

The Convert Muslim Foundation

Annual Report and Financial Statements

Year ended: 31 March 2024

DUA GOVERNANCE

Chartered Accountants and Business Advisors
Bradford Court
123-131 Bradford Street
Digbeth, Birmingham
B12 0NS

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Legal and Administrative Information

Name	The Convert Muslim Foundation
Charity number	1187573
Registered address	45 Oakfield Avenue, Leicester, LE67 9WH
Trustees	Andrew Barson - Chair Conor Murphy Zoe Hibell Warren Clementson Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor (Resigned 1 st August 2024)
Independent Examiner	Nasir Rafiq Dua Governance 123-131 Bradford Street Bradford Court Birmingham B12 0NS

The Convert Muslim Foundation
Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2024

The Trustees present their annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Objectives and Activities

In general terms, The Convert Muslim Foundation (**CMF**) aims to advance the Islamic religion in the United Kingdom for the benefit of the public through the holding of prayer meetings, lectures, public celebration of religious festivals, and producing and/or distributing literature on the Islamic religion to enlighten others about the Islamic religion, specifically (but not exclusively) with the needs of converts and their families in mind.

The charity also looks to advance the education of the wider public in the United Kingdom in the subjects of Islam and of conversion to Islam. We aim to promote research in these subject areas for the public benefit and to publish the relevant results.

Achievements and Performance

The **CMF** is dedicated to delivering top-tier convert care with your steadfast support. Our projects consistently make a profound and widespread impact, enriching the lives of converts throughout the UK and empowering them on their spiritual journeys.

Through the provision of **Shahadah Certificates** and specially curated **Gift Packs** tailored to individual needs, our ongoing support ensures that each new believer feels esteemed, respected, and supported along their spiritual journey.

In collaboration with local **Convert Care** facilitators at **City Retreat** in Leicester, **CMF** hosted a special evening on **Friday 11th November 2023**, featuring **Dr. Asad Tarsin**, acclaimed author of 'Being Muslim.' Dr. Tarsin's book, widely distributed by Convert Care facilitators throughout the UK, serves as an invaluable guide for newcomers to Islam.

The collaboration between the **CMF** and **City Retreat** fostered a warm and inclusive atmosphere, exemplifying hospitality to all attendees. Representing City Retreat, their speaker shared words of wisdom and encouragement, emphasising the importance of staying connected with both organisations and the transformative impact of the support given was emblematic of Convert Care initiatives nationwide.

Following consultation, the **CMF** selected **January 25th to February 5th, 2024**, for a **Seerah Umrah Tour**. A detailed itinerary more than six months in advance ensured the 49 participants ample time to arrange payments and adequately prepare for the journey. The group trip, organised in partnership with **Dome Tours International** and led by scholars both renowned for their captivating delivery of information fostering a desire for continuous learning among the participants, was an unparalleled opportunity.

Two years ago, the **CMF** initiated a pioneer project - '**Convert Care**,' that of establishing a user-friendly website designed to streamline access to information for newcomers and those interested in Islam. The site hosts a comprehensive directory of UK-based Convert Care service providers, simplifying the process of exploring this spiritual path. It empowers organisations to manage their content, actively contributing to a centralised hub of information, events, and activities relevant to new Muslims.

The platform is dedicated to fostering a collective of service providers committed to delivering excellent care. The aim of the launch weekend, 22nd – 24th September 2023, was to unite **Convert Care** service providers, creating a mutually respectful network of individuals and organisations sharing similar goals and values. By sharing experiences, we aim to learn about opportunities, trends, and best practices in serving our growing Convert community, collectively addressing unavoidable challenges.

The **Beacon Mosques Awards**, a nationally recognised project, serves as a benchmark of quality for mosques and Islamic centres across the UK. Through extensive engagement, standards are established to help mosques assess themselves against quality matrices, facilitating self-evaluation and improvement.

For the second consecutive year, the **CMF** has collaborated with Beacon Mosques to sponsor an award for the **Best Convert Care Service**, nominated and voted for by the Muslim community. Leveraging experiential knowledge in service delivery, the **CMF** judges the nominees and presents the award.

While not all converts initially turn to mosques for guidance, they eventually seek support during their spiritual journey. It's crucial for mosques and Islamic organisations to collaborate in understanding and addressing the specific needs, experiences, and challenges faced by converts. During the Mosque Expo, the CMF team provided assistance to mosque representatives in engaging and supporting converts, including the delivery of an enlightening seminar on engagement led by our Executive Officer, Kerry Mannan.

The **CMF's** involvement in this project demonstrates our commitment to building a supportive infrastructure for converts nationwide. By providing access to resources, networking opportunities, and recognition for exemplary service, we strive to empower mosques and organisations to better meet the unique needs of converts within their communities.

In August 2023, an exceptional opportunity arose for converts to Islam to explore various cities in Türkiye, courtesy of an invitation of collaboration between the **CMF** and the **Turkish Diyanet – the Department of Religious Affairs**. The collaborative organisation of the event commenced with an overview of the travel plan and associated costs, garnering immediate interest from converts across the UK. Ultimately, 38 participants, spanning various ages and conversion histories, embarked on the journey.

Cultural trips play a pivotal role in providing converts with firsthand experiences in predominantly Muslim countries, offering insights into daily life as the Muslim population exercise mutual respect and take personal responsibility for themselves as they go about their daily business. The excursion, encompassing visits to museums, mosques, and historical sites in Istanbul, Bursa, and Konya, was met with enthusiastic acclaim from the group. Such trips exemplify the **CMF's** dedication towards providing cultural experiences that develops a deeper appreciation for Islamic heritage and values, fostering a sense of connection and belonging within the global Muslim ummah.

A collaborative research project between **CMF** and the **University of Cardiff – Studies in Britain Islam Department**. Where previously research tended to focus on conversion narratives, vulnerabilities and marginalisation, the aims of this research are profoundly different. These are as follows:

- **Examine** what resources (social, economic, religious) Muslim Converts use to reach and maintain positions of leadership.
- **Explore** the extent to which Muslim Converts in leadership positions feel that they hold unique positions as 'bridge builders' in British society.
- **Understand** the extent to which the 'integral potential' Convert Muslims informs their personal and professional development and
- **Share** the experiences of Muslim Converts in leadership inform and improve recognition of their contributions to British Islam

Interviews with a wide range of Converts to Islam, 30 in total and from diverse backgrounds took place throughout 2023 where each shared their personal experiences of leadership and social change. The findings of this unique and groundbreaking research project will be widely shared and, in doing so, we hope it will improve recognition of the contributions that convert Muslims make to British Muslim communities. The project will end in April 2025.

This project is led by Professor Sophie Gilliat-Ray (Gilliat-Rays@cardiff.ac.uk) and researcher Dr. Asma Khan from Cardiff University and Batool Al-Toma, Founder Director of CMF, (batool@convertmuslimfoundation.org.uk), assisted by Anita Nayyar who is volunteering her expertise as a social psychologist to the project.

Public Benefit Statement

The section of this report below entitled 'Objectives and Activities' sets out the objects and aims of the charity.

The trustees have considered this, in conjunction with the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, and have concluded that:

- the aims of the charity continue to be charitable;
- the work done by the charity gives identifiable benefits to the charitable sector and both directly and indirectly to individuals in need;
- the benefits are for the public; not unreasonably restricted in any way;
- there is no detriment or harm arising from the aims or activities.

Structure, governance and management

The charity is a Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and operates under the rules of its constitution adopted 24 January 2020 and registered with the Charity Commission on the same day (Charity Reg: 1187573).

The **Convert Muslim Foundation (CMF)** is an equal opportunities organisation (and employer) that aims to have a diverse mix of skills and backgrounds amongst staff and the members of the Board of Trustees that reflects the diverse community we work with. These values guide the process of selecting new Trustees to the organisation. A document reflecting our values and the role of Trustees is available to all those expressing an interest in the organisation. The CMF has opted to openly advertise positions of Trusteeship amongst its members so that interested parties to make application. A full CV together with details of why an individual feels they have the desire, experience and expertise to be a Trustee is requested. Our Trustee outline is provided and an interview is arranged for selection to proceed.

Financial Review

Income and fundraising

The CMF's primary income sources are donations, legacies, and fundraising. In 2023/24, total income decreased by 40% to £44,462 (2022/23: £74,120), mainly due to a reduction in donations from CMF's largest donor. This highlights a vulnerability in CMF's financial model and underscores the need to diversify its donor base.

Recognizing this risk, CMF has adopted a more conservative Reserve Policy compared to other charities, pending the implementation of new fundraising initiatives to reduce dependence on a narrow set of large donors.

Despite this challenge, CMF's donor base showed resilience, with 60% of donors maintaining their support. This stability reflects the continued generosity of UK and international donors, enabling CMF to sustain its social and care programs for new Muslims and promote the legacy of early converts to Islam.

Expenditure

CMF's expenditure falls into two main categories:

1. Charitable activities: the costs associated with implementing programmes as per CMF's mandate;
2. Support costs: this includes expenditure and investment in ensuring that effective governance, people, policies and systems are in place to support the frontline delivery of our projects, and that donations are utilized in an efficient and effective manner.

Direct charitable expenditure decreased slightly by 4%, from £23,771 in 2022/23 to £22,867 in 2023/24. It is noted that 77% of CMF's total expenditure was directed toward charitable activities, with the remaining portion covering support costs. This reflects effective use of donated funds toward its core charitable mandate. However, we expect the percentage of direct charitable expenditure to total payments to increase in future years as the charity grows.

Of the direct charitable expenditure, 73% was allocated to two main charitable programs:

- 1st Convert Care Conference
- Best Convert Support Award (Beacon Mosque Awards)

Other charitable expenditures were related to services provided by paid staff, including counselling support for recently converted Muslims in areas such as mental well-being, religious guidance, and other forms of convert care.

Investments

CMF does not currently have an investment portfolio. However, CMF may, in the future, consider establishing an investments portfolio with the aim to generate investment returns to support CMF's long-term financial sustainability which will reduce its dependency on donations and grants by generating an annual yield that is used to fund its programming.

Reserves Policy

In September 2024, the Trustee Board approved CMF's first Reserve Policy. The objective of the new policy is to ensure the long-term sustainability of the charity, considering factors such as the stability of donations, the concentration of its donor base, current annual expenditures for core operations, expected charitable activities, and potential financial risks faced by the charity. The reserves are intended to strike a balance between the charity's sustainability and the interests of donors, ensuring maximum impact for beneficiaries.

Free reserves refer to funds that are readily available for mandated charitable activities or operational administration costs. These do not include restricted funds, tangible assets, or amounts designated for planned spending.

Annually, the trustees review the risk profile and Reserve Policy, setting the minimum level of Free Reserves to be maintained.

As of 31st March 2024, CMF's total free, unrestricted reserves stood at £149,025 (2022/23: £134,171), significantly exceeding the minimum reserve level required by the new Reserve Policy. In the upcoming year, CMF's trustees will develop plans to deploy the excess reserves in alignment with the charity's objectives.

CMF maintains free reserves to:

- Mitigate unforeseen funding fluctuations,
- Provide working capital and manage the seasonality of income generation for the charity's effective operation,
- Ensure continuity of charitable activities supporting the Convert Muslim community in the face of unforeseen project expenditures.

The Trustee Board has reviewed the year-end reserves and determined that the level of free reserves is more than sufficient, considering CMF's size, operations, and the financial risks it faces.

Risk management

The Board of Trustees has assessed CMF's ability to continue as a going concern. The trustees have considered numerous factors when concluding whether the organisation continues to be a going concern and have also considered the key risks, including the ongoing cost of delivery, rising costs and inflation, and the cost-of-living crisis that could negatively impact the charity.

The critical risk in our financial model is a potential decline in income, which could impact our ability to deliver charitable activities and result in insufficient recovery of core costs. We are mitigating this risk by:

- (i) not committing to costly programs until adequate funding is secured,

- (ii) maintaining a healthy level of cash reserves, and
- (iii) deploying new fundraising initiatives to reduce donor concentration.

Our unrestricted core income is funded by donations, which remained resilient despite the adverse scenarios experienced in 2023/24. This gives CMF confidence that its conservative risk management approach will sustain the charity going forward. The financial results reflect continued generous giving by our core donors, and CMF has more than sufficient unrestricted cash resources to cover all charitable and administrative outflows (at the level of 2023/24) for the forthcoming 12 months.

After considering these factors, the Board of Trustees has concluded that the charity remains a robust going concern and has adequate resources to continue delivering for the foreseeable future.

Trustees' responsibilities statement

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with the United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

The law applicable to charities requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, and the provisions of the constitution. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the trustees of the charity on ..16/01/2025.. and signed on its behalf by:



.....
Andrew Barson
Chair of Trustees

The Convert Muslim Foundation
Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees the Convert Muslim Foundation

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024 which are set out on pages 8 to 12.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees 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 charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 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 charity 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.


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Nasir Rafiq BA FCA
DUA GOVERNANCE

Date: 21 Jan 2025

Bradford Court
123-131 Bradford Street
Digbeth, Birmingham
B12 0NS

The Convert Muslim Foundation
Receipts and Payments Accounts
From 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Receipts				
Donation	41,142	-	41,142	67,901
Activities	2,600	-	2,600	6,121
Sundry receipts	720	-	720	98
Sub total	44,462	-	44,462	74,120
Assets and Investment sales	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	44,462	-	44,462	74,120
Payments				
Activities & events	22,807	-	22,807	23,771
Donation	60	-	60	-
Consultancy	2,973	-	2,973	2,213
Technical support	560	-	560	249
Website, phone & postage	279	-	279	536
Professional fees	582	-	582	552
Travel	246	-	246	1,057
Printing & stationery	-	-	0	478
Trustee expenses - note 1(f)	580	-	580	247
Trustee remuneration - note 1(f)	800	-	800	0
Fundraising & marketing	-	-	0	125
Sundry payments	720	-	720	96
Subtotal	29,607	-	29,607	29,324
Assets and Investment purchases				
	-	-	-	-
Total payments	29,607	-	29,607	29,324
Net of receipts/(payments)	14,855	-	14,855	44,796
Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-
Cash funds last year end	134,171	-	134,171	89,375
Cash funds this year end	149,026	-	149,026	134,171

The Convert Muslim Foundation
Statement of Assets and Liabilities
As at 31 March 2024

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Cash Funds			
Cash at Bank	149,026	149,026	134,171
Total Cash funds	149,026	149,026	134,171
 Assets Retained for the Charity's Own Use			
Freehold Land & Building	0	0	0
Laptop	400	400	0
Total	0	0	0
	2,893	2,893	1,704
Liabilities	2,893	2,893	1,704

Approved by the Board on16/01/2025. And signed on its behalf by:



.....
 Andrew Barson
 Chair of Trustees

The Convert Muslim Foundation

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024

1. Accounting policies

(a) Basis of preparation

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the receipts and payments basis in accordance with the Charity Commission guidance.

(b) Charity status

The charity is a Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and operates under the rules of its constitution adopted 24 January 2020 and registered with the Charity Commission on the same day (Charity Reg: 1187573).

(c) Fund accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

(d) Receipts

All incoming resources are included in the Receipt & payment Accounts when the charity actually receives legally entitled income.

(e) Payments

All expenditure is accounted for on payments basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings, they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with use of the resources.

(f) Trustees' remuneration and reimbursements

Trustee Zoe Hibell received a consultancy payment of £400 for preparing the conference report for the 1st Convert Care Conference.

A further £540 was paid to 3 Trustees for reimbursement of travel costs related to the charity's administrative and operational activities, but not for their services.