



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 1 January 2023 until the 31st December 2023

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 (resigned 5th July 2024)
Laurence Longe
David Turner KC
David Williams
Peter Gordon Finlayson
Mukhtar Malakzai (appointed 12th April 2024)
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*.

Foreign Affairs Select Committee

Sulha Alliance was invited to provide evidence for the Foreign Affairs Select Committee 'Follow-up to Afghanistan Inquiry'. Prof Sara de Jong and David Williams, both trustees with Sulha Alliance, [submitted the evidence](#). Here they outlined the dire conditions Afghan interpreters are experiencing in third countries while waiting to be given a decision on their applications to settle in the UK. Prof de Jong and Mr Williams also offered specific recommendations, not least on how to expedite the process of resettlement.

Community Outreach Work

Our Community Support Officer (CSO), a former Afghan interpreter, has been employed by Sulha Alliance since March 2023. He offers support and advice to those who are more established in the UK, but who are still looking to bring additional family members to safety here, whilst seeking employment, housing and educational opportunities.

In 2023, 43 families were supported by our Community Support Officer.

The demands on our CSO will increase significantly with the move by the UK government to hasten the evacuation of eligible Afghans to the UK.

In the autumn, the government of Pakistan started to expel undocumented Afghans in great numbers. This also put ARAP eligible interpreters who used to work for the British armed forces and who were staying in UK-funded hotels in Pakistan awaiting their transfer to the UK, at risk of deportation to Afghanistan. The Pakistanis set a firm deadline of 1 November 2023 for the undocumented Afghans to leave – or be deported. Many Afghans eligible for resettlement in the UK were at this point still in limbo in Pakistan waiting for visas and flights, as the UK Government had put transfers to the UK on hold in December 2022. As such, through no fault of their own their temporary visas to Pakistan had run out and they started running a very real risk of being sent back to Afghanistan, where they and their dependents are sure to face mortal danger.

Due to mounting pressure by the Pakistani Government and legal challenges brought by interpreters waiting in Pakistan and Iran, supported by the Sulha Alliance, the UK Government committed to bringing thousands of ARAP and ACRS eligible Afghans to the UK starting in October 2023. The interpreters and other LECs among this cohort, as well as their dependents will need immediate assistance and long term support from Sulha Alliance.

The Impact on our Beneficiaries

A number of our beneficiaries have experienced distress both mental and financial which is exacerbated by the isolation from family and community in Afghanistan. To mitigate this, we have partnered with The Access Group Foundation and Vodafone to distribute pre-paid data SIM cards to beneficiaries so they are able to keep in touch with family and friends and access the internet to apply for benefits, sign up to a GP and enrol themselves or their children in school.

An example of how the work our Community Support Officer does is demonstrated by the case of Ahmad who was incredibly lonely and not settling well into life in the UK, mental anguish and a loss of purpose coupled with financial hardship. Through guidance from our Community Support Officer, Ahmad is now experiencing much better mental health and working full time in the service industry local to where he lives.

Bringing family over from Afghanistan is key to resettling well in the UK and our Community Support Officer helps beneficiaries complete the necessary forms to apply for Leave Outside the Rules for relatives to the UK who are most at risk or extremely vulnerable, which is a relief to those interpreters resettled to the UK.

Sulha Alliance was pleased to assist an interpreter who contacted our Community Support Officer a few days after arriving in the UK. His young daughter was experiencing mental health issues and Sulha Alliance helped get his children enrolled in the local school and notify the local authority of the challenges the family faced. Since then, the children are thriving and the interpreter is now in an apprenticeship in a laboratory as we discovered that he had qualifications as a laboratory technician.

Interpreters often face housing challenges and Sulha Alliance assisted on a case in Scotland. The interpreter and his family sent through photos of the accommodation they were placed in, it was riddled with mould and rats. This caused mental anguish but also unsurprisingly, physical health issues with breathing and hygiene for the whole family. Our Charity Foundation Officer spoke to the relevant local authority who were equally shocked by the state of the accommodation and alternative housing was offered to the family.

Our interpreters enjoy employment opportunities that use their translation skills. One of our beneficiaries in Wales struggled to find adequate employment. Sulha Alliance through its networks managed to secure him a job as a translator which helps in attaining financial independence and job fulfilment.

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 that are paired with each photo portrait, were taken from in-depth interviews by Prof Sara de Jong with 14 Afghan interpreters, supported by the Sulha Alliance, who were resettled to the UK in 2021.

- Sheffield – Yorkshire Integration Festival – 30 September 2023
- Leeds – Photo North Festival - 23-25 March 2023
- Cardiff - Ffotogallery - 26th January - 25th March 2023
- Newport – outside projection short film – 9 February 2023, opened by Jessica Morden MP
- York - permanent exhibition as part of the 'Art of Politics' trail- opened 23 October 2023

The photo portraits of Afghan interpreters were put on billboards around the city of Cardiff.



Events organised at the Cardiff and Newport exhibitions were visited by two Welsh MPs, 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. Afghan interpreters resettled to Wales also spoke about their experiences at these public outreach events. A student visit to the exhibition was integrated into the University of Cardiff's School of Law and Politics undergraduate module, 'Critical War and Military Studies'.

According to Ffotogallery's Learning and Engagement Manager, there were 717 visitors to the exhibition in Cardiff: *"I've just been looking back through other exhibition records and this visitor number] trumps them significantly! And the events were really effective in highlighting and exploring the issues raised, so thank you for a fab exhibition!"*

The exhibition has been positively reviewed in the media, including *The Cardiffian*, Welsh Agenda and the academic journal *Civil Wars*. The Museum of Equality and Difference (Netherlands) published an online interview: 'We Are Here, Because You Were There': Andy Barnham and Sara de Jong in Conversation with Rosa Wevers', 14 December 2023.

- <https://cardiffjournalism.co.uk/thecardiffian/2023/02/24/afghan-interpreters-who-fled-the-taliban-relive-their-shattering-stories-in-cardiff-exhibition/>
- <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13698249.2023.2190211>
- <https://moed.online/we-are-here-because-you-were-there-andy-barnham-sara-de-jong-in-conversation-with-rosa-wevers/>

The photo exhibition has been developed as a 360 degrees virtual exhibition, which remains available online: <https://ffotogalleryvirtualtours.org/exhibitions/wearehere/>

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

Our funding for our two staff members is secure until 2027, however the risk is that we are unable to find funding to run the events and workshops our beneficiaries enjoy.

Future Plans and Goals

The Sulha Alliance is actively seeking funding from multiple sources to enable us to help as many people as possible. We are already experiencing more demand for support, be it emotional support or financial or material help. As families are brought to the UK during our winter months, appropriate clothing is in demand.

We would like to fund our CSO to do more hours to support this influx and/or if we are able, employ a female CSO for gender-sensitive support for the women in our community, or hire another CSO based in the Scotland or the North of England to support to our beneficiary base their on an in person basis. We do have a volunteer network nationwide to offer ad hoc support but we would like to professionalise this support.

As a mainly volunteer led organisation, we are looking for funding to purchase accounting software to free up more hours to help our beneficiaries directly and have an extra layer of financial governance. Our funds are limited at the moment but as we grow, we would like our audit and compliance capacity to grow commensurate with the size of the charity.

Financial Projections

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

Contact Information

Sulha Alliance

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CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Sulha Alliance CIO

1198855

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

1-Jan-23

To

31-Dec-23

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					
Unbound Philanthropy Grant	-	30,000	-	30,000	30,001
Individual donors and fundraisers	1,653	-	-	1,653	7,175
Program Sales	177	-	-	177	-
Crowdfunder donations	-	-	-	-	12,910
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	1,830	30,000	-	31,830	50,086
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
Nil	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	1,830	30,000	-	31,830	50,086
A3 Payments					
Community events	-	-	-	-	1,250
Staff salaries	-	17,326	-	17,326	-
Employer and public liability insurance	-	227	-	227	-
Staff pensions	-	1,394	-	1,394	-
Employer & employee payroll HMRC	-	2,511	-	2,511	-
Staff expenses	-	402	-	402	-
Independent account review	420	-	-	420	-
Payroll manager	-	252	-	252	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	420	22,112	-	22,532	1,250
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
nil	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	420	22,112	-	22,532	1,250
Net of receipts/(payments)	1,410	7,888	-	9,298	48,836
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	7,175	41,661	-	48,836	-
Cash funds this year end	8,585	49,549	-	58,134	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	8,585	-	-
	Restricted funds on account	-	49,549	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	8,585	49,549	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
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 asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
	#VALUE!	Sara de Jong	10/24/2024	
	#VALUE!	Peter Gordon-Finlayson	10/24/2024	

THE SULHA ALLIANCE CIO
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE SULHA ALLIANCE CIO

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements The Sulha Alliance CIO (the charity) for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no 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 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

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 financial statements to be reached.



D MARTIN FCA
PARTNER
On behalf of TC Group

**One Bell Lane
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 1JU**

Dated: 24 October 2024