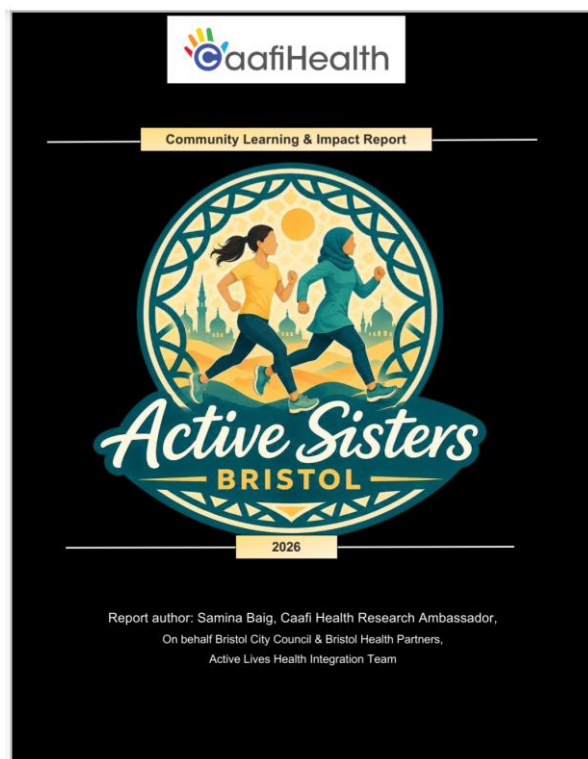




Active Sisters Bristol

Empowering Muslim Women
& Girls Through Physical
Activity

Samina Baig
Health Ambassador - CaafiHealth

The Journey

 **University of BRISTOL**  **NIHR**  **Bristol Biomedical Research Centre**

Are you a parent of a child who attends Quran or Islamic teaching lessons?

We would like to hear your **thoughts** on delivering a healthy eating and physical activity program alongside Islamic teaching for children.



We are running focus groups online. As thanks for time and participation, a gift voucher (Amazon) will be given to the people who take part.

-Interested? Follow the link (.....) to register your interest and one of our researchers will be in touch.

-Need more information? please contact the research team:
nour.alhusein@bristol.ac.uk
Phone: 01174559673

This research is being organised by the NIHR Bristol Biomedical Research Centre (Diet and Physical Activity theme), University of Bristol, in collaboration with the Bradford Institute of Health Research. This study is funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research - Bristol Biomedical Research Centre. <https://www.bristolbiomedical.ac.uk/research/research-projects/healthy-living-in-qualitative-childhood-obesity-with-the-help-of-islamic-religious-settings/>

 **Beezee by maximus**



أمانة Amaana
- Caring for the body as a trust

Get a £50 Amazon voucher when you complete the programme.

A FREE 5-week healthy lifestyle programme for South Asian Muslim mothers

Get involved

 12 June, 19 June, 26 June, 3 July, and 10 July 2025

 Greenbank Masjid, Greenbank Rd, Greenbank, Bristol BS5 6HE

 9:30-10:30am

 Childcare is available

To join the programme you must be:

- ♥ A South Asian Muslim mother
- ♥ Aged 18 years old and above
- ♥ Able to attend all 5 sessions
- ♥ Available to attend sessions in person.

Registration required - sign up today
Email rubana.begum@maximusuk.co.uk to register

 **CaafiHealth**

Community Learning & Impact Report



Active Sisters BRISTOL

2026

Report author: Samina Baig, Caafi Health Research Ambassador,
On behalf Bristol City Council & Bristol Health Partners,
Active Lives Health Integration Team



Partnership & Funding

Commissioned by Bristol
City Council - Public Health

Initiated by Active Lives HIT

Delivered by Samina Baig

Project duration: January
2026 - September 2026



Project Overview

LISTEN



- Stakeholder Surveys
- Mosque Engagement
- Understanding Needs

Listen

- ▶ Stakeholder surveys to understand community needs
- ▶ Mosque engagement and relationship building
- ▶ Understanding barriers to physical activity
- ▶ Identifying opportunities

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



- Focus Groups
- Community Voices
- Identifying Barriers

n Insight to Action Support

Learn

- ▶ Focus groups with Muslim women and girls
- ▶ Capturing community voices and lived experiences
- ▶ Identifying social, cultural, and practical barriers
- ▶ Using feedback to shape project activities

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

From insight → action

Each pilot tested a response to what we heard

Accessible, low-pressure activity

STEP TOGETHER

Walking challenge

Social connection & accountability

WHATSAPP SUPPORT

Encouragement + check-ins

Structured exercise

STRENGTH & FLEXIBILITY

Female-led, beginner-friendly

More opportunities to play sport

NETBALL

Women-only team sport

Choice and variety

PADEL / TENNIS

Explore additional pathways

Pilots being explored

Step Challenge

Strength and Flexibility

Netball

Padel Advocates

Pilates Instructor



ACT

- Pilot Activities

- Testing New Sessions

Act

- ▶ Pilot activities and new physical activity sessions
- ▶ Testing culturally inclusive approaches
- ▶ Encouraging participation and confidence
- ▶ Working collaboratively with community partners

Step Challenge



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.

STEP TOGETHER

2,450,914

steps recorded over four weeks

24 registrations
23 women joined the
WhatsApp group
16 completed all four weeks

Confidence: 6.4 → 8.5 / 10



10 BEFORE 10

10 MINUTES OUTDOORS BEFORE 10AM

*A small step for you,
a big reward from Allah*

OUR BODIES ARE AN **AMANAH** (TRUST)

Taking care of our health is an act of worship.

"Your body has a right over you."
— Sahih Bukhari

**BREATHE
MOVE
REFLECT
THRIVE**

THE BENEFITS OF 10 MINUTES OUTSIDE BEFORE 10AM

BOOSTS MOOD & REDUCES STRESS

INCREASES ENERGY & ALERTNESS

IMPROVES FOCUS & PRODUCTIVITY

FRESH AIR FOR BODY & MIND

SUPPORTS OVERALL WELLBEING

START YOUR DAY THE SUNNAH WAY

Wake up early – a blessed habit.

Step outside – even just 10 minutes.

Feel the barakah in your day.

*Small consistent steps lead to big change.
You've got this, Sister!*

Active Sisters BRISTOL

Stronger Together. Healthier Together.
For Our Deen, Our Dunya & Ourselves.

"And do good; indeed, Allah loves the doers of good."
— Surah Al-Baqarah (2:195)



WEEK 3 THEME:

Gratitude (SHUKR)

"If you are grateful, I will surely increase you."
(Qur'an 14:7)

Gratitude turns what we have into enough and more.

WEEK 3 CHALLENGE

A WEEK OF GRATITUDE IN ACTION

This week, let's focus on being grateful – for our bodies, our health, the people in our lives and every step we can take.

BE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR BODY
Thank your body for what it can do and keep it active.

ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER
Share kind words and support your sisters.

NOTICE THE BLESSINGS
Look for the small things to be grateful for.

CARE FOR YOUR HEALTH
Stay hydrated, eat well and keep moving.

THANK ALLAH EVERY DAY
Gratitude is a form of worship and brings barakah.

OUR WEEK 3 GROUP CHALLENGE

LET'S FILL OUR WEEK WITH **SHUKR**

TOGETHER, LET'S AIM TO:

Say "Alhamdulillah" 100 times every day.

Share your gratitude in the WhatsApp group

Post a photo of something you're grateful for

Encourage a sister and spread positivity

Small Moments Big Barakah

Every step is a blessing.
Every day is an opportunity to say Alhamdulillah.
TOGETHER, WE MOVE. TOGETHER, WE GROW.

DON'T FORGET!
Complete your Week 3 form and upload your screenshot by 7PM on Sunday.

MOVE TOGETHER • INSPIRE TOGETHER • THRIVE TOGETHER • ACTIVE SISTERS BRISTOL



ACTIVE SISTERS BRISTOL

Step Together CHALLENGE

Community Achievements & Reflections

2,450,914

COMMUNITY STEPS
IN JUST FOUR WEEKS!

6.7/10
Average Motivation

7.4/10
Average Wellbeing

8
Sisters who supported one another

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED TOGETHER

Supportive Community

Flexible & Inclusive

Focus on Wellbeing

Sisterhood & Friendship

*"Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves."
— Qur'an 13:11*

Thank you, Sisters, for your dedication and perseverance.
You have made this journey truly special.
Let's keep moving forward together!

ACTIVE SISTERS BRISTOL

Participant Voices from the *Step Together Challenge*

Sisterhood ♥

Every Step Counts ♥

Accountability ♥

Motivation ♥

Consistency ♥

Wellbeing ♥

“ Since starting this step challenge, it’s actually motivated me to get my dad involved too. He’s in his 70s and has diabetes, high blood pressure and a few other health issues, so we’ve been trying to encourage him to walk more for ages. We’ve started going for short evening walks together, and now when I ask him if he wants to go, he’s usually ready before I am! *Alhamdulillah*, it’s been really nice and hopefully beneficial for his health too. ”



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

“ This group definitely helped me with being motivated to go out every day for a walk rather than taking the car. So thank you everyone for assisting me! ”

“ I went from not actively walking to walking every day, even if it meant just 10 minutes. ”

Small steps today
create a healthier,
happier tomorrow ♥

Together, we move. ♥



Strength and flexibility



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
- 
 - ✓ Tuesday 16th June 2026
 - ✓ Tuesday 23rd June 2026
 - ✓ Tuesday 30th June 2026
 - ✓ Tuesday 7th July 2026
-  18:45 – 19:45
-  Fishponds Old Library, Fishponds Road, Bristol, BS16 3UH (Opposite Morrisons)

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST HERE:



Scan the QR or use link to join

<https://forms.office.com/e/YLLuk0krjn?origin=lpLink>

 Copy link

CONTACT: Raheema 0777592078 | Samina 07775630656

Let's move, grow stronger together 

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

STRENGTH & FLEXIBILITY

35

registrations for 15 places

16 participants evaluated
14 reported increased motivation

13 inspired to try other activities

Confidence: 6.8 → 8.5 / 10

ACTIVE SISTERS BRISTOL

Participant Voices from the *Strength & Flexibility* Programme

Stronger ♥

Confidence ♥

Active ♥

Welcoming ♥

No Judgement ♥

Wellbeing ♥

“ Thank you so much for everything. I have been more active in this past year than ever before in my life and they are all new initiatives. I’ve tried new things I didn’t even know existed and enjoyed it more than I could have expected. As someone who has often been very loathe to any kind of movement and generally tired, fatigued and stressed, it has been a very positive change and I would find it difficult to continue if these type of ladies sessions advertised in our community weren’t running. ”

“ Timing was excellent. Stretching after a long day was rewarding. The venue is excellent, clean with all necessities. The instructor was very friendly, highly knowledgeable and experienced with people of different backgrounds, levels and needs. ”

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



Stronger Together ♥



Netball Trials



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

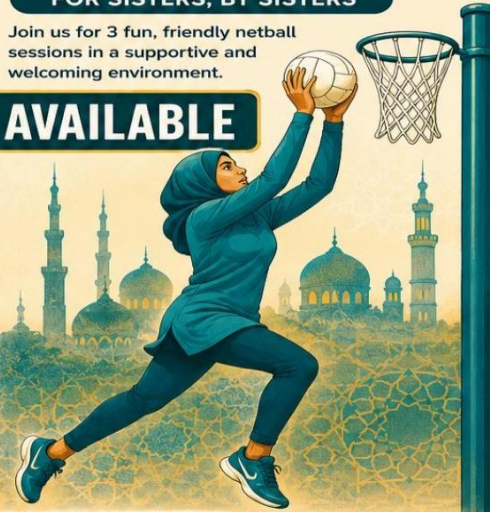
Hillfields Community Garden
Hillfields Park Community Centre
Thicket Avenue
Bristol
BS16 4EH

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.

NETBALL

33

registrations for ~25 places

12/15 likely or definitely to continue

14 wanted weekly or more frequent sessions

Confidence: 6.7 → 9.2 / 10

ACTIVE SISTERS BRISTOL

Participant Voices from the *Trial Netball Programme*

Women-Only

Confidence

Sisters

Community

Wellbeing

“ Yes, definitely. For me, the women-only and private environment made all the difference. It allowed me to feel comfortable, meet other sisters, and get involved in sport without worrying about being judged or feeling out of place. These sessions have helped motivate me to become more active after many years and have given me the *confidence* to try new activities. I think many Muslim women and girls would benefit from having more opportunities like this, as they create a *welcoming* space to improve both physical and mental *wellbeing* while building connections within the community. ”

“ Meeting more social, welcoming, Muslimahs. I connected with so many sisters! ”

“ DEFINITELY – as Muslim women due to modesty reasons and mixed venues we miss out on sports and having fun and improving our health. These types of activities don't just help with health but improve mental health and give a sense of community. ”

— Stronger Together —



OUTCOMES

 Increased Participation

 Culturally Inclusive Activities

 Stronger Partnerships

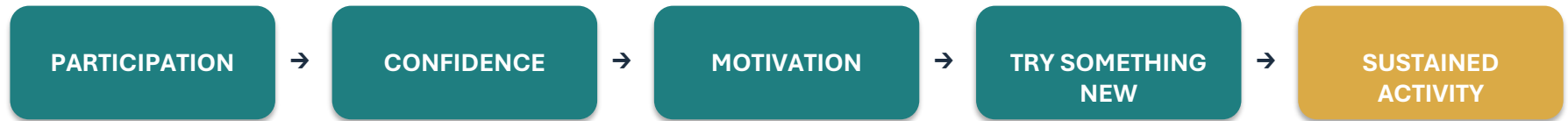
 Health & Wellbeing

Expected Outcomes

- ▶ Increased participation in physical activity
- ▶ Culturally inclusive activities across Bristol
- ▶ Stronger community partnerships
- ▶ Improved health and wellbeing outcomes

The Ripple Effect

Participation can become a pathway into something more



- Step challenge participant → hiking group
- Women exploring netball leadership/coaching
- Padel and tennis opportunities
- Pilates training pathways
- Women encouraging, mentoring and mobilising others

What has the project taught us?

Six messages for future delivery

RELATIONSHIPS

Trust creates engagement.

CHOICE

Different women need different routes into activity.

CULTURE

Cultural inclusion goes beyond simply making a session women-only.

SOCIAL CONNECTION

Encouragement, accountability and sisterhood can support participation.

PRACTICAL INCLUSION

Cost, location, timing, privacy and accessibility all matter.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Coordination, communication and relationship-building are real delivery costs.

COMMUNITY LED DOES NOT MEAN VOLUNTEER LED

Opportunities?



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

How can Bristol build on what has been started?

2,450,914

STEPS

But the real achievement cannot be measured in steps alone.

CONFIDENCE • CONNECTION • COMMUNITY

LISTEN. LEARN. MOVE. TOGETHER.