

BCBN Gala Dinner, 13 March 2017

in support of

Muslim Fostering Project & BCBN Grant Initiative

More Muslim children are in need of foster care than ever before

The refugee crisis across Europe is creating an unprecedented number of vulnerable Muslim children, and the numbers continue to grow dramatically. There are currently over 4,200 unaccompanied children seeking asylum in the UK - an increase from 2,700 in the previous year. Every 20 minutes another child enters the care system in need of a foster family¹. These children are of all ages, backgrounds and communities, though many refugees are likely to come from a Muslim background². The majority have experienced abuse or neglect.

There are not enough Muslim foster carers

Foster families give children the love, support and stability that they so desperately need. This is often their first positive experience of family life. Foster carers have a unique opportunity to make a real difference, supporting children to overcome the challenges of their early lives and helping them to develop and achieve their true potential.

Brent, Feb 2016:

44 Muslim children in care, only 4 Muslim foster families available

(Survey conducted by the London Central Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre)

While efforts are made to place these children within their faith and cultural tradition, this is proving difficult. Muslim families are disproportionately affected by social deprivation and are under-represented in terms of foster carers. Children from Muslim backgrounds are likely to experience greater difficulty in their placements. This is primarily due to the traumatic reasons for them coming into care, but also the difficulties in settling within foster families outside of their faith and cultural norms. This can have a major impact on the ability of the child to settle and, more fundamentally, on their identity at one of the most vulnerable stages in their life.

The Cause: Muslim Fostering Project

BCBN recognises the challenges surrounding Muslim children in care and believes that the ownership of this difficult social issue and its solution lies with the Muslim community.

Through working in partnership with specialist agencies and credible organisations, we can begin the process of ensuring that Muslim children are placed within other families of the same religious background. And we can work to ensure that those who are currently fostering Muslim children are well informed about the cultural and religious sensitivities.

BCBN has identified two key organisations: **The Fostering Network**, UK's leading fostering charity, and **Mercy Mission UK**, an experienced organisation working for education and engagement in the Muslim community.

Together with BCBN, they have created the **Muslim Fostering Project**.

The **Muslim Fostering Project** is to be developed and delivered by The Fostering Network, in collaboration with Mercy Mission UK. BCBN's role in this project is to raise awareness and secure the funding required to help launch the project. This initiative will identify and address challenges that affect Muslim children in care across the country.



¹ The Fostering Network, 2016

² [Statistics: looked-after children](#), Dept. of Education, 29 Sept 2016

The Project has three key aims:

1. Increase the number of Muslim foster carers

The project will engage with the UK Muslim communities to educate and inform on how to become a foster carer and to thrive. It will build relationships with local authorities and provide essential cultural sensitivity training for their social workers to better understand the specific needs of Muslim children in care.

2. Educate and support carers

The project will provide information and support to those carers who are not from a Muslim background and have Muslim children in their care. This will ultimately provide benefit to the children, as well as retaining foster carers within the system.

3. Commission comprehensive independent research

Current statistics on religious background of children in care has to be extrapolated from the scant data that is available. A key component of this project is the commissioning of critical research to make reliable data available. This will help to better understand the extent of the problem in recruiting and retaining Muslim foster carers, as well as evidence of the effectiveness of the Project itself.

How you can help

Please join BCBN at its fundraising Gala Dinner in March 2017, supporting the **Muslim Fostering Project** and the **BCBN Grant Initiative**.

As a founding principle, BCBN is totally funded by its Trustees, but it relies on the generosity of its Event Partners, its Event Sponsors and the Community to support its causes. The Gala Dinner provides an opportunity for your business or organisation to demonstrate its commitment in helping the most vulnerable in our society.

So click on the link below and become a Partner or Sponsor, host your guests at a table – or simply buy a ticket. Join us for a great evening of networking, dining and entertainment in aid of this worthy cause.

Attend the BCBN Gala Dinner
Monday 13th March 2017, 18:00 – 22:30
Great Room, Grosvenor House Hotel, Park Lane, London
www.bcbn.org.uk
events@bcbn.org.uk

The Fostering Network is the UK's leading fostering charity working to ensure all fostered children have a positive experience of family life, supporting them to have high aspirations, to overcome the challenges of their early lives and to achieve their very best. The charity supports around 60,000 foster carers and the 64,000 children in their care through a wide range of programmes, projects and activities. The Fostering Network benefits from extremely strong links to almost every fostering service across the UK and the vast majority of the UK's currently approved foster carers, most of whom are members of the charity. The charity brings expertise in fostering practice and policy development, maintaining open and active channels of communication to all branches of the fostering infrastructure within the UK.

Mercy Mission UK is a UK registered charity with a dedicated team committed to innovation, creating, refining and incubating ground breaking community development projects that respond to the challenges facing those in greatest need. The Mercy Mission model is to create and test solution orientated blueprints for Muslim communities to implement in their localities to improve the circumstance of those around them or those in a high level of need.

BCBN Grant Initiative launched in September 2014, aims to provide small third-sector grant awards to empower charities and local community projects. This initiative distributes one-off grant award of up to £3,000 per charity or to small but credible community projects, which are able to demonstrate their positive impact on the communities they aim to serve. BCBN's Grant Initiative has awarded over 30 charities and community groups, distributing over £60,000 in grant funds across the UK. Some of the grant recipients have included Sense for Deafblind Children, local food banks, Metro Blind Bowlers, Age UK and others. See more at <http://bcbn.org.uk/blog/>