

ACTIVE SISTERS BRISTOL



A test-and-learn approach to understanding what enables Muslim women and girls to be more active

SITUATION

An inequality in physical activity participation among Muslim women and girls.

TASK

Understand why this was happening — the barriers, motivations and enablers.

ACTION

LISTEN → CO-DESIGN → TEST → LEARN

Surveys • focus groups • community conversations
Engagement with faith leaders & local providers
Test-and-learn physical activity pilots

THE SHIFT

From asking “How do we get people to be more active?”

to asking “What would make physical activity feel possible, relevant and welcoming?”



**Bristol Health
Partners**

A community-informed approach: listen first, then test what could work.





Active Sisters

BRISTOL

Empowering Muslim Women & Girls Through Physical Activity

LISTEN



- Stakeholder Surveys
- Mosque Engagement
- Understanding Needs

LEARN



- Focus Groups
- Community Voices
- Identifying Barriers

ACT



- Pilot Activities
- Testing New Sessions

OUTCOMES



Increased Participation



Culturally Inclusive Activities



Stronger Partnerships



Health & Wellbeing

From Insight to Action Supporting Women & Girls to Get Moving

LISTEN

Barriers to Muslim Women and Girls Accessing Physical Activity Programmes

Insights from stakeholders on the key challenges that can limit participation.

1 Cultural or faith considerations

Some Muslim women and girls prefer opportunities that respect their cultural and faith needs, including:

- Women-only sessions
- Female instructors
- Privacy from male participants or observers
- Accommodation for modest clothing and religious practices



2 Cost

The cost of taking part can be a barrier, including:

- Session fees
- Membership charges
- Venue hire costs
- Specialist clothing or equipment
- Childcare expenses
- Travel costs



3 Limited women-only provision

There are not enough women-only opportunities available, which limits participation for women and girls who prefer or require these environments.



4 Lack of female instructors

The absence of female coaches, instructors or activity leaders can discourage participation, particularly where cultural or faith preferences influence choices.



5 Confidence and comfort

Some women and girls may lack confidence in joining unfamiliar activities, particularly if they:

- Feel underrepresented
- Are new to physical activity
- Are concerned about their fitness level
- Do not feel comfortable in existing provision



6 Childcare and caring responsibilities

Caring responsibilities, including childcare and looking after family members, can make it difficult for women to attend activities regularly.



7 Lack of awareness of existing programmes

Some Muslim women and girls may not be aware of the physical activity programmes and opportunities already available in their local area.



8 Availability of suitable venues

Venues need to be accessible, welcoming and culturally appropriate, and able to provide privacy where required, such as:

- Community centres
- Schools
- Faith-based settings
- Leisure facilities with dedicated women-only spaces



9 Transport and locality

Distance to activities, limited public transport options, travel time and the cost of travel can all affect participation, especially when suitable provision is not available within the local community.



Addressing these barriers through culturally informed, accessible and inclusive provision can help more Muslim women and girls take part in and benefit from physical activity.



LEARN

What Women Told Us	How We Responded
Women wanted accessible, low-pressure activity	Test a walking challenge
Social connection was important	Build in group support and WhatsApp encouragement
Women wanted structured exercise	Test Strength & Flexibility
Women wanted more opportunities to play sport	Test Netball
Women wanted choice and variety	Explore additional activities
Women wanted women-only environments	Prioritise appropriate female-led provision
Location was important	Use accessible community venues
Women wanted flexibility	Avoid unnecessary long-term commitments
Accountability could help motivation	Build in regular check-ins
Community members wanted to contribute	Explore leadership and training pathways

ACT



STEP TOGETHER CHALLENGE

STARTS TOMORROW!

WEEK 1: INTENTION (NIYYAH)

"The most beloved deeds to Allah are those that are consistent, even if they are small." — Bukhari & Muslim

HOW IT WORKS

- Set a step goal that fits YOUR life,
- Track steps on your phone or watch
- Stay motivated through our WhatsApp group
- Celebrate consistency & progress

EARN POINTS EACH WEEK

- Submission sent – 5
- Screenshot uploaded – 5
- Goal achieved – 10
- Improved from last week – 10
- Encouraged others – 5

Weekly Max: 35 4-Week Max: 140
Overall Max: 160

SUNDAY SUBMISSION

- Submit your step total
- Upload your screenshot
- Share if you met your goal
- Note any improvements
- Encourage others

**TOGETHER, WE MOVE.
TOGETHER, WE GROW.**

May Allah bless our journey with health, strength & sisterhood.



Strength & Flexibility

4-week block of strength and flexibility sessions, led by professional instructor Subitha

- Women Only
- Beginner Friendly, All Levels Welcome
- £5 for full 4-week block of sessions
- Limited spaces

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST HERE:

Scan the QR or use link to join
<https://forms.office.com/e/YLLuk0krjn?origin=lprLink>
Copy link

CONTACT: Raheema 07877592078 | Samina 07775630656

Let's move, grow stronger together! ❤️

REGISTRATION REQUIRED – WE'LL NOTIFY YOU IF YOU GET A SPACE



ACTIVE SISTERS BRISTOL NETBALL TRIAL SESSIONS

FOR SISTERS, BY SISTERS

Join us for 3 fun, friendly netball sessions in a supportive and welcoming environment.

LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE

MINIMUM AGE: 12 YEARS

DATES

- Thursday 25th June | 6pm–7pm
- Thursday 2nd July | 6pm–7pm
- Thursday 9th July | 6pm–7pm

VENUE

Hillfields Community Garden
Hillfields Park Community Centre
Thicket Avenue
Bristol
BS16 4EH

COST

£10 for all 3 sessions
Payable in full at the first session.

BRING A FRIEND OFFER

£15 for two people for all 3 sessions.

ABOUT YOUR SESSION LEADERS

LEADER 1

- Southwest Regional netball player for Bath Cougars Adults
- Captained school teams and vice-captained regional team
- Playing netball since age 12
- Competed at Nationals, finishing 15th in the country
- Part of Team Bath Academy and South West England Pathway Academy
- Awarded Avon Netball Association Player of the Season twice
- Completed Level 5 Sports Leadership
- Coached and umpired Year 7 teams for 3 seasons

LEADER 2

- Primary school teacher with 20 years' experience
- Led many school netball clubs
- Taken teams to tournaments
- Familiar with netball rules and gameplay
- Eager to support the community and share her passion for netball

LEADER 3

- Played school netball to district level equivalent
- Well versed with netball rules and drills
- Done netball scoring in Avon league matches
- Training and mentoring my daughter and travelling to Netball matches and tournaments for 7 years have given me lots of experience in this field

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

- Scan the QR code to register
- Limited spaces available
- Registration essential

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Samina
07775 630656

Stay Active. Build Confidence. Make Connections.

“The virtual encouragement. Knowing I wasn't alone but had a group with me!”

“Please join in whatever you can. Don't feel nervous, just give it a try. Everyone is very welcoming and there is no judgement”

“Meeting more social, welcoming Muslimah's. I connected with so many sisters!”

What did we learn?

The learning was not only about physical activity — it was about how public health works with communities.



TRUST MATTERS

Established relationships and trusted community connectors were central to engagement, motivation and participation.



CULTURE MATTERS

Language, environment, faith, confidence and practical adaptations can all influence whether an opportunity feels accessible.



CO-DESIGN MATTERS

Working with women and girls helped shape relevant opportunities and strengthened relationships between community and providers.

A KEY LESSON

COMMUNITY-LED ≠ VOLUNTEER-LED

Community-led approaches need investment — time, relationships, resource, support and paid community expertise.

RESULT

A stronger understanding of what enables participation — and practical learning to inform future public health and physical activity provision.

Where do we go from here?

Three priorities for the next stage

SUSTAIN

Clear post-pilot
continuation plan

Keep participants informed

Build on opportunities
already emerging

STRENGTHEN

Community coordination
capacity

Partnerships

Leadership and training
pathways

KEEP LEARNING

Continue test-and-learn

Reach women and girls not
currently engaging

Strengthen longer-term
evaluation