



**HOPE FOR
COMMUNITIES**

**TRUSTEE
ANNUAL
REPORT**

2024–2025



Charity Information

Founders and Directors of Hope for Communities

Sharo Ahmed

Alexis Rachel Ahmed

Trustees of Hope for Communities (as of 31st March 2025, unless stated, all acted for the entire year)

Andrew David McCullough

Sarah Anne Louise Harris

John Douglas Henry Greenway

Michael Alexander Ross Channon

Abey Varghese Philip

Phillip Andrew Gray

Alison Ruth Nicholson (elected as a trustee 24th February 2025)

Note: All trustees have confirmed that they have regarded the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

Charity Commission Registration Number 1180747

Charity UK address

121 Drummond Rd, Bermondsey,
London, England.
SE16 2JY

Charity website

www.hopeforcommunities.com

Why We Exist

This is a summary of our charity's objectives, as set out in our governing document:

The prevention or relief of poverty or financial hardship anywhere in the world, but in particular Iraq, by providing or assisting in the provision of, primarily but not limited to, education, training, healthcare projects and all the necessary support designed to enable individuals to generate a sustainable income and be self-sufficient.

A Letter from Sharo and Alexis, Directors of Hope for Communities

We are deeply grateful for your continued support and delighted to share this year's annual report with you. It has been a remarkable year marked by meaningful growth and progress across our work.

At the heart of these achievements is our incredible local team. Their dedication, passion, and tireless efforts have brought so many of the inspiring stories and successes in this report to life. We also extend our sincere thanks to our trustees, whose generosity of time and expertise strengthens our mission every step of the way.

We are deeply thankful to the communities who have welcomed us and allowed us to walk alongside them. It is a privilege to witness the growth of young people as they step into their potential, and we celebrate each milestone with pride and joy.

As a small charity, we are continually humbled by the generosity of those who support us. Your contributions make a real and lasting impact, and we see that impact growing stronger each year.

The longer we work within these communities, the clearer the transformation becomes. While challenges and barriers are part of the journey, the stories of change and resilience fuel our determination to keep moving forward.

So, settle in with a warm drink (and a treat if you fancy), and take a moment to read through our report. It's a reflection of what we've achieved together, and a glimpse of the hope that lies ahead.

Our Values, Vision and Mission

OUR VALUES

The arrows that guide us

Hope – We believe that even the most marginalised communities can be transformed by **courageous, contagious hope**.

Generosity – We believe that those so long considered the least deserve our very best, so our motto is “**The best for the least**”.

Sustainable impact – We’re not interested in short-term fixes, but in building to last.

Growing people – We’re nurturing the amazing talent and potential in our local community.

Integrity – We steward our resources with honesty, transparency and diligence for maximum benefit to all.

Honour – We act with humility as we work with different communities, respecting their cultures and learning from them.

OUR VISION

Where we’re going

Our vision is to see **hope restored** to communities where it has been crushed by war, displacement or poverty.

OUR MISSION

What we’re doing to get there

We’re restoring hope by helping to provide education, training, healthcare*, and all the support needed to enable individuals in the most marginalised communities to reach sustainable self-sufficiency.

*as our capacity grows

A Summary of the Main Activities and Achievements of Hope for Communities

Barika Community Centre, Kurdistan Region, Northern Iraq

Our Centre in Barika, (a community of displaced people and refugees), is the place where so many of our core values were born, nurtured, and brought to life. In a neighbourhood where many charities and NGOs who came before us struggled to connect, we chose to stay, listen, and build trust. Today, we celebrate the hope that has taken root, a hope grounded in our commitment to creating lasting, **sustainable impact**.



Five days a week, children and young people visit our centre to learn English, play sports, and simply enjoy being in a safe, welcoming space. This project began with one of our guiding values: **Honouring the community**. We asked residents what services they wanted, not what we thought they needed. And now, through ongoing consultations, we continue to shape our work around their voices.

When we first stepped into the building, only three rooms were usable. The walls were grey, cracked, and peeling, but with **integrity** and careful stewardship of our supporters' generosity, we began to transform it step by step. Today, the Centre is unrecognisable: bright, colourful murals cover the walls, more rooms are open and alive with activity, and outside, a multi-sports pitch, now covered, keeps games going all year round. Without our Centre, children here would have nowhere to gather beyond their homes and often closed schools.



We will share more about this later in our report, but it is from our work in this community that we are supporting young people who never imagined they could attend university. Through our scholarship program, doors are opening to futures once thought impossible. Their success is contagious. Other young people now see that a hopeful future is within reach. **Hope** is rising, and it's changing the story of this community.

Projects in Government Run Children's Homes

For over five years, we've been investing in the lives of children and young people living in children's homes, working with children who have experienced unimaginable trauma. Week after week, our team shows up. This consistency builds trust, nurtures healthy relationships, and reminds these young people that they are not forgotten.

Staff in the homes now introduce us as *"the organisation that never stopped coming back."* Unlike others who arrived with promises and cameras only to disappear, our commitment has always been different: we don't believe in quick fixes. We believe in **sustainable impact**. Because of that commitment, our team has become a steady presence in the lives of children who often struggle to trust adults. Over time, through patience and persistence, we've earned that trust, and with it, the chance to help them rediscover **hope** and a sense of belonging.



As children grow and transition into new homes for their age group, it's our team who remain the familiar faces they know and trust. This continuity makes all the difference.

One young boy, moving from the 5 to 12 year old's home into the 12 to 18 year old's home, lit up with joy when he saw our team walk in. With surprise and excitement he exclaimed, "The other boys told me people came every week and took us out to fun places, but I didn't realise it was going to be you!" Moments like this capture the heart of our work: being the steady presence in lives that often feel uncertain.

We don't just meet children once; we journey with them as they grow, move through different homes, and eventually step into our apprenticeship programme. This trust, built over years of consistency, allows us to live out our core value of **growing people**, helping them discover stability, confidence, and **hope** for the future.

Over the past five years, our commitment hasn't only touched the lives of children, it has also built strong, positive relationships with the managers and staff who care for them. When challenges arise, it's our team the managers turn to for support. This year, when the youngest home relocated to a new building, it was Hope for Communities they asked to help with transport and moving everything safely. This trust speaks volumes. We are proud to be known not just as visitors, but as partners, a community that consistently chooses **generosity** with our time and resources.



Apprenticeship Training Programme

When we launched our apprenticeship programme, it felt like we were playing catch-up. Our vision was to give young men leaving the care system the time, support, and guidance they need to thrive. The young women in the care system, don't face the same risk of homelessness and prison that the young men face, and so it was the young men who we saw were in the most need of the apprenticeship programme. We wanted to help them complete their education, learn independent living skills, set life goals, and transition smoothly into adulthood. We knew it wouldn't be easy, bringing **hope** into the most hopeless situations rarely is, but we went in with open eyes and open hearts.



However, reality looked different at first. The young men who joined us were 19, already out of care, and already facing serious challenges. In the first weeks, we were tackling urgent issues like homelessness. So the situation wasn't ideal; we didn't have time to prepare these young men prior to having to leave the home.

Fast forward three years, and the story has changed. We've supported eight apprentices so far, and our commitment doesn't end when they leave us. We stay connected, because we believe in building relationships that last; we value **sustainability**. Our team celebrates their milestones, helps them prepare for exams, and are there in times of crisis. All of our apprentices know we're just a phone call away.



Today, we've caught up. We've supported those who were most in need, and now we're welcoming younger apprentices, those with a few years still left in care. This gives us the time and space to invest deeply in their growth, to prepare them for independence, and to live out our core value... **growing people**.

At the end of this report, you'll find a case study that tells the story of one apprentice whose life has been transformed by Hope for Communities. His journey reflects what we stand for, and why this work matters.

Hope Hub (Coffee Shop and Community Space)

Hope Hub was established to provide a safe and welcoming environment for our Apprenticeship Programme. As we envisioned what this initiative could become, we recognised that a coffee shop offered the ideal setting, one where young apprentices could gain acceptance and confidence while engaging with customers.

Over time, Hope Hub has grown beyond its original purpose. It now serves as the home of our charity office, a venue for staff training and team meetings, and a space where our team can connect, relax, and **grow** together.



Operating as a coffee shop six days a week, Hope Hub has faced challenges due to the current economic climate and its location outside of high-traffic commercial areas. While daily customer numbers remain modest, our team has mastered the art of crafting exceptional coffee, that we modestly consider the best in the city! The true vibrancy of Hope Hub, however, emerges during our weekly community events, when the space transforms into a hub of activity and connection.

In **honouring** what we feel would be most enjoyed by our community, we have curated free events designed to be both enjoyable and enriching. Highlights include:

- English Café (twice weekly): A welcoming space for practising English and building connections.
- Book Clubs: Monthly gatherings in English, Kurdish, and Arabic.
- Games Night: A popular weekly evening of laughter, learning, and shared fun.
- Movie Night: Weekly screenings with popcorn, fostering friendship and relaxation.
- Korean Language & Culture Evenings (twice monthly): A recent addition that has drawn new visitors, reflecting the strong local interest in Korean culture.

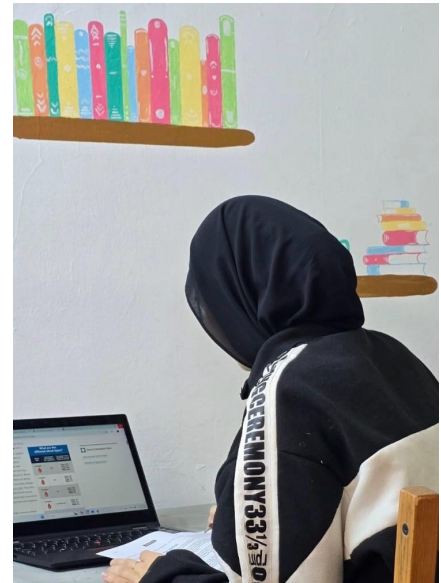


For many, these events have become a lifeline. Where isolation and loneliness can be real challenges, Hope Hub offers **generosity**, friendship, and belonging. It has truly become the “living room” of our community, a place where people feel at home, connected, and valued.

University Scholarship Programme

Last year, we introduced a new and ambitious initiative in our annual report: the University Scholarship Pilot Project. We highlighted the story of a remarkable young woman who was our first scholarship student. With our support, she secured a place at one of the leading universities in our region.

Her first year was an academic preparatory programme focused on strengthening her English and developing the study skills needed for university-level work. She excelled. While many students from the most prestigious private schools struggled to pass their exams, she consistently achieved outstanding results. Moving away from her family and community to live in the city was a significant transition, and throughout this period our team became a vital source of support and encouragement.



She has now begun her undergraduate degree in Medical Laboratory Sciences and continues to thrive. The potential we recognised in her early on is now being fully realised in an environment that nurtures her abilities. She is achieving top marks and has **grown** visibly in confidence. Her transformation is inspiring other children and young people in her community, demonstrating what is possible and helping **hope** take root.

Looking ahead to Autumn 2025, four young people from our Barika community aspire to attend university. Each will have different needs, and as a charity we aim to support them as we are able. For some, this may involve assistance with tuition fees; for others, help with accommodation or a one-off purchase of essential equipment. Our commitment extends beyond **generosity** with financial support. These young people are stepping into a completely new environment, and the friendship, mentoring, and practical guidance our team provides can be just as crucial. This holistic support often makes the difference between simply accessing higher education and truly succeeding in it.



Staff Training and Development

Visitors to our projects consistently remark on the brilliance of our team. As we shared at the beginning of this report, and as the updates throughout have shown, much of the **hope** that is emerging in our communities is as a direct result of their dedication. Investing in building an exceptional team has always been central to our mission; as our team **grows**, our projects flourish.

Every new staff member begins with an induction programme that goes far beyond policies and checklists. We want them to understand the heart of our work and the values that shape every project.

As founders, some of our proudest moments are when we see team members using those values to guide decisions and advocate for how we should respond in challenging situations. Our monthly team meetings are an important space for connection. We share updates and stories, celebrate birthdays, and learn from one another through peer-led training. Our management team also receives ongoing training and support as they take on new responsibilities.

In addition to our regular training, we respond to emerging needs by offering specialised workshops. One training need we identified, is an awareness that our team works in communities where people have experienced complex trauma. We wanted to ensure they felt equipped to support others while also caring for their own wellbeing. This year, one of our trustees, Ali Nicholson, a qualified counsellor, provided trauma-informed training. More details about this training can be found in her visitor's report.



Future Projects and Plans

This section could easily span many pages. If we responded to every need we encountered, we would be launching new initiatives constantly. Yet we remain committed to operating with **integrity**, ensuring that every project we begin is built on strong foundations and designed for **sustainable** impact. This means striking a careful balance between responding quickly to urgent needs and building programmes that endure.



Given the medical background of our founders and directors, healthcare has always been part of our long-term vision. For many years, however, it did not present itself as the most immediate priority or opportunity. We are excited to share that new opportunities are opening for us to begin medical work. We have established connections with outstanding healthcare providers beyond our region who are eager to invest and partner with us, bringing **hope** to our community through improved healthcare services.

As with all our projects, this new direction requires significant groundwork. Securing permissions and approvals from government offices will demand time and persistence, but this process is essential. We are committed to **honouring** our community by ensuring that every step forward is taken with **integrity** and transparency.

Our first medical project will be launched in the community we have served the longest (Barika). We have spent time consulting with the community and worked to ascertain what they feel the most pressing medical needs are. We are hoping to start a pilot project with an initial focus on diagnosing and managing chronic health conditions that, if left untreated, can lead to severe complications or even death. The need for improved medical services in this area is profound, and we welcome the opportunity to finally begin addressing it.



Visitor's Report

By Alison Nicholson one of our Trustees, who is a Qualified Counsellor and Teacher, and provided a training workshop

The main aim of my trip was to support Sharo and Alexis to deliver training to staff members. The training focus was to support the staff to be able to better identify ways in which trauma might impact the young people they work with. Then to follow this to learn how to support students to regulate their emotions and behaviours through a compassionate approach. This training also supported the staff to consider how they might need to care for themselves as they may experience secondary trauma and also have their own trauma in their lives.



It is important for me to mention how Sharo and Alexis have developed a culture of encouragement and support within their team. This was so noticeable in every meeting I went to, but 2 examples have really stuck out to me;

Firstly the whole team gave up their free time to attend a family wedding for one of the apprentices. The young man was visibly giddy with happiness that the whole team had attended to support him. Some of the men taught him some dance moves and made sure he made it home safely at the end of the night. Everyone joined in eagerly with the celebrations, showered the apprentice with encouragement and spoke to me about him with real kindness.

The second striking example of the positive culture Sharo and Alexis have developed was the way the team engaged in the training days. Everyone contributed positively to group discussions, showing deep care and compassion for the young people they work with, and an earnestness to want to create an environment for the young people to grow and flourish in.



Through the training days I also supported Sharo, Alexis and the team to review some policies and procedures such as behaviour management and the staff code of conduct. The staff contributed a lot of positive ways to support the young people and showed high expectations for everyone involved with Hope for Communities. It is clear everyone is highly invested in the work of the charity and often go above and beyond to provide the best they can for the young people.



I was fortunate to be able to visit Barika, one of the orphanages and meet with a student they are funding through university.

I was so pleased to see how Sharo, Alexis and the team are continuously developing the spaces they use, namely Barika and Hope hub, through decorating and updating resources to suit the

needs of the service users and to ensure the spaces are warm and welcoming. Barika was full of life because I was able to attend one of their yearly parties. The children enjoyed games, activities and snacks throughout the day. Having visited 3 years ago I have seen how they have transformed Barika into a hub of activity and learning for the local community.

Hope Hub is a great resource for training the apprentices, hosting language and book clubs and providing a space for staff to meet, work and have training.

I was so privileged to meet with the first student Hope for Communities is sponsoring through university. Having met her during my first visit 3 years ago I was taken back by just how much she had developed in confidence since then. She clearly feels confident in being part of the charity and looks not only to Sharo and Alexis but other staff members for support and community. She is thriving at University and the support she receives from the charity is clearly a key part of this.



A Case Study – An Apprentices's Journey of Hope and Determination



There are countless stories of inspirational children and young people whose lives have been transformed through the hope they have discovered. This year, we are proud to share the journey of one of our apprentices.

Growing up in orphanages after his family was unable to care for him, he became well known to our team through his regular involvement in our activities. For young men in his age group, we often arrange outings of their choosing, and he once reflected: *"getting away from the orphanage would make things better for us."*

By the time he joined our apprenticeship programme, he had already left school. In his community, failing exams means being held back a year, and without support many boys lose confidence, eventually giving up on education altogether. Our apprenticeship programme is designed to change that trajectory by providing supplies, attending meetings with teachers, and helping young men prepare for critical exams.

This apprentice embraced the opportunity wholeheartedly. We were able to advocate for him, and support him to go back into the school system. Through his barista training, he gained valuable skills and secured employment as a barista. The job not only provided accommodation but also allowed him to balance work with his school commitments. Although he has officially graduated from our apprenticeship programme, he remains an integral part of our Hope for Communities family. For young men without families of their own, our team becomes that support system.

He continues to visit the centre before major exams for tutoring and encouragement. When life feels overwhelming, he turns to our team for guidance. Different staff members meet with him regularly, motivating him to stay focused and pursue his dreams. His ambition is to complete the level of education required to enter further training in a trade such as mechanics or electrical work.

While his journey is filled with hope, it is not without challenges. He still requires significant support and faces many obstacles. Yet our team remains committed to walking alongside him, encouraging him to persevere in his education and strive for a brighter future.

In his own words: *"Before I got to know this charity, I didn't have any ambitions, I didn't think of the future. But after getting to know them they taught me to think about my future and work hard for a better future."*

Financial Review

Hope for Communities is very grateful to all of its supporters who have so generously helped us in being able to continue with all of our projects.

Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held:

The trustees have agreed to hold three months of the charities running costs in reserve. This is to enable projects to continue in the event of a drop in income.

Amount of reserves held at end of financial year: £57,521

This was more than the needed 3 months' running costs (as of March 2025), however at present our projects are constantly developing and we are starting new projects and so these additional reserves help us in being able to confidently start new initiatives.

(At the end of the financial year, there was also £11,825 that has been transferred from our UK bank for projects and initiatives in the Kurdish region of Iraq that is yet to be deployed.)

Reasons for holding zero reserves	Para 1.22	n/a
Details of fund materially in deficit	Para 1.24	n/a
Explanation of any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern	Para 1.23	n/a

Funds held as custodian trustees on behalf of others

Description of the assets held in this capacity	n/a
Name and objects of the charity on whose behalf the assets are held and how this falls within the custodian charity's objects	n/a
Details of arrangements for safe custody and segregation of such assets from the charity's own assets	n/a


Structure, Governance and Management

Description of charity's trusts:		
Type of governing document (trust deed, royal charter)	Para 1.25	Constitution
How is the charity constituted? (e.g. unincorporated association, CIO)	Para 1.25	Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions e.g. election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees	Para 1.25	<p>According to the constitution:</p> <p>Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed [for a term of three years] by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees.</p> <p>In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.</p>

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature	
Full Name	Andrew David McCullough
Position	Chair of Trustees
Date	22nd January 2026



Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	Period start date 1/4/2024	To	Period end date 31/3/2025
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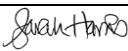

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
One-off donations from individuals	6,098	1,000	-	7,098	16,886
Regular invoiced donations from individuals	13,795	-	-	13,795	5,900
Donations from businesses/organisations	42,379	25,325	-	67,704	88,808
Fundraising events and campaigns	4,018	10,000	-	14,018	-
Give as you live	97	-	-	97	16
Amazon	-	-	-	-	25
HMRC-reclaimed gift aid	1,942	-	-	1,942	-
Bank refunds	-	-	-	-	35
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	68,329	36,325	-	104,654	111,670
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	68,329	36,325	-	104,654	111,670
A3 Payments					
Staff Salaries and Pension Costs	54,688	31,086	-	85,774	34,127
Rent	3,147	2,801	-	5,948	6,833
Utilities/heating	1,832	889	-	2,721	2,897
Petrol/vehicle maintenance	970	50	-	1,020	1,097
Staff meetings/training	170	500	-	670	440
Projects:Equipment/refreshments/resources	554	2,835	-	3,389	9,967
Buildings maintenance	112	-	-	112	186
Bank charges/comms/admin kurdistan	218	-	-	218	546
Orphanages:Trips out/events	1,393	11	-	1,404	1,017
Apprenticeships salaries/support	1,631	5,653	-	7,284	7,412
Scholarship Programme	552	1,229	-	1,781	-
Travel/Accommodation	777	-	-	777	1,794
Staff development/investment	-	-	-	-	3,291
Communications/admin UK	504	-	-	504	452
Charges for bank transfers	1,806	-	-	1,806	1,222
Stripe Fees	317	-	-	317	334
Draw down of funds previously transferred to Kurdistan that were yet to be deployed in prior periods	- 1,051	-	-	- 1,051	- 1,314
Sub total	67,620	45,054	-	112,674	70,301
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	67,620	45,054	-	112,674	70,301
Net of receipts/(payments)	709	- 8,729	-	- 8,020	41,369
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	52,833	12,708	-	65,541	24,172
Cash funds this year end	53,542	3,979	-	57,521	65,541

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	UK Bank Account	53,542	3,979	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	53,542	3,979	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets				
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use				
B5 Liabilities				
Money transferred to projects in Kurdistan, including prior periods, that is yet to be deployed at the end of 31 Mar 2025				
		11,825		

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of
all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Sarah Harris	22/1/2026
	Abey Varghese Philip	22/1/2026

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Hope for Communities

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Hope for Communities Trust (the Trust) for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached. Please see supplementary information section for additional details of the examination undertaken.

Signed: 

Name: Gajen Ganandran MEng, ACMA

Relevant professional qualification: Qualified Chartered Management Accountant

Address: 43 Monkams Drive, Woodford, IG8 0LX

Date: 27 January 2026