

REFLECTING ON THE FUTURE

Rochdale Can Lead the Way on Recovery

The Salik Project UK emerged because addiction and recovery exist in South Asian communities, yet are too often kept silent. Our role is to open safe conversation and act as a cultural bridge into Rochdale’s existing support services before crisis. A truth is clear: isolation undermines recovery. But isolation is not only individual; families can become isolated too, carrying fear, shame, and burden behind closed doors.

Listening to the Community

Throughout 2025, we listened closely to women, young people, parents, and community leaders. This briefing summarises what we heard, what we achieved, and how it shapes our 2026 direction — focused on earlier engagement, reduced harm, and stronger recovery outcomes through education, outreach, and building partnerships.

Snowdon Climb | 2025



“We Can Only Do So Much”

Community and mosque leaders said families often approach them first. They want to help, but recognised limits in role, capacity and training, and the risk of being drawn into situations beyond them. They agreed addiction needs a focused, professional response.

Their message was practical: they can raise awareness and signpost, but they cannot replace specialist support. Clearer pathways, shared roles, and partnership are needed so families aren’t left relying on community figures for specialist help.



Joint focus group with WHAG and Salik Project UK

What We Heard

Across all focus groups, a consistent picture emerged: addiction is increasingly visible in everyday life, yet open discussion and early response often lag behind reality due to stigma and fear of judgement.

Women spoke about the pressure to manage issues within the family to protect *izzat* (honour), frequently carrying the emotional burden as problems escalate quietly behind closed doors.

In both women’s and community discussions, participants said families often try to manage concerns privately before seeking formal support. Faith was seen as helpful in recovery, but not a replacement for professional care, and delays were linked to ignorance of existing safe entry points.



What We Learned

- Silence driven by stigma delays support rather than preventing harm.
- Families are central to recovery, yet often lack guidance and support.
- Young people respond best to honest, credible information grounded in real experience.
- Early awareness is critical, as emerging trends such as youth nitrous oxide use show how quickly risk can escalate in a constantly changing landscape.

Our Role in This Work

The Salik Project UK will draw on lived experience and cultural understanding to deliver early awareness, education, and outreach in South Asian communities. We will challenge stigma and silence with practical guidance and clear signposting, helping people start conversations and reach support sooner.

Through online campaigns and community outreach, we plan to connect families to existing recovery support in Rochdale and help reduce cultural and practical barriers to access. Further projects are planned to support people in recovery with continued engagement.



A Collaborative Way Forward

In partnership with existing services and community organisations, our contribution will focus on:

- Expanding multilingual online awareness campaigns so people can engage privately and early.
- Challenging stigma and *izzat* in culturally sensitive ways to help normalise conversation.
- Supporting earlier intervention, particularly for parents and carers, alongside existing services.
- Strengthening family understanding as part of recovery, not as an afterthought.
- Acting as a cultural bridge between South Asian communities and existing support pathways.
- Staying connected to young people as risks, trends, and access routes evolve.



Help is available –
just take the first
step.



PATH TO RECOVERY

Looking Ahead to 2026

In 2026, our work will also build on what communities told us they need: earlier awareness, clearer understanding, and easier routes into support. We will expand multilingual online campaigns, strengthen community outreach, and develop accessible learning that reflects South Asian realities and family contexts.

We will continue focus groups to keep listening as trends and risks change, especially for young people. Alongside this, we will lay the foundations for one-to-one support later in the year, working in a way that complements existing services and strengthens pathways into recovery.



Through online campaigns and community outreach, we will help families connect with Rochdale's recovery support network, support individuals on their path to recovery so they do not feel isolated and manage cultural and practical barriers that too often delay help. We can only do this with your support.