

**West Midlands Outstanding Learner of the Year
Sofia Begum**

Michael: Sofia is British Pakistani.

Sofia: I had education up at Primary level. I left, I'm guessing I must have been about nine or ten. It wasn't by choice but it was the expectation and I had two choices in life. I could choose either to become a victim or I could change my life and do something for me, something that I felt passionate about.

(Talking: I'm hearing that the reason why you've come to counselling today to is to deal with some of the anxiety...)

I guess what led me to counselling was my personal experiences.

Michael Lilley (My Time, Birmingham): My Time is a culturally and faith sensitive counselling and psychological service and we do work in eighteen languages.

Sofia: I came onboard five years ago as a volunteer. When I was accepted on to do my diploma course I felt really lucky.

Michael: We have employed her in partnership with the NHS. She's travelled in a learning way, an incredible distance at the same time as being a single parent of five children.

Sofia: I guess it's opened up my mind.