



Shamsia



What was life like before MSA?

My daily routine consisted of being a full-time Mum for my children and taking care of my mother-in-law who had medical needs. This meant that I rarely found time for myself. I did attend a few swimming lessons to act upon my interest in sports but there were some obstacles which ultimately meant I had to stop. I often felt uncomfortable if there wasn't a female lifeguard and after moving to Redbridge, the journey time became too long for me.



How did you come across MSA?

I first found MSA on Facebook and attended my first badminton session in 2016 – only a few months after MSA had launched. At first, I was worried the sessions clashed with my household responsibilities and would occasionally call home to check everything was OK. However, I soon realised that my children could cope and badminton became an opportunity in the week I could dedicate to myself. As weeks went on, more people joined and I felt welcomed by everyone there, slowly becoming part of the badminton family.

Have you always enjoyed sports?

During my school years, I was always quite sporty and occasionally took part in sports day activities and after-school clubs. I even participated in the Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE) that comprised of activities like canoeing and swimming. Despite enjoying my time there, I stopped during my college years due to cultural differences. In some Asian communities, sports can be looked down upon so I exercised at home. This changed when I came to MSA.



What other activities have you taken up with MSA?

I've taken part in yoga, pilates and have recently joined archery. I even took up netball for a short while and have encouraged my daughter to join. Along with physical activity courses, I attended a couple of mental health courses that provided me with knowledge and understanding of mental health; something that is slowly growing in the Asian community.

What impact has your participation had on life?

I've continued to play badminton with MSA for many years and one of the main reasons is due to the atmosphere created there. I felt safe being in an all-female environment, meaning I could take my hijab off and the coach was extremely supportive. It was also comforting to see like-minded women who were also stay-at-home mums like me. There were also younger girls too who encouraged me to bring out my inner child! I became confident coming to badminton sessions every week.

