Nige facilitated the panel meeting and arranged for them to come to the centre to see our work. The young people spoke to us about the fantastic work they have been doing.

Sahira Irshad, who was on the panel with other community campaigners, spoke about the struggles she has faced and empowered the young women in the group to never give up on their goals and dreams.



Celebrated International Youth Day

Young people at our youth club created art pieces to celebrate international youth day



Educational Workshops

In September 2023, as reported by [schoolweek.co.uk](https://www.schoolweek.co.uk), the issue of school exclusions has become a growing concern. In Sheffield, the numbers excluded have exceeded the PRU's commissioned place numbers at Easter, prompting the council to take action and increase capacity from 250 to 300, a clear indication of our community's response to this pressing issue.

Mums United, with unwavering dedication, has been running workshops for young people who have been excluded, have had repeated detentions, or are struggling with school. As mothers, we are steadfast in our commitment to ensuring the best for our young people by providing one-to-one support, we have been able to meet their challenges head-on.



MUSYC Continued

Sheffield Wednesday Football Club- SWFC Community programme

For the past 4 years we have been working with Sheffield Wednesday Community Programme, they have provided staff at the Landsdowne Muga and continue to engage with young people through foot all.

We have also been working with the team for young people to create t-shirts that would highlight the impact of knife crime, we are hoping for our work to be displayed on the screen before a match to highlight the impact of knife crime



PROD. Lights, Camera, Action

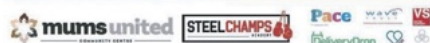
Want to be part of our exciting new project?

Young people will be creating a documentary illustrating the impact of violence in our communities.

DATE: Every Sunday 2-4pm

Youth Led, Youth Directed, Youth Written. This is our story.

Mums United Community Centre
19 Wickat, Sheffield, S2 9HS
Find out more information by visiting www.mums-united.com



LIGHTS CAMERA ACTION - Knives and broken lives

This 11-month project is driven by young people who are leading and directing the creation of a unique documentary. This powerful film will delve into the heartbreaking reality of knife crime and its impact, offering a perspective that is often overlooked. Through the lens of young people, the documentary will shed light on the complex psychological factors that lead to carrying knives. As the project continues to unfold, more details will be revealed and explored to raise awareness and positively impact the issue of knife crime.

MMAP Workshops

Quinton Green from MMAP workshops came to inspire our young people who will be filming their documentary: he brought a guest speaker, Azim, who inspired young people with his story about wanting to produce.

Quinton also helped the group focus on storytelling and advised the young people on how to write.

Quinton Green, the founder of MMAP workshops, visited Mums United. He wanted to inspire the young people by encouraging them as they prepared to begin production on their project. Quinton brought along a special guest speaker, Azim Miah.

Azim Miah is a young filmmaker who shared his story of triumph and overcoming obstacles. His words and experiences had a powerful impact on the young people, motivating them to strive towards success.

Quinton conducted engaging written word workshops, empowering the young filmmakers to articulate their ideas effectively. His guidance on storytelling through the written word significantly enhanced their storytelling skills.



Lowfield School

We carried out our Violence Prevention workshops at Lowfield Primary School. We conducted six sessions, reaching 60 young people. During these workshops, we focused on topics such as knife crime and its consequences, root causes of violence, healthy relationships, peer pressure, and personal goals and aspirations.

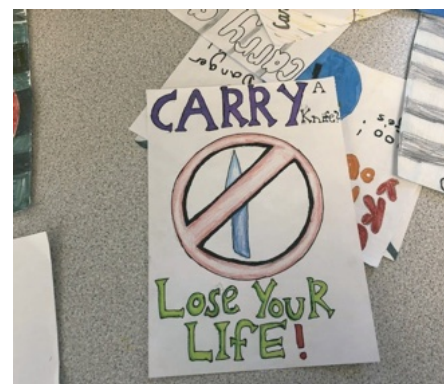
The young people at Lowfield Primary School were highly engaged and actively participated in the workshops. They significantly understood the topics discussed and created fantastic work to showcase their knowledge and thoughts. This is a testament to their willingness to learn and commitment to preventing violence in their community.

Throughout the workshops, we addressed the severe issue of knife crime and its consequences. We discussed the effects of violence on individuals, families, and the wider community. By understanding the root causes of violence, the young people were able to identify ways in which they could avoid getting involved in violent

situations. This helps to break the cycle of violence and create a safer environment for everyone.

Our workshops also strongly emphasised fostering healthy relationships and addressing peer pressure. By instilling in young people the significance of healthy relationships and providing them with tools to recognize and resist negative peer pressure, we are empowering them with crucial life skills that will guide them towards making positive choices in the future.

Furthermore, we encouraged the young people to reflect on their personal goals and aspirations. By setting these goals and nurturing aspirations, they are less likely to engage in violent activities and more driven to strive for a constructive future, thereby ensuring the long-term impact of our workshops.



Root Causes

The roots causes project explores the core reasons why young people turn to youth violence. We will be basing our workshops on the four levels of social ecological model that addresses 4 areas that can impact on violence. Individual, relationship, community, and society



This model considers the complex relationship that interplays between individual, relationship, community, and societal factors. It allows us to understand the range of factors that put people at risk for violence or protect them from experiencing or perpetrating. The socio-ecological model of youth violence is a framework that understands youth violence as a complex issue that is influenced by multiple levels of social and environmental factors. It recognizes that individual, relationship, community, and societal factors all interact and contribute to the development of youth violence.

At the individual level, factors such as genetics, personality, and previous exposure to violence can increase a young person's risk of engaging in violent behaviour. Relationships with family, peers, and romantic partners can also play a role in shaping attitudes and behaviours related to violence.

At the community level, factors like poverty, lack of resources and opportunities, social norms, and access to weapons can contribute to a higher

prevalence of youth violence. Neighbourhood characteristics, such as crime rates and availability of services, can also impact the likelihood of youth violence.

At the societal level, factors like media influences, cultural norms, and institutional policies and laws can either promote or deter youth violence. Socioeconomic inequalities, discrimination, and lack of access to basic needs can also create environments that are conducive to violence.

The project

Our project focused on understanding violence through the lens of the social-ecological model. For a comprehensive understanding, we actively engaged our youth club members and parents, dividing them into three groups based on gender and involvement: female youth, male youth, and parents. Each group, comprising 10 individuals, provided deeper perspectives on violence. Through group discussions, we explored the different factors that contribute to violence,

including individual traits, family dynamics, peer influence, school environment, community norms, and societal beliefs. We also discussed the impact of these factors on our community and the individuals involved in violent situations. By involving both young people and parents in our project, we uncovered common themes and differences in opinions regarding violence. This information helped us to develop more comprehensive and inclusive solutions for addressing violence in our community.

Findings of the project

Below is the podcast that we carried out with the groups, we involved young children to ascertain their views

<https://youtu.be/7m8N4bS3p-U?feature=shared>

Based on the model the findings are split into 4 sections: individual, relationship, community, and society

INDIVIDUAL

Cohort 1 Male Youths

The young people spoke about violence in homes, strict fathers, and the pressure to conform to different cultural values, along with the struggle to fit into Western society, can have a significant impact on the lives of young men. These challenges may lead them to seek refuge in gangs, where they feel understood and accepted. This cycle of violence and struggle must be addressed to provide a safer and more supportive environment for these young men to thrive in their identities and communities.

Violence in homes is a harsh reality that many young men in some community's face. This violence often stems from strict fathers who enforce rigid rules and regulations within the household. These fathers may use physical punishment as a form of discipline, causing trauma and fear in their children. As a result, these young men are left feeling emotionally scarred and are more likely to resort to violence as a means of dealing with their struggles. In addition to violence in the home, these young men also face the pressure of living up to both Muslim and Pakistani cultural norms while also trying to fit into the Western society they live in. This creates a constant internal conflict as they try to balance their two identities. This struggle to conform to multiple societal expectations can be overwhelming and lead to feelings of isolation and frustration.

The male group in the study revealed that their fathers would often speak about the same struggles they faced. Still, instead of breaking the cycle, they would perpetuate it by replicating the same strict and sometimes violent parenting methods they experienced. This irony only adds to their frustration and exacerbates the sense of hopelessness they may feel. As a result, it is not surprising that some young men turn to gangs to escape from the pressures and judgment they face at home and in their communities. Gangs may provide a sense of belonging and understanding, a feeling that these young men may lack in their daily lives. They may find a sense of camaraderie and acceptance in gangs, which can be very appealing to those who feel marginalized in society.

Cohort 1 Female Youths

The female group Focused on self-esteem. Experiencing sexual harassment or assault can also lead to an increased risk of engaging in violent behaviour, as it may impact a girl's sense of self-worth and her ability to establish healthy relationships. The members of this group understand that these traumatic experiences can often leave a lasting impact on a young girl's sense of self. It may lead to feelings of shame,

guilt, and worthlessness, leading to unhealthy choices for being validated.

Cohort 3 Parents

Parents recognised the role of individual characteristics such as impulsivity and anger management in contributing to youth violence and that young people with learning difficulties or who have behavioural problems would be at more risk, as these individuals may struggle to control their impulses and manage their anger, making them more susceptible to participating in violent acts. They felt the males would be at a higher risk than females.

Similarities between the three groups

1. All three groups face challenges and pressures in their homes and communities, which can lead to feelings of isolation, frustration, and a desire for belonging and acceptance.
2. These experiences can significantly impact their mental health, self-esteem, and behaviours. AI counselling, family support, community-based programs, and policy changes. By addressing these various factors, the socio-ecological model aims to prevent and reduce youth violence holistically and comprehensively.

Differences between the three groups

1. The male group highlighted the pressure to conform to different cultural values. In contrast, the female group focused on self-esteem and the impact of sexual harassment and assault on their sense of self.
2. The male group mentioned gangs as a source of refuge, while the female group talked about seeking validation from others.
3. The parents recognised individual characteristics such as impulsivity and anger management as contributing to youth violence, while the young individuals themselves did not mention these factors.
4. The parents felt that males were at a higher risk of engaging in violence than females, while the young individuals did not differentiate between genders.

RELATIONSHIPS

Cohort 1 Male Youths

When discussing with the youth, it was evident that a boy's immediate environment, including family, peers, and school, can significantly shape his perspective on violence and influence his likelihood of engaging in violent behaviour.

The group spoke about the definite pressure from male peers to conform to societal norms of masculinity, which often glorify aggression and dominance, which can influence a boy to engage in violent behaviour to fit in and gain social status.

They were not sure why; they felt they needed to prove themselves. When asked if it was because they were insecure, they dismissed this idea. 'Clout' was important - (Clout is a slang term referring to a person's influence/reputation) Family dynamics and upbringing can also play a role in shaping a boy's perspective on violence. Witnessing or experiencing violence in the home or being taught that physical force is an acceptable way to solve problems can normalise violent behaviour and desensitise a boy to the consequences of his actions.

School environment can also contribute to a boy's perspective on violence. Bullying and social exclusion can lead to feelings of anger and hostility, creating a cycle of violence as a way to cope with these emotions. The group felt that they have seen boys becoming marginalised when someone has been excluded, as there is no routine. In exclusion schools, they are flexible. Often, the young people don't do any work, and there is no pressure, and that breaks down the protective factor, which is their school environment- routine - discipline - so is it any wonder then that they will go into gangs? Often, gang members are not random strangers; they are people they grew up with.

All the young people stated that they were guided and influenced by their peers more than their parents.

Cohort 2 Female Youths

The Female youth spoke about how important their friends are; they spoke more of an emotional connection to their friends, who they felt would support them and validate them, helping their self-esteem, a sense of belonging, and overall well-being. They also recognised that this would also make them vulnerable to peer pressure and potential exploitation from those who use aggressive tactics to manipulate or control others.



Root CausesContinued

From the discussions that took place, it was clear that in romantic relationships, female youth may be more likely to experience violence and abusive behaviours from their partners compared to their male counterparts. This can be attributed to societal norms and gender roles that perpetuate the idea that men are more dominant and women are meant to be submissive. As a result, female youth may feel like they have to tolerate or even justify their partner's aggressive behaviour to maintain the relationship.

Additionally, female youth may also view relationships as a way to find love and acceptance, especially if they come from homes where there may be family dysfunction or lack of support. This can make them more vulnerable to entering into toxic or abusive relationships as they may believe that they are not deserving of healthy and respectful relationships.

The group agreed that something was exciting about being with a boy who had 'clout' (a slang word for influence) and would further make them accepted in their social circles. They would see why the coercion and aggression would blind some young females because at the moment in time, being part of the 'popular gang' was more important—even though it would be toxic.

Furthermore, the media and popular culture often depict romantic relationships that are based on possession and control, which can further perpetuate the idea that aggression and violence are expected in relationships. This can have a damaging effect on female youth and their expectations for healthy and equal partnerships.



Cohort 3 Parents

Parents had varying perspectives on the influence of relationships on youth violence. Some saw it as the main factor, while others downplayed its significance.

Parents viewed their child's friends and romantic partners as potential sources of positive or negative influence. Parents are also influenced by societal norms and expectations regarding gender roles and perceptions of what constitutes "normal" behaviour in relationships, which impacts their views on the second element of the model.

Parents felt that their children were impacted by their peers rather than what happened at home. Although some parents spoke about trauma-informed approaches, they felt that if you have 'good friends,' they would support your children. Still, if your peers are negative, your children will fall into the trappings of the gangs, as their influence is far more significant than the influence of parents.

Some parents have tried to guide their children towards positive peer relationships and even monitor and limit their children's interactions with peers they view as negative. This has led to strict rules and limitations on social activities, which creates tension and conflict within the parent-child relationship.

Furthermore, the media and popular culture often depict romantic relationships that are based on possession and control, which can further perpetuate the idea that aggression and violence are expected in relationships. This can have a damaging effect on female youth and their expectations for healthy and equal partnerships.



Similarities between the three groups:

- All three cohorts identified the influence of peers on youth violence as a critical factor.
- Family dynamics and upbringing were seen as essential influences on youth violence in all three cohorts.

In all three cohorts, the media and popular culture were acknowledged as perpetuating aggressive behaviours in relationships.

All three cohorts recognised the influence of relationships and social circles on a youth's self-esteem, sense of belonging, and social status.

Differences between the three groups:

- Cohort 1 (Male youths) discussed the pressure to conform to societal norms of masculinity as a driving force for engaging in violence. In contrast, Cohort 2 (Female youths) addressed the potential for being exploited and influenced by aggressive individuals in their social circles.
- Cohort 2 (Female youths) discussed the potential for experiencing violence and abuse within romantic relationships, while this was not a prominent topic for Cohort 1 (Male youths) or Cohort 3 (Parents).
- Cohort 3 (Parents) saw the influence of relationships as more significant than Cohort 1 (Male youths) and 2 (Female youths), who both believed that peers had a more substantial impact.
- Cohort 3 (Parents) mentioned the use of strict rules and limitations on social activities as a way to mitigate the influence of peers, while this was not mentioned by Cohort 1 (Male youths) or 2 (Female youths).

COMMUNITIES

Cohort 1 Male Youths

The group discussed the lack of safe spaces for young people, places that were not free. If there are four children in a family, the cost adds up. Also, some local places were usually occupied by youths who were in gangs, and they may have issues with them, so they didn't want to go there. Because the risk is high- some young people end up going there and end up being runners for local gangs—the pressure to join them to feel a sense of belonging and protection.

The cohort stated that Knife crime, gangs, and drugs are standard parts of the community; it's

accepted. It doesn't matter whether you're from a single-parent family or low income- the picture that gangs paint is tempting to every young man. Young males often feel let down by their communities when it comes to dealing with knife crime. There is a combination of factors, including A lack of trust in authorities, limited community resources, a culture of silence, and inadequate responses to the issue. Young males often feel that communities do not provide sufficient support or help when it comes to dealing with the problem of knife crime.

Young males felt let down by their communities due to the lack of trust in the authorities. Many young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, think that the police and other officials do not understand their struggles or care about their well-being. This lack of trust can cause them to view community initiatives and programmes addressing knife crime as ineffective or irrelevant. Instead of seeking help from these sources, young males may turn to their peers for support, perpetuating the cycle of violence.

Another factor contributing to the feeling that communities do not help with knife crime is the lack of resources and support within these communities. Many areas that are heavily affected by knife crime also have high levels of poverty, limited access to education and employment opportunities, and inadequate mental health services. These socio-economic factors can contribute to the prevalence of knife crime. Still, community members may feel helpless in addressing the issue's root causes without adequate resources and support.

The group felt there was a culture of silence surrounding knife crime. Young males may feel pressure from their peers to remain silent or even participate in acts of violence, making it difficult to break the cycle and seek help. This culture of silence can also extend to families, who may fear retribution or stigmatisation if their children are involved in knife crime.

The response from communities and authorities to knife crime can also contribute to the feeling of not being supported. Some communities may view knife crime as a problem that only affects certain groups or neighbourhoods, resulting in a lack of attention and resources being directed towards addressing it. This can leave young males feeling like their safety and well-being are not prioritised in their community.

The group concluded that More efforts need to be made to address these underlying issues and involve young people in finding solutions to knife crime within their communities.

Cohort 2 Female Youths

The female group felt that their voices are never heard when it comes to youth violence; they think that the efforts to prevent and tackle knife crime are primarily directed towards young males, leaving them feeling marginalised and unheard. The group also felt that communities are not doing enough to address the issue of knife crime. While efforts to address knife crime are necessary, communities must recognise and include the perspectives and experiences of young females. The group felt that their voices need to be heard, and more support and resources should be provided for them to feel safe and empowered in their communities.

One of the main reasons for this sentiment is the lack of support and resources available to young females who are affected by knife crime. Many of them are victims themselves, having either been threatened or attacked with a knife. However, they often feel there is no one they can turn to for help and support. This is especially true for those living in areas where knife crime is prevalent, as the fear of retaliation prevents them from reporting incidents to the police.

Moreover, young females also feel that communities do not provide enough education and awareness about knife crime. They believe that if young people, regardless of gender, were educated on the consequences of carrying and using a knife, it could potentially reduce the number of incidents. However, schools and other community organisations often focus solely on targeting young males, leaving female students feeling excluded and less informed about the issue.

There is a disproportionate amount of support for young males, such as mentoring programs and alternative activities to keep them away from violence. However, there are limited opportunities for young females to access similar support, leaving them vulnerable and feeling neglected by their communities.

Some young females also express frustration with the lack of action taken by authorities and community leaders to address the root causes of knife crime. They feel that instead of taking a reactive approach, more focus should be placed on addressing the underlying issues that lead to knife crime, such as poverty, lack of opportunities, and the presence of gangs in their communities.

In addition, young females often feel that communities are quick to stigmatise and stereotype them as being associated with knife crime solely based on their gender. This further

reinforces the feeling of being marginalised and not being taken seriously when discussing this issue.

The group spoke about gender norms, misogyny, discrimination and violence against girls and women in the community, creating a culture of violence. There is a lack of opportunities for education and employment, which can contribute to feelings of hopelessness and frustration, leading to violent behaviour.

In communities, the level of expectations from family life inadvertently perpetuates cycles of violence against women and increases a girl's susceptibility to being victimised.

Cohort 3 Parents

Parents expressed concern over the lack of support and resources for families in their communities. They also spoke about the challenges of raising children in a neighbourhood where violence is prevalent and how it can impact their children's behaviour and well-being. Parents feel pressured to protect their children from violence by any means necessary, which can lead to justifying or overlooking violent behaviour. Many parents may feel overwhelmed and powerless in their efforts to provide a safe and nurturing environment for their children in a community where violence is rampant. Lack of access to resources and support systems can also contribute to their feelings of hopelessness and frustration, which can be reflected in their parenting styles and decisions.



Root Causes Continued

Parents may also grapple with the guilt and responsibility of not being able to protect their children from witnessing or experiencing violence. This can create a sense of helplessness and loss of control in their role as a caregiver. The group also felt that there was a lack of affordable facilities for young people. Parents think that schools and some community groups are not doing enough to address and prevent knife crime. They felt a disconnect between what their children were learning in these environments and the realities of their communities.

Parents felt there was a lack of support from their neighbours and the broader community when it came to addressing knife crime. This creates a sense of isolation and helplessness, as they may feel they are fighting this issue alone. In some communities, there is a stigma attached to seeking help or speaking out about knife crime, leading parents to feel isolated and unsupported. Parents felt the overall societal attitudes towards knife crime, such as victim-blaming or normalizing the use of violence, contribute to a culture of silence and inaction. This can create a sense of frustration and disappointment in their community's collective response to the issue.

Similarities between the three groups:

- All three groups acknowledge the prevalence and acceptance of knife crime and violence within their respective communities.
- Lack of resources and support systems for young people and their families is a shared concern among the groups.
- All three groups expressed feeling let down and unsupported by their communities, authorities, and society at large in addressing and preventing knife crime.
- There is a common understanding among the groups that knife crime is a complex issue with multiple underlying factors that need to be addressed.
- Gender norms and stereotypes were identified as contributing to the perpetuation of violence and lack of support for young people.
- The culture of silence surrounding knife crime is acknowledged by all three groups.

Differences between the three groups:

- The groups have different perspectives based on their roles and experiences - youths, specifically male and female, expressed feeling marginalized and unsupported; while parents expressed concern for their children's safety and the challenges of raising them in a violent community.
- The specific concerns and factors mentioned vary between the three groups - male youths focused on the pressure to join gangs and lack of safe spaces, while female youths highlighted the lack of education and support specifically for girls and women. Parents discussed the impact of the community and societal attitudes on their children's well-being.
- There is a difference in the level of responsibility and actions that each group can take to address knife crime - youths may feel limited in their ability to change their circumstances, while parents may feel the pressure to protect their children and advocate for change in their communities.
- The three groups may have different perspectives on the effectiveness of current initiatives and programmes in addressing knife crime.
- The experiences and challenges faced by each group may intersect and overlap, but each group may have unique insights and perspectives on the issue based on their experiences.

SOCIETY

Cohort 1 Male youths

The male group believed media influences create societal norms and values. Media plays a significant role in shaping youth attitudes towards violence; for example, Grime music can be linked to attitudes towards violence, but so can rap music. The lyrics often glamorize the pursuit of money and material possessions, which can create a desire for quick and easy wealth in young people.

Grime music videos often depict scenes of violence, drug use, and weapons. This constant exposure to violent content can desensitize young people to its consequences and make violence seem normal or acceptable. Many grime artists come from backgrounds of poverty and crime, which can make them relatable and influential to young people in similar situations. However, their portrayal of a lavish

and glamorous lifestyle through platforms like Snapchat and TikTok can also romanticize a lifestyle often achieved through illegal means. Snapchat and TikTok can also be used as a tool for cyberbullying and retaliation. This can escalate conflicts and lead to offline violence between individuals.

Users curate their content on both Snapchat and TikTok to portray a particular image or lifestyle. This can create pressure for young people to conform to a specific image, which can result in them engaging in violent acts to fit in or gain popularity.

Exposure to violent media, such as video games and movies, can desensitize boys to violence and normalize aggressive behaviour as a means of conflict resolution. Furthermore, the media portrayal of knife crime often focuses on victims and perpetrators but does not shed light on the underlying societal issues that contribute to the problem. This can lead to a lack of understanding and empathy from the wider community and a feeling of isolation for those directly affected by knife crime.

Cohort 2 Female Youths

This group spoke about how harmful behaviour is normalised through social media.

Many participants expressed concern over how movies, music, and other forms of media often portray violence as a norm or even glorify it. This can hurt young people, especially those already vulnerable and influenced by their surroundings. There was also a strong consensus that women are often objectified in gang culture, which further perpetuates harmful gender norms. In many cases, women are viewed not as people but as objects for the male gang members to use for their pleasure and gain. This objectification of women can create a toxic environment where they are seen as inferior to men and only valued for their physical appearance and ability to fulfil the desires of the men in power.

The objectification of women in gang culture can also have broader implications for society as a whole. It can lead to cultural norms and expectations where girls and young women are expected to conform to traditional gender roles and norms. This can limit their opportunities and contribute to feelings of powerlessness and

frustration. Girls may feel pressure to conform to societal expectations of being a woman, which may limit their ability to pursue education, careers, and other goals.

In addition, the culture of toxic masculinity prevalent in gang culture can also promote aggressive and violent behaviours in boys and young men. This poisonous masculinity places a strong emphasis on dominance, strength, and violence as a means of asserting power and control. As a result, boys and young men may feel pressure to conform to these expectations and display aggressive behaviours to prove their masculinity.

Moreover, the glorification of violence in media and the objectification of women in gang culture can intersect to have even more harmful effects. For example, gang members may use violence as a way to assert their dominance and control over women, perpetuating a cycle of abuse and toxic masculinity. This can also contribute to a lack of respect for consent and the belief that women are to be controlled and dominated by men. messages and expectations on their attitudes and behaviours related to violence.

Cohort 3 Parents

Parents expressed their concerns about their children's exposure to violence and unhealthy behaviours in media, entertainment, and popular culture.

Parents are concerned about the messages their children are exposed to through media and popular culture, and they want to take an active role in helping their children navigate these influences positively and healthily. By

openly discussing these concerns and teaching important skills, parents can equip their children to make informed and responsible choices and to shape their values and beliefs.

Another major concern that parents had is the exposure to violence in media, whether it be through television, movies, video games, or social media. The glorification of violence and its normalization can desensitize children, leading to an increase in aggression and a disregard for the consequences of violent behaviour. This can also contribute to the development of fear and anxiety in children, as they may have a distorted perception of the world around them.

Parents also have concerns about their children being exposed to unhealthy behaviours and unrealistic body standards through media and popular culture. The constant bombardment of images and messages promoting an idealized and often unattainable image can lead to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem in children. This can also contribute to the development of unhealthy behaviours such as disordered eating, body shaming, and excessive focus on appearance.

Parents also discussed the need to prioritize the importance of teaching their children about consent, healthy relationships, and positive communication skills. In a world where sexual assault and harassment are prevalent, parents want their children to understand the importance of boundaries and how to respect them. They also want their children to know how to maintain healthy and respectful relationships with friends, romantic partners, or family members. Teaching children about consent and communication

can also empower them to stand up for themselves and others and to recognize and reject unhealthy behaviours.

Similarities between the three groups

- All three groups recognise the media's significant role in shaping attitudes and behaviours related to violence.
- Exposure to violent media can have desensitising effects and contribute to normalising and glamorising violence.
- The portrayal of hypermasculinity and toxic gender norms in media and popular culture can have harmful effects on boys and young men.
- There is a concern that media and popular culture may promote and perpetuate harmful behaviours and attitudes, leading to negative consequences for youth.

Differences between the three groups

- Cohort 1 focuses more on the influence of specific forms of music (grime and rap) in shaping attitudes towards violence. At the same time, Cohort 2 and 3 have a broader perspective on various forms of media.
- Cohort 2 specifically highlights the objectification of women in gang culture and its contribution to toxic gender norms, while this is not mentioned by Cohort 1 and 3.
- Parents are specifically concerned about their exposure to unhealthy behaviours and body image standards in media and popular culture, while Cohort 1 and 2 do not mention this.
- Cohort 3 emphasises the important role of parents in mitigating the negative effects of media on their children, while Cohort 1 and 2 do not mention this.



Root CausesContinued

Conclusion

Individual

The strict parenting styles, pressure to conform to cultural expectations, and the struggle to fit into Western society create a challenging environment for young men. Additionally, experiences of trauma and sexual harassment can have a direct impact on the self-esteem and choices of young women, increasing their risk of engaging in violent behaviour. Finally, individual characteristics such as impulsivity and anger management must be addressed and supported to prevent violent acts in young people with learning difficulties or behavioural problems. The community and parents must break the cycle

of violence and create a safe and supportive environment for the youths to thrive in their

identities and contribute positively to society. Only by addressing these issues and providing the necessary support and resources can we hope to reduce the prevalence of violence in the lives of young.

Relationships

Whether it is the influence of peers, family, or media, relationships play a critical role in shaping a youth's perspective on violence. Parents, educators, and society must understand these influences and work towards promoting healthy and respectful relationships. By addressing toxic norms and promoting positive and supportive connections, we can create safer environments for our youth and reduce the prevalence of violence in our communities.

Communities

All three cohorts - male youths, female youths, and parents - feel let down by their communities when it comes to addressing the issue of knife crime. Lack of safe spaces, limited resources and support, a culture of silence, and inadequate responses from authorities all contribute to the feeling of being unsupported. Furthermore, young females' specific experiences and perspectives often go unheard, further marginalising this group within the community. More needs to be done to involve all members of the community in finding solutions to knife crime, addressing its root causes, and providing support

systems for those affected. We can only create safer and more positive communities for our

young people by working together.

Society

The viewpoints of all three cohorts highlight the impact of media and popular culture on youth attitudes and behaviours towards violence. From the male youth's belief in the influence of media on societal norms to the concerns of female youth over harmful gender stereotypes perpetuated in gang culture and the worries of parents over their children's exposure to violence and unhealthy behaviours, it is evident that media plays a significant role in shaping perceptions and expectations for young people. It is crucial for society to collectively address these concerns and work towards creating more positive and healthy influences on our

youth to promote a safer and more respectful community for all. Parents also have a crucial role in educating their children and equipping them with the necessary skills to evaluate and navigate media influences critically. Furthermore, it is essential for media and entertainment industries also to take responsibility and prioritise ethical and responsible content creation that does not perpetuate harmful stereotypes or glamorise violence. Only by working together can we create a society where violence is not normalised or glorified, and our youth can grow up with a more positive and healthy understanding of relationships, consent, and conflict resolution.

The issue of violence among youth is complex and multifaceted, impacted by individual, relationship, community, and societal factors. There is no one solution to this issue; instead, a collective effort is needed from all members of society to create a safer and more positive environment where our young people can thrive. By addressing the root causes of violence and providing the necessary support and resources, we can empower our youth to make positive choices and break the cycle of violence. Together, we can create a brighter, more peaceful future for our youth and communities.



MUMS UNITED

Providing a voice for all mothers

Raise Awareness

**Listen • Support • Engage
• Empower • Action**

If you are scared that your child is on the brink of entering a gang/knife crime/anti-social behaviour or you are worried about the youth of today please join Mums United.

All disclosure is confidential

Contact us confidently on

07445 911671

mumsunitedsheffield@gmail.com

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We are here to change the narrative

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SFSC

The Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities (SFSC) programme stands out as an evidence-based parenting programme. It uniquely supports parents and caregivers in developing positive relationships with their children, enhancing communication and problem-solving skills, and ultimately reducing risk factors for youth violence.

Why is the SFSC programme critical to our organisation?

The 13-week Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities programme plays a pivotal role in our charity's efforts to combat youth violence. It provides a comprehensive and evidence-based approach to preventing and addressing violence. By focusing on strengthening families and promoting positive parenting practices, the programme can initiate a ripple effect of positive change within families, communities, and society at large, thereby significantly contributing to a safer and more peaceful future for our youth.

The SFSC programme is not just a programme, it's a journey that engages and empowers families. It adopts a strengths-based approach, acknowledging that every family possesses unique strengths and resources that can be harnessed to promote positive outcomes for children. By engaging and empowering families to take an active role in their children's development, the programme fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among parents and caregivers, leading to sustained positive change.

Benefits of the programme :

Prevention of youth violence:

The SFSC programme focuses on strengthening family relationships and promoting positive parenting practices, which are proven protective factors against involvement in youth violence. By equipping parents and caregivers with the skills and knowledge to effectively communicate with and guide their children, the SFSC programme can help prevent children and young people from engaging in violent and risky behaviours.

Early intervention:

The SFSC programme targets parents and caregivers of children aged 3-18. By providing support and resources to parents at an early stage, the programme can intervene and address potential risk factors for youth violence before they escalate. This is crucial as early intervention is more effective in preventing and addressing youth violence than reactive measures.

Addresses underlying factors contributing to youth violence:

The SFSC programme goes beyond simply addressing parenting skills and also tackles underlying factors that contribute to youth violence, such as ineffective communication and problem-solving within the family, exposure to violence or trauma, and community factors, such as poverty and inequality. By targeting these underlying factors, the programme can holistically and sustainably prevent youth violence.

Promotes community collaboration:

The SFSC programme involves parents, caregivers, community leaders, and organisations, creating a collaborative and supportive network for families. By working together, different stakeholders can share resources and expertise, identify and address community-specific issues, and make a safer and more cohesive community for children and young people.



SFSC facilitator training and sfsc young peoples training

The decision to train people from the community and different community organisations to become facilitators for SFSC programs aligns with our core values of community empowerment, inclusivity, and sustainability. It benefits the individuals who receive the training and the communities they serve, creating a ripple effect of positive change and promoting stronger and more resilient families.

This SFSC programme is rooted in prevention; it focuses on preventing violence, which will look at risk-taking behaviour as it relates to grooming, gangs, knife and crime, risk of radicalisation, unsafe sexual activity, and drug and alcohol use. It addresses and challenges relationships in the home and its impact on the wider community. By training community members to deliver, the programme will become embedded in the local community, providing a sense of ownership.

Our aim is that we want to empower primarily our mothers and young people in our communities to recognise, learn and facilitate change through the training and delivery of the Strengthening Families and Strengthening Communities programme.

As a charity, we aim to support and empower individuals and communities to create positive change and live fulfilling lives. One of the best ways to achieve this is by providing accessible and effective training opportunities for community members and individuals from different community organisations.

The Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities (SFSC) program and the SFSC Young Peoples Programme are evidence-based, proven programs designed to strengthen families and promote positive community relationships. However, for these programs to have a lasting impact and reach as many people as possible, it is important to have trained, knowledgeable and passionate facilitators who can deliver the programmes effectively.

By training people from the community and different community organisations to become facilitators for SFSC programs, we are not only creating job opportunities and investing in individuals' skills and capabilities but also ensuring that the programs are delivered with cultural competence and sensitivity to the specific needs and challenges of the communities they are serving.

Furthermore, involving community members and organisations in delivering these programs helps build strong relationships and partnerships, thereby promoting a sense of ownership and investment in the programs within the community. This can lead to long-lasting support and sustainability for the programmes.

Additionally, by training a diverse group of facilitators, we can reach a wider range of participants from different backgrounds and communities. This can be especially beneficial for the SFSC Young Peoples Programme, as it allows for a diverse range of role models and mentors for young people to look up to and learn from.

SFSC Parenting programme

SFSC has a structured curriculum delivered by two trained facilitators over thirteen weeks, in three-hourly sessions. The programme is designed for parents of children aged three to 18 years old. A range of teaching methods are used, with regular opportunities for parents to try practical activities which are built on through tasks at home. Key to delivery of SFSC is the facilitation process and effectively engaging parents to share and explore their experiences.

Delivery of the programme

We have completed the training and have embarked our journey in delivering the parenting programmes and young people programmes - The outcomes will be illustrated in the next report once all programmes will be delivered.



SFSC Young Peoples programme

The SFSC programme is a 13-week group based activity and will be delivered to groups of between eight to ten young people, over a two hour session facilitated by two trained facilitators.

The SFSC YP programme is an evidence-based social development programme that uses interactive age-appropriate exercises and structured activities to engage children and young people in developing life skills. This includes:

- Developing their emotional intelligence as well as exploring their identity through exercises such as 'true pride vs. false pride' to promote their self-esteem;
- Exploring their relationships with their peers, families and communities to develop the social competencies that allow them to form and maintain supportive relationships
- Developing their solution-building skills that help better identify risky behaviours and situations such as involvement in gangs or carrying knives, as well as implement strategies for dealing with these without harming themselves or others;
- Develop appropriate strategies for them to deal with stress and manage conflict.

Research

Sahira Irshad, the founder and chair of Mums United, was the Chair of the Virus Watch Equity Study Advisory Group.

The Virus Watch was one of the most extensive COVID-19 studies in the country. Unlike other studies, it explicitly investigated why many minority ethnic communities were hit harder by COVID-19 and sought to unpack the contributing factors, such as people's occupation and housing conditions.

As part of this study, the Advisory Group helped guide their analyses and co-produce solutions to reduce COVID-19's unequal impacts. Sahira Irshad brought her expertise and experience as a community leader and advocate for minority ethnic communities to the study. This was crucial in ensuring that the study focused on and addressed the specific challenges faced by these communities during the pandemic.

The Advisory Group helped guide the research and ensure the findings and recommendations were culturally sensitive and relevant. Sahira Irshad and trustee Professor Shahd Salha took part in the findings of the Not by Choice report.

They were able to contribute to the national discourse on the unequal impacts of the pandemic on minority ethnic communities. Their involvement and contributions are helping to inform policy and decision-making processes to ensure that future responses to events like the pandemic are more equitable and inclusive. The report highlighted the systemic inequalities and structural barriers that have exacerbated the pandemic's negative impacts on these communities.

The report reveals the unequal impact of the pandemic on minority ethnic and migrant communities:

- Increased Vulnerability
- Disproportionate Mortality Rates
- Limited Access to Sick Pay
- Inadequate Support Schemes
- Unequal Vaccination Coverage

This project is a collaboration between the Race Equality Foundation, Doctors of the World UK, and the UCL Virus Watch team. It is funded as part of the UCL Virus Watch study, which is funded by UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) and the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR).

Here are the links to the findings:

<https://raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/press-release/new-report-highlights-unequal-impact-of-covid-19-pandemic-on-disempowered-ethnic-minority-and-migrant-communities/>

<https://raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/health-and-care/not-by-choice-the-unequal-impact-of-the-covid-19-pandemic/>



VIRUS WATCH EQUITY REPORT:



Community Centre

We always dreamed of creating a home for our mothers and young people. We are so proud to have opened the centre this year.

Why was Community Centre Created?

A safe and supportive environment:

The community centre was created to provide a safe and supportive environment for young people to spend their time away from the streets where they may be exposed to violence. This can help reduce their risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of violence.

Prevention of Youth Violence

The Centre was created to address underlying issues and promoting positive role models, the community centre can help prevent young people from turning to violence as a means of dealing with their problems or seeking attention.

Early Intervention

The community centre was created to serve as an early intervention for at-risk youth. By providing support and resources, it can help prevent them from becoming involved in violence before it escalates.

Addressing Root Causes:

Youth violence is often a result of deeper, underlying issues such as poverty, lack of opportunities, and family problems. The community centre was created to work at addressing these root causes, promoting long-term solutions to prevent violence.

Promoting Social Inclusion

The community centre was created to bring diverse groups of young people together and gives them a sense of belonging. This can help reduce feelings of isolation and prevent individuals from seeking validation through violent behaviour.

Access to Resources and Support

The community centre was created to offer a range of resources and support services, such as counselling, advocacy education programmes, and workshops on gender violence, self-esteem, and building resilience. We want to help young people overcome challenges and develop healthy coping mechanisms.

Empowerment and Skill Development

Through various activities and programmes, the community centre was created to empower young people and help them develop skills and talents, giving them a sense of purpose, self-worth, and a positive outlook for their future.

Collaboration and Partnerships

The community centre is for the community and is was created to works closely with local organisations, schools, and local authorities to address youth violence. Collaboration and partnerships can have a more significant impact and reach in the community.

The community centre is a hub for the local community, bringing people together and promoting unity and solidarity. This can help create a more cohesive and peaceful community overall.

With its focus on addressing the underlying causes of youth violence and promoting positive change, the community centre has the potential to make a lasting, transformative impact on individuals, families, and the community as a whole.



But our programme is not just about learning English. It's about providing a supportive community for these mothers. We understand their challenges in balancing family responsibilities while trying to improve their skills and opportunities. That's why we offer a safe space for them to bring their young children to the classes. This allows them to attend and creates a sense of community among the mothers and their young ones.

We are proud to have helped these 20 mothers gain confidence and improve their English skills. By equipping them with this valuable tool, we are not only helping them communicate better in their everyday lives but also opening up doors for potential job opportunities and social connections. We are committed to continuing our free conversational classes and supporting these amazing mothers in their journey towards self-improvement.

Students

Our doors are always open to students passionate about making a difference in the lives of others. We offer volunteering opportunities for students to get involved in various projects and initiatives to empower and uplift the youth in our community. By volunteering with us, students can gain valuable experience, develop new skills, and positively impact their community.

In addition to volunteering, our centre welcomes student journalists interested in covering stories and issues related to the youth in our community. We believe in the power of media to raise awareness and encourage positive change. By providing a platform for student journalists, we aim to amplify the voices of the youth and bring attention to their concerns and struggles.

Through our collaboration with students, we aim to create a strong network of individuals who are dedicated to promoting the well-being of young people. By working together, we can provide support, resources, and opportunities for the youth to thrive and reach their full potential.

Rising Cost of Living: Empowering our communities

This project has embarked on a unique journey, taking a distinct approach to combat the rising cost of living. It has not only extended its advocacy and support to families but has also honed in on individuals in deprived communities and those who encounter barriers to accessing support. This innovative strategy has paved the way for better opportunities for these individuals, sparking curiosity and engagement among stakeholders.

Addressing the rising cost of living is a complex task. It requires a comprehensive approach that goes beyond just budgeting for food and managing resources. This project has recognised this and provided support in various areas, including financial literacy, job skills development, and access to affordable housing options.

Thank you to the women who have attended; we have had 15 women participate in the project. This project has not just provided practical skills; it has empowered individuals. It has fostered a supportive network that links them to various resources. We have witnessed a remarkable surge in self-sufficiency among participants and a significant reduction in financial stress within these communities. This inspiring transformation is a testament to the project's effectiveness and potential.

"This project has been a game-changer for me and my family. The workshops taught us how to budget and manage our limited income efficiently. We now have more control over our finances and feel empowered to make better choices. Additionally, through the advocacy provided by this project, we were able to access additional support like affordable housing options and job training programs. It has truly transformed our lives."



Community Centre Continued

Community Centre Outcomes:

BCBN

Thank you to Better Community Business Network for allowing us to provide 100 meals weekly to the most vulnerable from August 2022 to FEBRUARY 2023. In total, 2600 meals were provided

With this partnership's help, we could reach individuals and families who were struggling to put food on the table. These meals not only provided much-needed sustenance but also brought a sense of hope and care to those who received them.

We are extremely grateful for Better Community Business Network's support and commitment to improving the lives of those in our community. This partnership not only helped those in need but also raised awareness about the importance of supporting those who are less fortunate.



Co-Op Food Donations Received

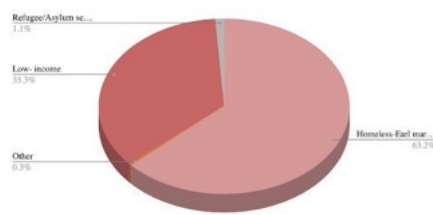


Figure 1. Distribution of food from Coop

Food has been distributed to 889 people and 380 families

KFC Donations

43 families have been supported with KFC donations, they all have been from low income based families

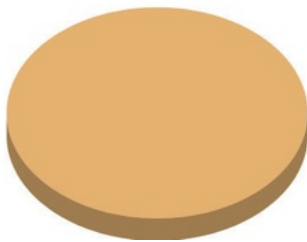


Figure 2. 100% of the donation has been given to low income based families

Tesco/Fairshare Donations

Through donations received from Tesco we have supported 2385 people 743 families

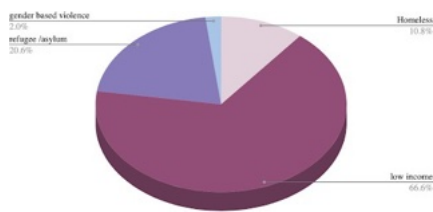


Figure 3. Distribution of food from Fairshare

Advocacy and Support

We are proud to have supported 484 individuals through our advocacy and support services. This number, which is nearly double the support we provided last year, is a stark reminder of the increasing need for our services. It underscores the urgency and importance of the work we do.

The figures are a testament to the unwavering dedication and hard work of our volunteers and coordinators. Their efforts have not only expanded our services but also reached a significantly larger number of people in need. This figure also underscores our comprehensive approach to youth violence, addressing the immediate needs of vulnerable families. Regrettably, the number also reflects the growing demand for advocacy and support services due to the harsh reality of the rising cost of living. This underscores the significance of your contributions and the need for continued support.

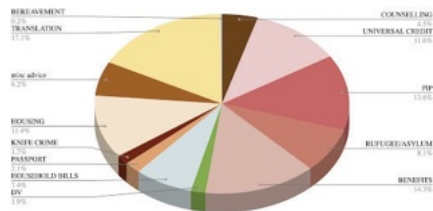


Figure 4. Advocacy services breakdown

Thank You

We would like to thank everyone who has helped build and grow this centre, from our coordinators and volunteers who have dedicated their time and effort, to the people who have donated clothes and other items, and to those who have donated online. Your contributions, whether big or small, have made a significant difference, and we would like to say thank you so much.

Your generosity allows us to continue our mission of helping individuals and families in our community. We are grateful for your contributions and are constantly working to ensure that your donations are used efficiently and effectively. Your kindness and willingness to give is heart-warming, and we cannot thank you enough.

Together, we are transforming lives and creating a positive impact in our community. Your donations have not only helped us establish a safe and welcoming space, but they have also directly improved the quality of life for those in need. Your contributions are making a tangible difference, and we are deeply grateful for that.

We are overwhelmed by the generosity and kindness of our donors, and we promise to continue using your donations to bring about positive change in our community. Your support helps us provide for those in need and instils hope and positivity in their lives.

We want to emphasise the importance of your continued support and involvement. Your contributions are not just financial but also bring hope and positivity to the lives of those we serve. We are truly grateful for your kindness and generosity and look forward to continuing our journey towards a more inclusive society. Your ongoing support is crucial in sustaining our efforts and making a lasting impact.



Events

Syrian & Turkish Campaign

On February 6, 2023, a 7.8-magnitude earthquake rocked southeast Turkey near the Syrian border, with thousands of aftershocks. In Syria, the earthquake exacerbated the effects of the ongoing war, deepening the crisis for approximately 3.7 million children.

Mums United launched a fundraising campaign to support relief efforts. Their online platform encouraged their members and followers to donate whatever they could to help those in need.



<https://youtu.be/QeRPA-gg5iU?si=UwdfuaCyWmhNqJBK>

Community Partnership open day / Equality & Diversity Event

Bringing different services across the community to showcase their employment support programmes, including voluntary /charity organisations and South Yorkshire Fire service. At these events, we have set up our stall and engaged with attendees, providing information about our organisation and our work tackling youth violence. We have also highlighted the various programs and resources available to support young people in the community.

Our presence at these events has allowed us to reach a wider audience and connect with individuals who may have yet to hear about our organisation. We have also been able to network and build strong partnerships with other organisations and services in the community, such as voluntary and charity organisations and the South Yorkshire Fire Service.

This collaborative approach allows us to work together towards a shared goal of promoting the well-being and safety of young people in our community. By showcasing the range of

support available, we can reach more young people and provide them with the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.

We also use these events as an opportunity to raise awareness about issues such as equality and diversity and educate attendees on how they can play a role in preventing youth violence. Having an open and inclusive dialogue can promote positive attitudes and create a more cohesive and supportive community.

Our presence at these events also allows us to gather feedback and suggestions from the community, which helps us continuously improve and adapt our programs to meet better the needs of the people we serve.

Our hope is that, through these stalls at council-led events, we can continue to make a positive impact and bring about positive change in our community.



La Luna social Club

Thank you to La Luna Social Club for raising money for our centre. We appreciate your generosity over just over £800 was raised.



Welcoming Cultures

Mums United participated in the Welcoming Cultures Event, a vibrant gathering where individuals from diverse cultures converged to share their unique narratives. This event, a platform for storytelling, fostered a sense of Unity and togetherness, reconnecting businesses with institutions, young people, and communities.



Mums United held a stall showcasing their work; members also spoke about their culture and heritage through written word poetry. At the event, Mums United members forged personal connections with individuals who broadened their cultural horizons profoundly and personally. Through engaging conversations and captivating performances, attendees delved into diverse customs, traditions, and ways of life, creating an atmosphere of inclusion and appreciation.



The Welcoming Cultures Event was not just a gathering for Mums United, but a platform to reconnect with our cultural roots and celebrate our heritage. By sharing our stories and participating in traditional activities, we not only instilled a deep sense of pride in our culture but also advocated for its preservation for future generations. This event was a testament to the resilience and richness of our cultural identity.

Here is the link to performance pieces by Mums United

https://youtu.be/SZ5nqm_qO_o?feature=shared



Sharrow Festival

The Sharrow Festival is an annual event that brings together Sharrow's vibrant and diverse community, a neighbourhood in Sheffield, England. This lively festival takes place every Summer and celebrates everything related to the community, from food and music to arts and culture.



One of the highlights of the Sharrow festival is the presence of local organisations and charities dedicated to serving the community. Mums United has participated in the festival since 2018. During the festival, Mums United sets up a

stall, a hub of information and support for young people and parents. Their stall is a platform to raise awareness about the potential community exploitation risks. Through engaging conversations and informative materials, the organisation strives to equip and educate individuals and families about the perils of exploitation and how to safeguard themselves.

However, Mums United also understands the importance of creating a fun and inclusive atmosphere at the festival. Along with informative materials, they offer light-hearted activities such as henna and tombola to engage and entertain individuals of all ages. This ensures that their stall is accessible and appealing to a diverse range of people within the community.



By actively participating in the Sharrow festival, Mums United reaches out to the community and spreads awareness about important issues. It also creates a positive and engaging presence showcasing their valuable work. Their stall serves as a welcoming and informative hub for individuals and families, providing support and guidance and promoting unity and belonging within the community.

Decolonisation of Medicine - September

Dr Annabel Sowemimo spoke about her new book at a community event, Mums United Professor Shahd Salha performed her poem talking about the plight of women and the strength we find within.



Yorkshire integration Festival - October

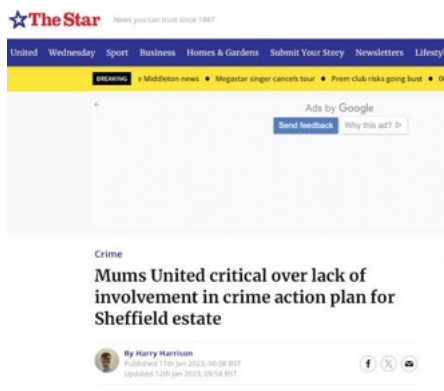
The Yorkshire Integration Festival returned to Sheffield for its second year. This event is a free, family-friendly event, it is a celebration of the positive impact made by migrants and refugees in Yorkshire and Humber, showcasing the diverse range of cultures and customs that make our region a special place to live.

The young people from our MUSYC (Mums United Sheffield Youth Club) took part at the festival, they performed written work Poetry.



Awards & Media

Jan 2023



Mums United critical over lack of involvement in crime action plan for Sheffield estate
[Link](#)

Feb 2023



[Link](#)

March 2023



Covid Memorial

The following is a You Tube link which demonstrates the great work that the club carried out.

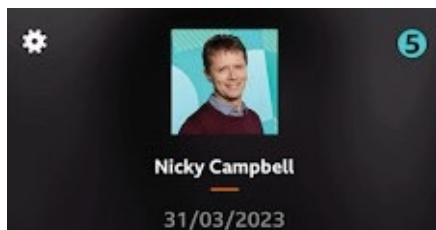
[Link](#)



Welcoming Culture Event
Mums united perform at the event

[Link](#)

April 2023



Mums United joined Nicky Campbell on BBC Radio Live, discussing organised crime. Chair and founder Sahira Irshad spoke about the culture of apathy and how organised crime is entrenched within the fabric of our communities; intergenerational drug dealing has become a norm and part of the subculture of society. Sahira spoke about how important prevention is in ensuring young people are informed about the decisions that they make

[Link](#)

July 2023

Mums United chair Sahira Irshad and trustee Professor Shahd Salha took part in the Not by Choice report findings. The purpose of this report is to examine the impact of COVID-19 on inequalities with the view to developing recommendations for responding to such events in the future.

[Link](#)

Sahira Irshad - chair/founder of, Mums United took part along with many local community campaigners to talk about her experiences of local campaigns in Sheffield and the relationship to local democracy and governance. The report was publicised In April 2024

The findings of the report can be found in the link below:

<https://researchforaction.uk/democratising-governance-report>

November 2023



Sheffield Star visited the community centre ahead of the opening of Steel Champs Academy - Our community gym

[Link](#)

Trustees' Report and Accounts
for the year ended 30 November 2023



Annual Report

Contents

35	Legal and administration information
36-37	Reports of trustees and directors
38	Statements of financial activities
39	Balance Sheet
40	Notes part of the financial Statements

Annual Report Continued

Legal and administrative information

Trustees	Sahira Irshad (Chair)
	Shahd Salha (Trustee)
	Chloe Blood (Trustee)
Company Number	1192570
Registered Office	Sharrow Community Forum South View Road Sheffield, S7 1DB

Statements of financial activities for the year ended 30 November 2023

Objectives

Mums United is a registered charity which started 4 years ago as a community group. I am pleased to say that we have grown from a group of 6 to 80, targeting areas in Sheffield for outreach, engagement and intervention work that are characterised as the most deprived LSOAs (lower-layer super output areas) by the Government in its Index of Multiple Deprivation. These areas are Burngreave, Spital Hill, Heeley, Netheredge, Sharrow, and Wicker.

Achievements and performance

Our Mission Statement is to listen, engage, act, raise awareness and never give up hope for our members. We provide grassroots solutions to the rise in youth violence, in knife and gun crime and child drug exploitation. For the past three years, our dedicated membership of volunteers and professionals have been campaigning for greater action on rising crime among some young people in some of the most deprived communities in the city of Sheffield. We believe that the solutions to the problems that afflict our communities must come from the communities themselves. Our work has been recognised nationally as we have been recognised as the 1749th "Point of Light" organisation across the UK.

This year alone there have been over 13 stabbings in Sheffield and over 18 shootings. Sheffield has been labelled as one of 21 'violence hotspots'.

In order to address this we have been creating positive pathways for young people, mothers whose voice is rarely heard and when is heard no one listens. We need to empower our communities, build strength and resilience from within so that we can ensure our children will grow into healthy ambitious adults.

In the past financial year we have continued to raise awareness about the impact of youth violence, we have continued to grow as a charity, we have increased our group membership and have mothers from different cultural diverse backgrounds engaging and participating in our work. It is this diversity that gives us the strength in changing the narrative for our members.

We are mothers who have "lived experiences", our trauma informed approach focuses on prevention, we look at the outcomes, which is youth violence but also ensure that the other side of the spectrum is focused on, how young people change their trajectory towards gangs, we ensure protective factors are in place so that the young people know there is a safe place for them to come. Activities delivered include:

- Engaging young people in sport and culture as a means for self-expression to counter the rise in youth violence.
- Focusing on the well-being, building confidence and resilience of young people.
- Creating projects where mothers and young people can engage in safe open dialogue.
- Supporting positive change in the wellbeing of young people and adults who are at risk.
- Focusing on the wellbeing of mothers, identifying the trauma and working with mothers to find the power in them to enable change to take place.
- The Charitable Bank has brought into focus the poverty that exists and the vulnerabilities of families, how their vulnerabilities are exploited by local gangs. Through the Charitable bank we not only focus on providing food, we provide clothes and toys to vulnerable families and individuals. It is also a place where young people and mothers can develop their business and administrative skills.

Annual Report Continued

We would like to thank our funders : South Yorkshire Foundation , National lottery, Graves Trust, SWC-Scurrah Wainwright Charity, Sharrow Community Forum, Magic grants, Sheffield City Council for funding our projects.

Thank you to all the mothers and the young people who have come to the clubs, local schools who have supported the charitable bank and our projects, our mentors who deliver the workshops.

Risk Management

The Trustees actively review the major risks, which the charity faces on regular basis and believe that maintaining reserves at current levels, combined with an annual review of the controls over key financial systems, will provide sufficient resources in the events of adverse conditions. The trustees have also examined other operational and business risks faced by the charity and confirm that they have established systems to mitigate the significant risks.

Trustees' Responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

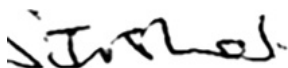
The Trustees' are required by charity commission to prepare financial statements for each financial year

- a) Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- b) Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- c) State whether the policies adopted are in accordance with the Charity Act
- d) Prepare the financial statements on going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the charity will continue in operation

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records, which disclose with

Approval

This report was approved by the trustees on 26th September 2023 and signed on its behalf.



Sahira Irshad
Chair

Statements of financial activities for the year ended 30 November 2023

Income & Expenditure	2023	2022
Restricted	78,716	120,494
Unrestricted	20,347	4,822
	99,063	125,316
Resources Expenses		
Food Package	907	1,784
Repairs and maintenance	41,906	37,482
Rates	557	378
Charitable donations	2,186	
Training seminars	7,734	27,236
Printing	3,295	3,595.69
Rent	9,600	-
Light and heat	2,446	-
Subscriptions	1,045	571.81
Other office costs	1,454	1,330.00
Vehicle running costs	135	-
Insurance	514	-
Advertising	3,604	2,453
Website costs	20	762
Event management & equipment	3,528	15,904
Accounting fee	250	250
Wages and salaries	22,992	4,404
Travel Expense	3,836	4,919
Volunteers expenses	35	1,019
Sundry Expense	1,464	340.56
Total Resources Expenses	107,506	102,430
Net income from resources	(8,442)	22,886
less - depreciation	2,003	<u>371</u>
bal b/f	(10,446)	22,515
bal c/f	<u>37,513</u>	<u>14,998</u>
	27,067	37,513

Annual Report Continued

Balance Sheet as at 30 November 2023

	NOTE	2023 £	2022 £
Fixed assets	1	8,385	1,482
Current assets	2	19,613	37,080
less - current liabilities	3	558	1,050
Net Current Assets		<u>19,055</u>	<u>36,030</u>
Net Assets		<u>27,439</u>	<u>37,512</u>
Capital account	4	<u>37,513</u>	<u>14,998</u>
Profit and loss Account	5	<u>(10,446)</u>	<u>22,515</u>
Shareholder's Funds		<u>27,067</u>	<u>37,513</u>

Notes to balance sheet as at 30 November 2023

1 FIXED ASSETS	Fixtures & Fittings	Computer Equipment	Total
Cost			
As at 1 December 2022	1,322	531	1,853
Additions	8,535		8,535
As at 30 November 2023	<u>9,857</u>	531	<u>10,388</u>
Depreciation			
As at 1 December 2022	264	106	371
Provided during the period	1,919	84	2,003
As at 30 November 2023	<u>1,919</u>	<u>84</u>	<u>2,003</u>
Net Book Value			
As at 30 November 2023	7,938	446	8,385
As at 1 December 2022	<u>1,058</u>	<u>425</u>	<u>1,482</u>
2 Current Assets	2023	2022	
Cash at Bank	19,584	37,053	
Cash in Hand	29	27	
	<u>19,613</u>	<u>37,080</u>	
3 Current Liabilities			
Other creditors	1,300	1,050	
Other taxes and social security	(742)	-	
	<u>558</u>	<u>1,050</u>	
4 Capital Account & Equity			
Bal b/f	37,513	14,998	
5 Profit and loss Account	(10,446)	22,515	
	<u>27,067</u>	<u>37,513</u>	



Report to the trustees/
members of

Mums United

On accounts for the
year ended
Charity No

30 November 2023
1192570

Set out on pages

33 to 40

Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 30/11/2023.

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed

N Qureshi

Name

Nisar Qureshi

Relevant professional qualification

ICAEW

Address:

Unit 9 Twelve o'clock court
21 Attercliffe Road
Sheffield
S4 7WW

