

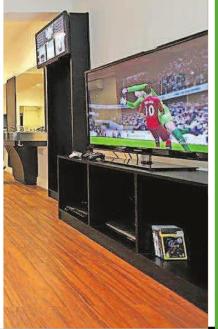


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CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF BSC

A local success story

pswich's Bangladeshi Support Centre (BSC) was established in 1998 by a group of volunteers. This forwardthinking group included the late Azizur Rahman, AKM Mahbubul Alam, the late Jill Stewart, Junab Robbani and many others Boshor Ali and Mahbub Alam Shamim were also two of the founders of BSC. The Centre's current trustees include Adrian Barney, Julie Begum, Moshud Ali, Koysor Miah and Manik

"This was an important initiative that my colleagues and I undertook", said Boshor, Chair of BSC, "in the late 1990s, we wanted to make a difference to our communities by engaging in a range of initiatives and activities, especially with the intention of empowering children, young people and women.'

Since then, BSC has come a long way, planning and delivering

BSC Multicultural Services is celebrating its 20th birthday this year, marking two decades of supporting and engaging the local community

a range of projects for the benefit of not only the Bangladeshi community, but the wider community, too. "We started with a small grant of £250 from Suffolk County Council and we have not looked back," said Mahbub, who has served as a treasurer since the beginning of BSC

Many other people have served on BSC's Board of Trustees during the last 20 years, including Abdul Momin Khan (Liton), Mohammed Moksood Ali, Sajjad Miah, Monwara Ali, Kohinoor Begum, Fotik Miah and the late Ian Paul Burnett. 'We particularly want to pay tribute

to those of our trustees who have since passed away', said Mahbub, who is also a local businessman.

"I have very fond memories of being a small team at the beginning, but as we managed to secure more funding, it was possible to recruit part-time staff to plan and deliver the projects,' recalled Boshor, who was Vice-Chair at the time.

Some of BSC's memorable projects included a Training Project funded by the European Social Fund and Learning and Skills Council (LSC). This was successfully delivered in partnership with Suffolk ACRE, SAVO and CSV Media, for which the LSC offered a bonus to BSC. Many local residents will also be familiar with the annual BIG Multicultural Festival and the Suffolk BME Business Awards two other initiatives organised by

"People think we have a big team at BSC," said Boshor, "but in reality we operate with a handful of trustees, part-time staff, many volunteers, supporters and partners. We want to acknowledge everyone's contribution, particularly our funders – local, regional and national. We would not be here without their on-going support. Thank you.'

Increasingly, BSC's work has been recognised locally and nationally, having collected many awards and trophies. "We have competed with some of the best community organisations from across the country," recalled Mahbub, "and I am delighted to say we received the best



BSC Treasurer Mahub Alam Shamim and Chair Boshor Ali

Picture: CHRIS GROVER

community organisation in the UK from Channel S in London. BSC was also invited by Her Majesty The Queen to her Diamond Jubilee Garden Party in 2012. A visit from HRH Prince Edward was equally uplifting for

BSC staff, volunteers and clients

"To top things up," said Boshor, "earlier this year we received the Community Organisation of the Year award from the High Sheriff



BSC Multicultural Services regularly organises an array of inclusive community events, which prove popular with people from all backgrounds

Picture: SARAH LUCY BROWN





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CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF BSC

Left, The BSC Team (Left to right): Boshor

The centre continues to serve the community under its new name of **BSC Multicultural** Services, offering vital services to over 50 different nationalities

angladeshi Support Centre is now BSC Multicultural Services, with a whole new focus to reach out to all communities across Ipswich and Suffolk.

This small but incredibly active and busy organisation is run by their dedicated trustees, several part-time staff and many volunteers of diverse backgrounds. However, the staff are quick to add that this would not have been possible without the on-going support of BSC's generous funders, partners and well-wishers.

According to Shayra Begum and Mohammed Alam, both centre managers: "BSC strives to provide services to people of more than 50 nationalities in Ipswich and beyond, thus reflecting the gradual cultural changes in Ipswich. In addition to serving long-standing communities, we welcome new ones like Turkish, Kurdish, south Indian, Romanian, Lithuanian, African and Polish.

Mojlum Khan, who is a funding and development manager, said: 'We would not be here had it not been for our trustees, staff, volunteers, funders and supporters. On this special occasion we want to pay tribute to them all."

Mr Alam started work at BSC



delighted to share his memories opened its doors to clients. Now, BSC boasts no less than a dozen awards from local, regional and national organisations for their outstanding contribution and achievements. "Our latest award," added Mr Khan, "is the Suffolk Voluntary Organisation of the Year for Inspiring Young People, presented by the High Sheriff.

According to Shayra, "Society

to play its part in facilitating a culture of respect, tolerance and coexistence.'

Tina Ali and Noman Siddiqui are BSC's finance and outreach officers, respectively. "It has been an honour for me to be a part of the BSC team", said Tina, "and make a difference and I am really looking forward to BSC's 20th celebration on 24 November." Noman nodded in agreement. He

number of clients of diverse background.

"I really enjoy working directly with people at the grassroots level and for this I want to thank BSC for giving me this opportunity,' said Noman.

Having recently rebranded, BSC is now looking forward to the future. The staffs were very hopeful and enthusiastic. "We have several new projects in the

we look forward to outreaching into different communities for the benefit of

BSC will be celebrating its twentieth anniversary at Trinity Park on 24 November 2019. To find out how you can get involved or help BSC, please contact 01473 400081 or visit www. bscmulticulturalservices.org.uk

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Multicultural projects for all

ver the last 20 years, BSC has planned and delivered many projects, both small and large, for the benefit of Ipswich and Suffolk's diverse communities. Currently, people of more than 50 different nationalities access and enjoy BSC services and projects. Here, we take a look at just a few of the centre's valuable projects.

SUPPORT SERVICES DROP-IN

BSC started operating with just one project, namely the weekly Support Services Drop-in. The purpose of this project was to provide one-to-one guidance and support to disadvantaged and vulnerable people in Ipswich and Suffolk, especially those of Bangladeshi origin. The office was opened for a few hours a week but through word-of-mouth the number of people seeking help and support steadily increased. Once additional funding was secured, BSC office hours were increased to 2 days a week. A few years later, this was increased to 3 days a week to meet the growing demand.

As more and more ethnic minority people moved to Ipswich, BSC naturally became the first point of contact for many growing Kurdish, Turkish, South Indian, African and Eastern European people. As a result, the number of people coming to BSC for help continued to grow, and the office was consequently opened 5 days a week. Our Support Workers deal with around 2000 cases annually, with people of more than 50 different nationalities benefitting from the centre's services. In total, we have handled more than 30,000 cases since BSC was established.

BSC's initiatives offer a helping hand to many

TRAINING PROJECT

This project was established soon after the inauguration of BSC in 1998. Trustees, staff and volunteers of BSC were aware that there was an urgent need to organise a range of capacity building trainings and workshops in order to upskill BME people who were at the time working mainly in catering (restaurants and takeaways), retail (shops and markets) and manufacturing (local factories). One of the highlights was the GET IT ON Project which, although funded by European Social Fund and Learning and Skills Council, was delivered by BSC in partnership with several other organisations. This enabled BSC to set-up an IT Training Suite to deliver in-house technology training (basic, intermediate and advance levels).

CARERS PROJECT

This project was set up in partnership with Ipswich Borough Council to identify and support BME carers and cared-for citizens. This one-year pilot enabled BSC to identify more than 30 BME carers and cared-for individuals in Ipswich, which subsequently enabled us to develop this project with further with funding from central government via Suffolk County Council. As a result, we were able to identify and support more than 80 BME carers and cared-for citizens over several years, including outreaching into Lowestoft, Bury St Edmunds,



Sudbury and Suffolk Coastal.

The carers and cared-for individuals really valued the respite breaks organised by our part-time Project Officers including Health Walks in the Park, information events aimed at Carers and Assessments for Further Support (in partnership with Suffolk Family Carers). More

than 100 carers and cared-for people have benefitted from this project.

HEALTH AWARENESS & PREVENTION PROJECT

This project was developed in 2008 in partnership with NHS Suffolk, Public Health and National Social Marketing Centre (London) to raise awareness of health issues in the BME communities in Suffolk (especially among Bangladeshi people). Through a series of health events, we highlighted issues that affected BME people, focusing on preventing heart disease, diabetics, gastric and blood pressure. Hundreds of people



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CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF BSC



attended the events and provided positive feedback.

This project became so successful that NHS England featured our project as one of the three most interesting and innovative initiatives in the country. BSC was invited to London for the launch of the brochure which provided a

detailed overview of our project. NSMC also featured our project in their 'Lighting the Beacon' booklet which was distributed nationally, thus providing more recognition for this project.

Again, towards the end of 2018, we linked up with Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG to continue this work and reinforce the message

BSC provides vital IT training for BME citizens



Photos: BSC

of health and wellbeing within the BME communities in Suffolk.

SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOL

The BSC Supplementary School was established in 2014 with the support of Lloyds TSB Foundation and Suffolk County Council. Currently, it works with young people of more than 20 different nationalities who not only experience educational and economic disadvantages but also face social, cultural and language barriers. This project offers the following services:

1) 'Saturday School' and 'Homework Club' provides disadvantaged young people additional support in English, Maths and Science, and is led by qualified teachers and supported by volunteers. This helps children to improve their knowledge of core subjects, complete homework on time and tackle academic

underperformance at school.

2) 'Sports Club' enables young people to engage in regular recreational activities such as football, badminton, and table

tennis. Prior to this project, many children spent their leisure time playing games on electronic devices or hanging around on street corners. Now more than 200 young people and their families participate in constructive activities, tackling social isolation, promoting integration and reducing incidents of anti-social behaviour.

3) This project has also improved family relationship through parent-child activities (such as Boxing with Dad and Zumba with Mum), thus encouraging parents and children to work as a team. Families canalso attend educational trips, sports days and outings organised by this project.

Funded by BBC Children in Need and supported by Northgate High School, St Helens Primary School, Goals Sports Centre, Ipswich Tigers Badminton Club, Suffolk County Council, Community Action Suffolk and Inspire Suffolk, this project has transformed the lives of hundreds of children and their families for the better.

BEFRIENDING SCHEME

This project was established in 2003 in partnership with Suffolk County Council to provide support to some of Suffolk's most disadvantaged and vulnerable BME elderly people to enable them to stay fit, healthy and independent for as long as possible. Since its inception, the project has regularly engaged elderly people in a range of activities (such as chair-based exercise, healthy walks in the park and winter health awareness events) which the participants really appreciate, especially as many of them had multiple barriers such as language, culture, gender, and health issues.

What's more, the two part-time Project Co-ordinators (male and female) make regular home visits to support the clients who could not visit our office due to disability or related issues. We currently have more than 120 clients on our contact list, but with additional funding, we hope to reach many more people in need



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A Multi-Award-Winning Organisation

Over the years, BSC has picked up a number of awards and accolades for the important work that it does in the local multicultural community

ince its inception in 1998, BSC has received many awards and recognitions for its contribution to community development and the regeneration of Ipswich and Suffolk. Of course, this could not happened without considerable and sustained commitment, dedication and hard work from everyone at BSC including its trustees, staff, volunteers and clients, as well as on-going support from its funders, donors, supporters and partner organisations.

Looking back on its long history, one of the first awards BSC ever received was an ALL-INCLUSIVE FINALIST AWARD from the National Learning and Skills Council in 2005. This was in recognition of its outstanding contribution to upskilling BME people of 20 different nationalities over a period of 3 years, in partnership with SAVO, Suffolk Acre and CSV Media.

Just two years later, BSC was awarded the MATRIX quality standard which was successfully renewed in 2010. In the same year, BSC was recognised by NHS England for its innovative health project in partnership with Suffolk Public Health, Suffolk County Council and National Society Marketing Centre based in London, being hailed as one of 3 outstanding projects in the country. In 2011 BSC was nominated for the 'Best



The One Big Multicultural Festival is a much loved event among Ipswich residents of all backgrounds

Picture: ASHELY PICKERING

Community Organisation of the Year' and an independent panel of judges awarded the accolade to BSC. This was no mean achievement for such a small organisation based far away from the urban centres of London, Birmingham and Manchester, but we were able to put Ipswich on the national map! To top things up, a few months later, Healthy Ambitions Suffolk selected BSC for another award for promoting BME people's health and wellbeing!

In 2012, Her Majesty The Queen invited BSC to her Diamond Jubilee celebration at Sandringham Castle, followed by a Bronze and Silver Awards from the National Resource Centre for



BSC is proud to have picked up a number of prestigious awards over the years

Supplementary Education (London) for our work with children and young people, which is one of BSC's flagship projects.

In 2016 BSC received a 'Working Together Award' from Suffolk Community Foundation and Suffolk County Council. A year

later, the High Sheriff of Suffolk conferred an award on BSC in recognition of its outstanding work in Suffolk.

In 2018 BSC received yet another 'Working Together Award' and His Royal Highness Prince Edward was clearly impressed by BSC's 'wonderful work' during a visit to Ipswich. Last but not the least BSC went head-to-head with some of Suffolk's leading charities and community organisations for the coveted 'Community Organisation of Year Award' in early 2019! After all the applications were scrutinised by a panel of independent judges, BSC received the award from The High Sheriff of Suffolk. Long may the good



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CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF BSC

A day to remember

On November 24, BSC will be hosting an evening of celebrations to mark its 20th anniversary

SC is celebrating its 20th anniversary on Sunday, November 24 2019. This is an important milestone for the award-winning organisation, now serving people of more than 50 different nationalities. Over the last two decades, BSC has played a significant role in community development and regeneration in Ipswich and Suffolk, empowering local people to play their full part in our society. To mark this occasion, we are organising an important celebration event at Ipswich's Trinity Park where a brochure highlighting BSC's contribution and achievements during the last two decades will be launched. Guests will include prominent businessmen, politicians, and community and faith leaders from all over the country, including London, Luton, Birmingham, Manchester, and Newcastle and from all over East Anglia. There will be inspirational talks, music, entertainment, food and an opportunity to network. BSC's friends, partners, supporters and funders will also be there to enjoy the event and celebrate! This will also be an opportunity for BSC to thank all its funders, friends and supporters. The event is by invitation only and will begin at 5.30pm and finish around 9pm.

The future looks bright

After 20 years of contributions to

community development in Ipswich and Suffolk, BSC Multicultural Services is looking to the future with hope and optimism. In addition to forging new partnerships and working with people of more than 50 different nationalities, BSC intends to play its part in promoting education and training, health and well-being, cultural understanding and community cohesion as well as making Ipswich and Suffolk a prosperous, safe and welcoming place to live and work for everyone, regardless of background. At the event on November 24, BSC will launch its Friends of BSC scheme (£15 per year) and its 8 sponsorship packages (£500 per package) to make the organisation more sustainable going forward. The packages cover education, health and wellbeing, sports and recreation, youth services, employment support, awards and events, support for businesses and information, advice and guidance (IAG).

If you are interested in becoming a friend of BSC or would like to sponsor one of the above packages, please contact BSC on 01473 400081/429740 or visit www.bscmulticulturalservices.

We hope you will help and support us going forward. Thank you.





BSC is well known for its inclusive events, and this Sunday, will be hosting a very special anniversrary celebration

> Pictures: ARCHANT/ Mike Cooper



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BSC says thank you

It is a privilege and life-enhancing experience to see so much kindness, compassion and dedicated skill, selflessly laid down for the benefit of others - a sentiment that whole-heartedly fits our experience of working with the Bangladeshi Support Centre (BSC). Our relationship with the BSC goes back well over a decade, mainly as a funder to support their activity. During that time, we have seen the organisation continually identify and develop much needed services for disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable people. Originally, these services were created for Suffolk's Bangladeshi community but as the years have rolled by, new emerging communities have

equally found that the sheer humanity of the organisation and quality of their services, have provided a much needed helping hand during times of need. Today, BSC reach people from over fifty different nationalities, with empathetic and sensitive face-toface services that are wideranging and effective. It is therefore so fitting that the organisation has chosen this time, as they celebrate their 20th anniversary, to reflect that very wide engagement by renaming their charity to BCS Multicultural Services.

STEPHEN SINGLETON, CHIEF **EXECUTIVE OF SUFFOLK COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

It's truly inspiring what the BSC Multicultural Services have been able to achieve over the past 20 years. They have shown how we can improve the lives of many by working across the needs of different cultures within our society. Their efforts in reducing

inequalities is one of the many shining beacons in our local community.

DR IMAAD KHALID, CLINICAL **EXECUTIVE, IPSWICH AND EAST SUFFOLK CLINICAL** COMMISSIONING GROUP

am delighted that BSC Multicultural Services are celebrating their 20th anniversary. BSC is a very active organisation doing a huge amount of good in Ipswich and Suffolk. They have moved on significantly from their starting purpose of supporting the Bangladeshi community. They now provide advice and support to a wide range of communities. They are highlighting the positive contribution members of minority communities are

making to the Suffolk economy through the BME business awards. The One-Big Multicultural festival improves every year and is now a permanent fixture on the Ipswich cultural calendar. I wish BSC every success and look forward to working with them over the next 20 years."

COUNCILLOR DAVID ELLESMERE, LEADER OF IPSWICH BOROUGH COUNCIL



