



Sulha Alliance Trustee Report

Introduction

The Sulha Alliance CIO is the only UK charity whose work solely focuses on Afghan interpreters and other Locally Engaged Civilians (LECs) who used to work for the British Army in Afghanistan. The Sulha Alliance campaigns for their protection through resettlement to the UK from Afghanistan and third countries. Once in the UK, we provide support and signposting services to ensure interpreters and their families are given the best chance to thrive.

This report covers the period since the Sulha Alliance CIO was incorporated on 6 May 2022 until 31 December 2022 but this report will reflect events that have occurred since year end.

Board of Trustees

The Sulha Alliance has nine trustees, eight of whom appear below. The Charity Commission has granted a dispensation to one of the trustees and exempted them from inclusion of their name in the CIO's entry on the Register of Charities

Sara De Jong – Chair of the Board of Trustees

Ed Aitken

Sarah Hutchinson

Liaqat Ali Hassanzadah

Laurence Longe

David Turner KC

David Williams

Peter Gordon Finlayson

Trustee (identity withheld)

Employees

The Sulha Alliance CIO has two employees and have been employed since March 2023.

Mission and Objectives

Our objectives are set out in our constitution as found on the Charity Commission website. Our beneficiaries are Afghan interpreters and Locally Employed Civilians (LECs) who worked with the British Army, and their families. Sulha Alliance CIO is to promote the mental, physical and financial wellbeing of our beneficiaries. We endeavour to support their journey from Afghanistan and third countries to a new life in the United Kingdom, and do so facilitating interagency support for housing, health and financial needs, assisting where possible with advice on education and vocational training. In addition to this, Sulha Alliance has set up forums and events to generate public support and amplify advocacy.

Financial Overview

The Sulha Alliance was incorporated on 6 May 2022, and is reliant on external funding to support the objectives stated in our constitution.

Income Sources

In the reporting period, Sulha Alliance received donations through crowdfunding platforms, small events, and personal donations. The largest donation received is from Unbound Philanthropy: stretching over a period of two years (1 August 2022 until 31 July 2024) with a sum total of £60,000. This grant was given to enhance the capacity of Sulha Alliance to build a more inclusive policy, and to improve the legal and service environment for Afghans in the United Kingdom.

Expenditure

Expenditure during the reporting period relates almost entirely to employment costs. The grant from Unbound Philanthropy funds the salaries of our two Sulha Alliance employees: the Community Support Officer and the Charity Foundation Officer.

Financial Governance

Sulha Alliance financial governance involves separation of duties (accounting, raising and authorising payments), dual authentication of all payments by trustee members, cash withdrawal limits, documentation of all spend and income, and scrutiny by a Financial Working Group made up of expert members of the board of Trustees.

Achievements and Activities

Media Coverage

Sulha Alliance is the only charity supporting Afghan interpreters and LECs who worked with the British Army, and is uniquely placed to comment nationally on the challenges of asylum and resettlement. In this reporting period, our trustees have been interviewed in *The Times*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Guardian*, BBC News, *Arab News*, *Forces News*, *the Independent*, Reuters, ITV, and *Metro*.

Legal Support

The asylum system and resettlement schemes for Afghan interpreters are complicated, and several have fallen foul of the draconian rules and Home Office national security rejections (after having been approved as eligible for relocation under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy by the MoD). To support judges in understanding the specific threats faced by those who worked with the British Army, the huge mental strain our interpreter community are under as they grapple with rigid bureaucracy and an uncertain future, members of the Sulha Alliance team have given evidence at court in support of interpreters, and have had many negative decisions overturned due to such interventions.

Community Outreach Work

Our Community Support Officer (CSO), a former Afghan interpreter, has been employed since March 2023 to support and gather data on our beneficiary community. He offers support and advice, and signposts beneficiaries to organisations who are adequately resourced to deal with some of the major challenges Afghan interpreters face: such as gaining employment, accessing housing and healthcare, and achieving family reunification. This role was created to help Sulha Alliance identify the needs of the community and direct resources accordingly. So far, we have managed to map where many of our beneficiaries have settled, and established a connection into those communities. We have, in effect, successfully encouraged former interpreters to become community representatives. In future, and resource dependent, we are keen to empower these representatives to organise and host events bringing beneficiaries together.

Our CSO hosts online forums to offer advice to our beneficiaries, which is particularly useful given the geographical spread of the community.

Research

Sulha Alliance stays informed by working closely with our interpreter and LEC community to ascertain need, and through research undertaken by Prof Sara De Jong, Chair of the Board of Trustees.

As an expert on the protection and rights of Afghan interpreters, Prof De Jong has contributed extensively to our media campaigns, and to panel discussions and reports both national and international. The UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, The Netherlands and Germany are all responsible for resettling Afghan interpreters and LECs. These countries, in tandem with several international NGOs, share best practice with the Sulha Alliance – and vice versa, in a network effort that ultimately shapes and sharpens our advocacy work.

To ensure we are working with the most accurate figures, Sulha Alliance does Freedom of Information requests and supports MPs in submitting Written Questions in order to tailor our advocacy and support work to target the most vulnerable of our beneficiaries.

Raising Awareness

The Sulha Alliance, in collaboration with photographer Andy Barnham developed the photo exhibition 'We are here, because you were there: Afghan interpreters in the UK', which documents the experiences of Afghan interpreters, employed by the British Army, through portraits and quotes. The quotes were taken from in-depth interviews by Prof Sara de Jong with 14 Afghan interpreters, supported by the Sulha Alliance, who were recently evacuated to the UK.

- o Leeds – Photo North Festival - 23-25 March 2023
- o Cardiff - Ffotogallery - 26th January - 25th March 2023
- o Newport – outside projection short film – 9 February 2023
- o London - Last Supper Gallery - 23 November 2022- 7 December 2022
- o Cambridge - The Cambridge Union - 25 October - 1 November 2022
- o Glasgow - Tramway - 13 October - 20 October 2022
- o York - Refugee Week, 24 June 2022

The exhibition was referenced in Parliament by Dr Julian Lewis, MP, former Defence Select Committee Chair during a House of Commons debate, December 2022.

The Cambridge Union reported over 730 daytime visits in 1 week; the Cambridge Conservative Association visited with Lord Lilly; the Cambridge Liberal association visited with Sir Ed Davey.

The Glasgow opening was attended by 4 MPs and one MSP, while the London event was attended by a representative of Human Rights Watch, a representative of the NHS, lawyers, charities, an MP, and several Afghan interpreters.

Events organised at the Cardiff and Newport exhibitions were opened by a Welsh MP and the Deputy Director of the Cohesive Communities Division in the Welsh Government and the Chief Executive Officer of the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales.

The exhibition has been positively reviewed in the media, including the *Metro*, the *Herald Scotland*, *The Cardiffian*, *Welsh Agenda*, and *Forces.net*. It has been developed as a 360 degrees virtual exhibition, which remains available online.

Impact

The Sulha Alliance is a new charity, and was, prior to incorporation, entirely volunteer led. The role of the CSO is new, but we are making headway into a hard-to-reach community. We are supporting our Afghan interpreters in finding jobs and housing, empowering community representatives to take a more pastoral role within the community and getting those who need it into education and vocational training.

Many of our beneficiaries have by now arrived in the UK. Once settled in permanent accommodation, they thrive – as do their families. Many have started university courses, found gainful employment or become self-employed. Their children have often excelled at

school and moved on to higher education. They are also helping other Afghans who have recently arrived settle into the community.

Governance and Compliance

Sulha Alliance CIO takes all reasonable steps to comply with charity law, and has a Board of Trustees with skills in both law and accountancy. We take external legal advice where appropriate from our legal team at:

Charles Russell Speechly LLP
5 Fleet Place
London EC4M 7RD

Internally, governance is achieved through weekly meetings of the executive team (A sub-group of 3 trustees) and the operational team (employees and volunteers). Activity is scrutinised through quarterly meetings between the executive team and full board of trustees.

Challenges and Risks

Sulha Alliance is mainly volunteer led, with the executive team and trustees all unsalaried. Our volunteers have a long history of standing with our beneficiaries. Our expenditure is modest and our employed staff are externally funded for two years. Our fundraising efforts have been curtailed by the war in Ukraine, which diverted attention away from our beneficiary community, and by the cost of living crisis which has affected the charity sector as a whole. There is therefore a requirement to secure ongoing funding to ensure the continued employment of salaried staff. This is being addressed through a deliberate fundraising strategy.

Those of our beneficiaries who are still in other countries waiting to come to the UK to settle and start a new life are at the mercy of government policy. We are optimistic this will be resolved; that the duty of care the UK has to those who worked with our service personnel at great personal risk will finally be honoured. We will continue to advocate for this solution.

Future Plans and Goals

The Sulha Alliance is committed to helping our Afghan interpreters and LEC community resettle and thrive in the UK. This is a small number of people who supported the British Armed Forces during our time in Afghanistan, and we owe it to them to give them a future free from harm due to that association. We endeavour to strengthen our capacity to do this by increasing the hours and therefore the salary of our CSO, and by employing more people in different parts of the country to assist in the resettlement efforts.

Our plans are twofold: To continue our practical help and outreach in resettling our beneficiaries, and to continue to advocate for our beneficiaries so that they receive the support they deserve.

Financial Projections

Sulha Alliance accounts are prepared in accordance with the guidelines of the Charity Commission of England and Wales.

Contact Information

Sulha Alliance

c/o Charles Russell Speechly LLP

5 Fleet Place

London EC4M 7RD

info@sulha-alliance.org www.sulha-alliance.org



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Sulha Alliance CIO

1198855

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

6-May-22

To

31-Dec-22

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					
Crowdfunder donations during OP PITTING	-	12,910	-	12,910	-
Unbound Philanthropy Grant	-	30,001	-	30,001	-
Individual donors and fundraisers	7,175	-	-	7,175	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	7,175	42,911	-	50,086	-
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
Nil	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	7,175	42,911	-	50,086	-
A3 Payments					
Community events	-	1,250	-	1,250	-
Staff salaries	-	-	-	-	-
Employer and public liability insurance	-	-	-	-	-
Staff pensions	-	-	-	-	-
Staff NI	-	-	-	-	-
Staff expenses	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	1,250	-	1,250	-
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
nil	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	-	1,250	-	1,250	-
Net of receipts/(payments)	7,175	41,661	-	48,836	-
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	-	-	-	-	-
Cash funds this year end	7,175	41,661	-	48,836	-

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	Unrestricted funds on account	7,175	-	-
	Restricted funds on account	-	41,661	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	7,175	41,661	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK



	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

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

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	SARA DE JONG	10/31/2023
	Peter Gordon-Finlayson	10/31/2023

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of The Sulha Alliance CIO

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the period ended 31 December 2022.

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.

M A Filsell FCA

On behalf of Knill James LLP

One bell Lane
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 1JU

Date: 31 October 2023