



www.sufra-nwlondon.org.uk
Registered Charity No. 1151911

Annual Report

2013-2014

*In the last year, Sufra NW London has provided
emergency food aid for 3,483 people*

Give together | Eat together

Letter of Support

OFFICE OF THE LEADER OF BRENT COUNCIL

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17.09.2013

On behalf of Brent Council, I would like to congratulate you and your team of staff and volunteers on the launch of Sufra NW London. Your charity has filled an important gap in service provision within Brent where over 11,000 children live in severe poverty.

The work of Sufra is very special to us in Brent. We are a diverse community of faiths and cultures, and the charity has worked hard to recruit an interfaith and multicultural workforce to combat food poverty in the borough. It is impressive that you continue to bring new dimensions to your work, innovate in your practice and reach out to some of the most marginalised in our communities.

I wish you all the best on the launch of your service, and look forward to visiting you in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Muhammed Butt
Leader of Brent Council

What does “Sufra” mean?

The word “Sufra” originates from the Persian meaning “table-setting” or “that on which food is served”. It carries similar connotations in Arabic, Turkish and Urdu. Traditionally, the “Sufra” was made of a round cloth or woven palm-leaves, although more recently the term is used in cultural settings to describe long rolls of plastic or paper placed on the floor within a community building to serve large numbers of guests. The term strongly indicates hospitality and generosity towards guests through the service of food and refreshments.

Food Bank users are referred to us as “guests” – we consider each family that attends the food bank to be recipients of our hospitality.



Legal Information

Sufra – NW London is governed by a Constitution, which was adopted on 20 April 2013. The organisation was registered with the Charity Commission on 7 May 2013. The organisation's objects are charitable and are outlined in its governing document as follows:

“The relief of poverty and economic disadvantage among persons who are in a condition of need, hardship or distress in particular within the London boroughs of Brent, Harrow and Ealing and in such other parts of the United Kingdom, by providing such persons with goods and services which they could not otherwise afford through lack of means.”

The Trustees are legally responsible for the organisation, and govern its strategic direction.

Board of Trustees

Warsame Nur	Chair	(Representative Trustee)
Noha Nasser	Secretary	(Representative Trustee)
Zahra Valji	Treasurer	(Representative Trustee)
Aaseem Mulji	Trustee	(Representative Trustee)
Mohamed Mishal Mohamed	Trustee	(Representative Trustee)
Zahra Khimji	Trustee	(Representative Trustee)
Huda Al-Hassani	Trustee	(Representative Trustee)

Representative Trustees are appointed by Partner Organisation who provide core funding for the charity and include:

Al-Mizan Charitable Trust (2 Trustees)
Beta Charitable Trust (2 Trustees)
My Community-UK (1 Trustee)
Shia Ithna-Asheri Community of Middlesex (1 Trustee)
Islamic Unity Society (1 Trustee)

The Terms of Reference of the Board gives power to appoint Independent Trustees. There are currently no Independent Trustees represented on the Board.

Management Committee

Mohammed Sadiq Mamdani	Interim Director (part-time)
Sohaib Hassan	Project Manager
Fahim Dahya	Facilities Manager (part-time)

Melissa's Story

Every week, 150 people come to our food bank. This is Melissa's story, who came to us in November 2013.



**Tom, who is Melissa's 6-year old son,
is regularly skipping meals**

"I am a single mother. I left my husband after he started beating Tom really badly. If it was just me I would have stayed, but I couldn't let Tom suffer like I did. Because I never did well at school, I've struggled to get a job. I never had to worry before when I was with my husband. Now I have to work to put food on the table but it's really hard getting work that is only during school hours. In November I managed to get a part-time job as a dinner lady at Tom's school. I was overjoyed but when my benefits stopped and I was still waiting for my first pay check, we had nothing. I was seriously thinking of stealing food from the school. You see, you can try and live without gas and electricity, but how do you live without food?"

Report from the Chair

The proliferation of food banks across the UK has ignited raucous political debate on the shortcomings of the welfare state. Whilst this profile has supported the work of many food banks, which are heavily reliant on donations from well-wishers in the community, it has also been unhelpful in polarising the political class and unleashing an intrusive critique of those who are reliant on hand-outs from charities. Our volunteers who collect food donations at supermarkets are often quizzed about the “kind of people” we help, whether they spend all their benefits on alcohol or cigarettes and why “they don’t just get a job like everyone else”. These simplistic stereotypes betray how so many of us know so little about the nature of poverty in the UK; for those with any personal or social connection to those who are struggling to make ends meet, these questions, and the public debate has focused on all the wrong questions.

Food poverty in North West London is intrinsically linked to the extortionate cost of housing in the capital. The London Borough of Brent, where the vast majority of our beneficiaries reside, suffers one of the greatest disparities between levels of income and housing costs. Over 30% of employed residents in Brent receive less than the London Living Wage emphasising that hard-working families are no less affected by poverty. As a result, over 18,000 children across North-West London will often have to skip meals. To make matters worse, the implementation of the benefit cap, which makes no account for regional differences means that Brent is the second worst affected local authority in the country. Countless families reside in temporary accommodation, and more and more will be forced to move outside of the borough, leaving behind employment opportunities, breaking social and family contacts and disrupting the education of children and young people.

The public debate on food banks has so heavily focused on whether they are actually needed, that the more justifiable concerns about how they operate and support vulnerable people has escaped the critics. It is clear that many food banks are short-sighted in their good-will, reducing food poverty to a transactional process where a voucher is exchanged for a food parcel with little long-term engagement. Moreover, very few food banks actively integrate within mainstream welfare provision, creating an unregulated sub-sector that fails to look beyond an annual quota of vouchers and an immediate supply of subsistence. In fact, most are not registered charities and there is little accountability for their work.

Sufra NW London was set up in April 2013 by a partnership of 5 charities committing an annual investment of £35,000 for a 3 year period to establish a food bank service that not only provided food aid, but also an array of subsidiary services that contend with individual experiences of poverty. This model of service delivery recognises that food banks provide an opportunity to reach vulnerable people, who may have little or no engagement with statutory or voluntary sector organisations, but present themselves at the food bank in crisis. Sufra is therefore in a prime position to act as the first point of call for those living in “hidden” poverty. By offering a multitude of additional services in the same premises as the food bank, our staff and volunteers are able to support desperate families take their first steps in a journey that challenges the long-term causes of poverty.

Over the past year, we have seen the charity develop and grow its food bank service providing emergency food aid to 3,483 people. We now look forward to an exciting year ahead as many new welfare services are established as part of our core provision.

I would like to thank Mohammed Mamdani for overseeing this development, Sohaib Hassan for managing our operations and Fahim Dahya for providing logistical support to the team.

Warsame Nur
Chair of the Board of Trustees

Report from the Director

When I was invited by the Board of Trustees to join Sufra NW London and develop a new food bank model in Brent, I eagerly accepted the opportunity. Not only was I returning home to work at the grassroots of the community in which I grew up, but also set an ambitious brief to redefine the food bank model. Until now, food banks have generally restricted their service to the immediate relief of food poverty without responding to the root causes of disadvantage and unfairness in this age of unprecedented welfare reform.

The first six months of the past year focused on building the infrastructure of the charity, setting out our ethos and drafting operational policies and procedures. This was followed by our first community food drive in partnership with the local Muslim community, coinciding with Ramadan, which brought in an astonishing 10 tonnes of food supplies. I am immensely grateful to our friends at Harrow Central Mosque and the Husaini Islamic Centre in Stanmore for heavily promoting this inaugural food collection amongst their congregations and stocking the food bank in preparation for its launch.

On 5 October 2013 the food bank officially opened its doors, receiving its first referrals from 18 agencies based across North-West London. These referral agencies, which now include many statutory teams including Brent Council's Welfare Assistance Team play an integral role in identifying and assessing needy families and where appropriate, in issuing vouchers which can be redeemed at the food bank. In this way, we are committed to managing an accountable system for distributing food aid, helping those in genuine need for assistance. Since the launch of the service, Sufra has dramatically increased its profile in the community with a regular and strong presence at community events, on social networking sites and in the media, with articles about the charity published in the Wembley Observer, Harrow Times and the Brent & Kilburn Times.

Within months, Sufra NW London succeeded in integrating its service as part of mainstream provision in the local community, with many new statutory and voluntary sector organisations registering with Sufra NW London as referral agencies. With the food bank fully established, trustees, staff and volunteers have worked collaboratively in the last 3 months to achieve the wider vision of the charity, designing and piloting an array of subsidiary services which seek to alleviate the root causes of poverty in the community. These new services will launch in the coming months and years, as funding becomes available,

creating a holistic programme of activities that challenges the long-term causes of poverty. In this way, the food bank will mark the beginning of a journey, rather than a final destination for families with no hope of a better future.

One of the services piloted during the year was the Food Academy, which trains young people leaving care into independent accommodation for the first time with basic cookery skills. Like all our new services, the Food Academy was inspired by 18-year-old Stephen, one of our first food bank users, who recently left care. His adolescence was exceptionally disruptive moving from one foster home to another, and his last foster parents did not allow him into the kitchen. Living independently for the first time, he said that he could not afford to eat regularly and he had failed his last assessment at college. Probing him further, he explained that he was reliant on take-away meals because he did not know how to cook. In fact, when he received his food parcel, he asked volunteers how to cook basic staples such as pasta and rice. Based on his experience, the Food Academy will teach young people how to prepare meals from scratch over a 5-week accredited course that includes transferrable skills in numeracy and literacy and mentoring towards further education, vocational training or an apprenticeship. We consider it an essential attribute of our services that we achieve multiple social outcomes, rather than isolating food poverty from all other manifestations of poverty.

In light of the public debate surrounding food banks, a key aspect of our role as a charity has been to create better understanding of poverty in local communities. Our staff and volunteers have visiting a number of local schools, community centres and places of worship, delivering presentations and stories of real people affected during the current climate. For many communities, this engagement has been a real eye-opener, and led to greater understanding of the trials and tribulations of low-income families struggling below the breadline. This has also allowed us to maintain a regular schedule of collections, with a colossal 46 tonnes of food collected and distributed during the year.

Volunteers are at the heart of Sufra NW London, with over 70 people, young and old, involved in collecting, sorting and inventorying our food stocks. As the charity grows, we plan to introduce more specialist and flexible roles that create new opportunities for local people to play a greater role in delivering services, whilst learning new transferable skills and forging a strong community spirit. Towards the end of the year, we recruited a new intern, Bulent Kazim, who has developed a local campaign to reduce food wastage and increase energy efficiency as a means to reducing poverty and preserving the environment. In the coming year, we look forward to training community ambassadors who will undertake outreach in the community, helping people to make positive changes in lifestyle. Projects such as these form the mosaic of Sufra NW London's intervention in transforming the prospects of new generations.

Setting up a new charity comes with as much enthusiasm and excitement, as it does unexpected challenges. Our greatest challenge over the past year has been to find suitable premises to accommodate our core food bank service and the many new subsidiary projects under development. Our operation at Carlton House Hall in South Kilburn had always been a temporary residence, and as we mark the end of our first year, I am pleased that we will shortly be moving to St. Raphael's Estate from where our new operation will be based.

Lastly, my gratitude to all our core funders, donors and supporters who make our work possible. In particular, I would like to thank Tessa Awe from CVS Brent who has always been on hand to introduce new contacts and give personal advice and direction to the charity.

Mohammed Sadiq Mamdani
Interim Director



Bulent Kazim & Ali Ansare lead Wednesday Food Bank Sessions on a weekly basis

Our Vision

Sufra NW London is not just a food bank. We are developing a variety of subsidiary services centred on food, which challenge the root causes of poverty in NW London.

Each service has been designed to reflect the real life experiences of food bank guests living in poverty, for which there is little or no provision in the local area.

Food Bank

Emergency food supplies for low-income families in crisis

Food Academy

Accredited learning in basic cookery for young people who have recently left care and/or suffer from mental health and addiction.

Welfare Surgeries

Drop-in advice services providing sign-posting, advocacy, access to vocational education, volunteering and employment opportunities and financial literacy training.

Kitchen

Hot food service and drop-in for asylum seekers and their families with access to pro-bono solicitors and English classes for women and children

Medical Screenings

“Pop-up” clinics in council estates across NW London, providing screenings for basic medical conditions, nutrition workshops and health advice.

Subsidised Vegetable Box Scheme

A food co-op encouraging low-income families to eat fresh fruit and vegetables at affordable prices

Growing Project

An allotment managed by secondary children suffering obesity, growing fresh produce and learning about the provenance of food

Food Sustainability Project

Community activism and local campaigning on the ethical and environmental implications of food wastage

Food Bank – How much do you provide?



We provide guests with enough food to feed their family 3 meals a day for a minimum of 5 days. Each food parcel is proportionate to the size of the family, and is tailor-made to reflect the cultural and faith sensitivities of guests.

A standard food parcel contains: cereal/porridge, juice, milk, biscuits, tea, coffee, jam, sugar, instant noodles, soup, baked beans, pasta, pasta sauce, rice, lentils, chickpeas, kidney beans, cooking oil, tinned fish, tinned vegetables, tinned fruit, stock cubes, seasoning and rice pudding or custard.

Retail Value:

Two-Person Family (Small):

Minimum Retail Value: £26.26

Four-Person Family (Medium):

Minimum Retail Value: £45.16

Seven-Person Family (Large):

Minimum Retail Value: £65.64

On average, each parcel is worth 13% more because we are able to provide additional food items, including occasional fresh produce, depending on the food donations we receive.

The total retail value of food distributed in 2013-2014 was: £28,534.87

Food Bank Statistics – A Brief Analysis

We provide guests with enough food to feed their family 3 meals a day for a minimum of 5 days. Each food parcel is proportionate to the size of the family, and is tailor-made to reflect the cultural and faith sensitivities of guests. A statistical breakdown of guests is included overleaf.

Key Facts:

- The food bank issued a total of 883 food parcels supporting 3,483 people. 78% of guests were unique users (689 food parcels supporting 2,486 people). These figures represent 6 months of operation in the last financial year when the service opened.
- More than four-fifths of guests only accessed the food bank once (83.3%) demonstrating that the service does not encourage dependency. Only 3.0% of guests received 4 or more food parcels.
- 63.4% of food parcels were issued to small families comprising between 1 and 3 people. 17.0% of recipient households had 7 or more family members reflecting the impact of the benefit cap disproportionately affects small and large families in the London Borough of Brent.
- More than half (57.3%) of recipients in need of emergency food aid were children under the age of 18 years.
- Almost a quarter of guests (23.7%) stated that the main reason for accessing the food bank was due to disruptions in the benefit payments. In contrast, 27.3% of guests were from working families who could not afford the cost of living, despite being in employment.
- A larger proportion of guests identified as Black African, Caribbean or of another Black background (59.7%), compared to Asians and people of Mixed ethnic background who represented 6.0% and 1.7% of users respectively.

Food Bank Statistics – Data

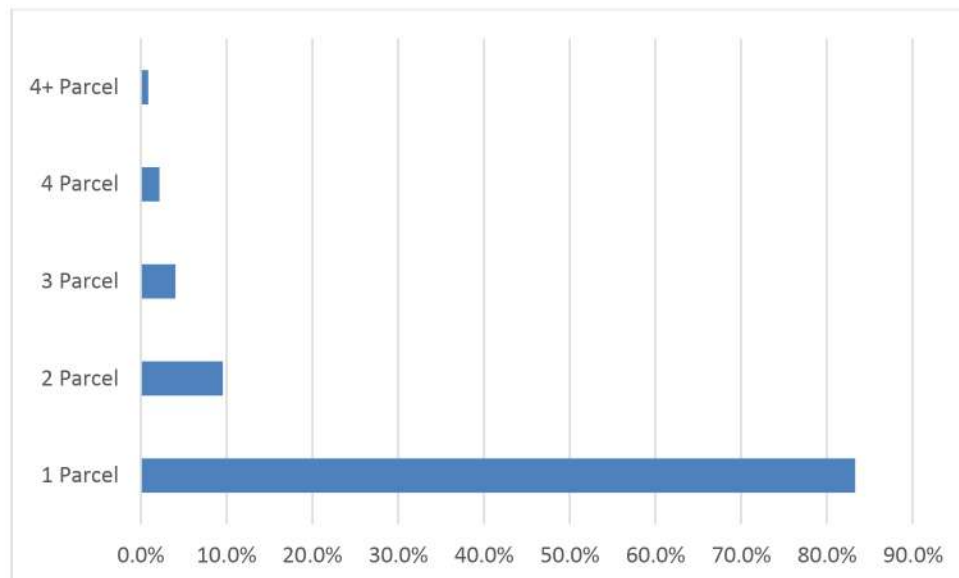
Number of Beneficiaries

Total Number of Food Parcels	883
Total Number of Recipients	3,483

Unique Number of Families Supported	689
Unique Number of People Supported	2,486

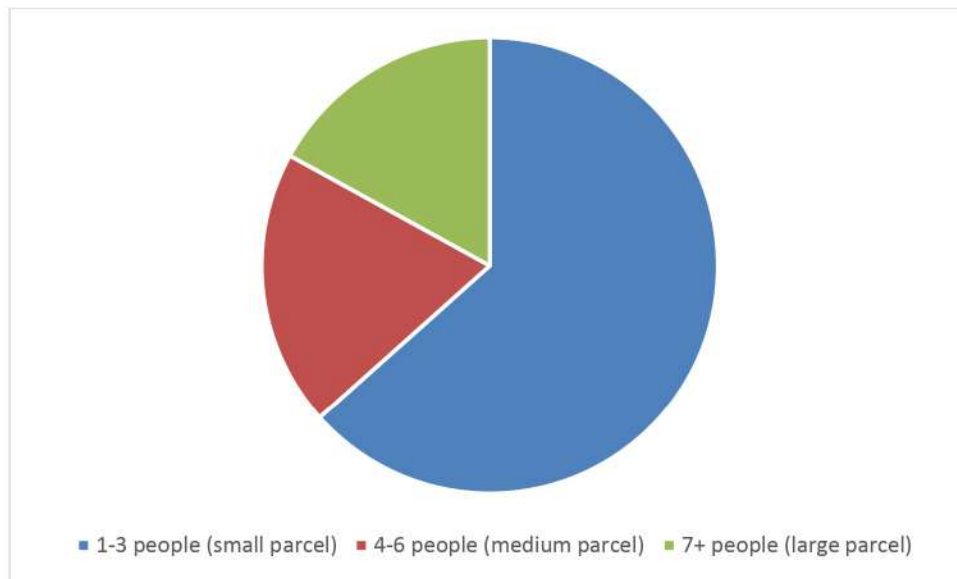
Number of Parcels Received Per Family

1 Food Parcel	574	83.3%
2 Food Parcels	66	9.6%
3 Food Parcels	28	4.1%
4 Food Parcels	15	2.2%
4+ Food Parcels	6	0.9%



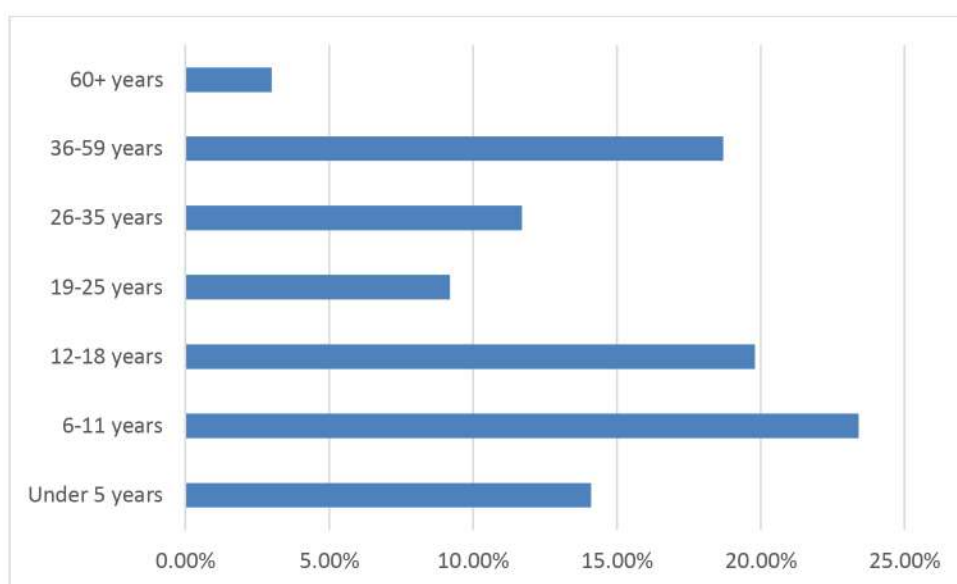
Family Size

1-3 people (small parcel)	437	63.4%
4-6 people (medium parcel)	135	19.6%
7+ people (large parcel)	117	17.0%



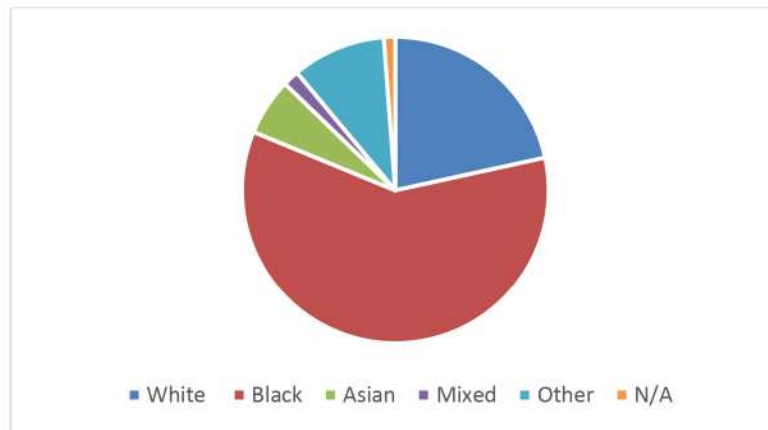
Age of Food Recipients

Under 5 years	350	14.1%
6-11 years	581	23.4%
12-18 years	493	19.8%
19-25 years	229	9.2%
26-35 years	292	11.7%
36-59 years	466	18.7%
60+ years	75	3.0%



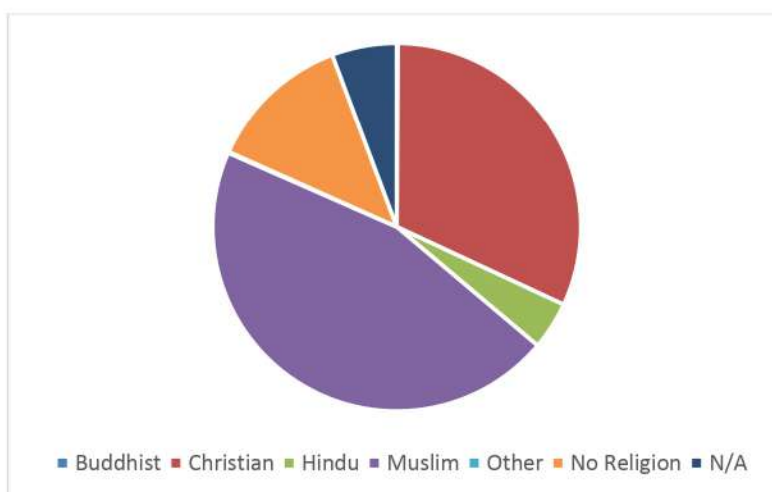
Ethnicity

White	149	21.6%
Black	411	59.7%
Asian	41	6.0%
Mixed	12	1.7%
Other	68	9.9%
N/A	8	1.2%



Faith

Buddhist	1	0.1%
Christian	219	31.8%
Hindu	29	4.2%
Muslim	313	45.4%
Other	1	0.1%
No Religion	87	12.6%
N/A	39	5.7%



Picture Gallery #1



Councillor Butt, Leader of Brent Council distributing “shopping lists” at Tokyngton Week of Action



School children dress up as superheroes in bid to save families from food poverty



Young people from Ansar Youth Project working late into the night moving food



Murtaza collecting food donations at Sainsburys in Hendon – our first supermarket collection!

Picture Gallery #2



1-year-old food bank guest chooses her favourite foods with
Sohaib Hassan, Project Manager of Food Bank



University students set up
food collection points during
Interfaith Week 2013



Pilot Food Academy training young people
basic cookery skills.



Front Page article about Sufra NW London
in Wembley Observer



Every grain of rice counts!



Remembering the hungry at Halloween

Core Funders

We are grateful to our core funders who have supported the development and operational costs of the charity:

Al-Mizan Charitable Trust (£10,000)

Al-Mizan Charitable Trust (AMCT) is a grant-funder that supports vulnerable families living in poverty across the UK. We provide small grants and interest-free loans of up to £500 that help disadvantaged families in severe financial difficulty purchase essential household items such as beds and cookers, access vocational training and meet day-to-day living costs. For more information, visit www.almizantrust.org.uk.

Beta Charitable Trust (£10,000)

Beta Charitable Trust (BCT) works in some of the most destitute and deprived areas of the world to provide basic human rights to the poorest of individuals on the premise that clean water, sanitation, food, medical care and education are the fundamental rights of every human being. For more information, visit www.betacharitabletrust.org.

Shia Ithna'Ashari Community of Middlesex (£5,000)

The Shia Ithna'Ashari Community of Middlesex (SICM) is a community centre located in North Harrow that holds weekly activities and events to encourage spiritual, intellectual and physical development of community members, in partnership with local faith communities. For more information visit www.sicm.org.uk or www.thesalaamcentre.com.

My Community UK (£5,000)

My Community UK (MCUK) is a charity aimed at creating a shared platform across all cultural backgrounds to share knowledge, skills and experiences on a wide range of issues affecting the vulnerable in society. For more information, visit www.mcuk.org.uk.

Islamic Unity Society (£5,000)

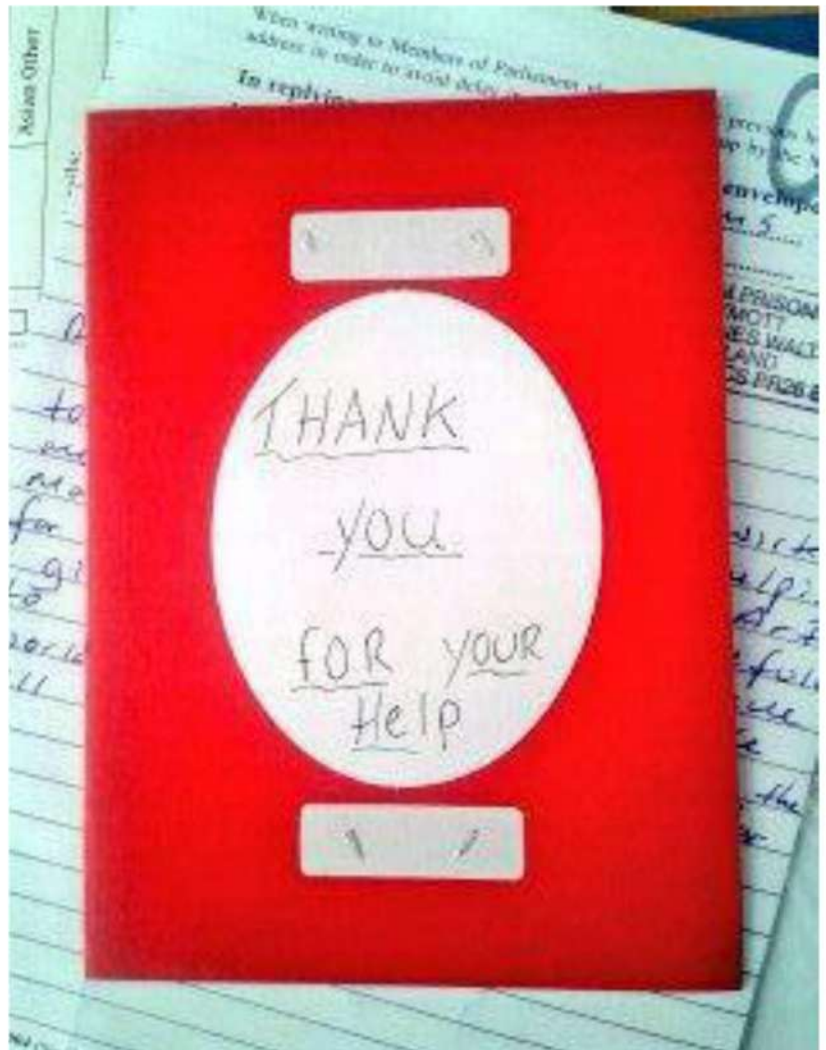
The Islamic Unity Society (IUS) is an independent charity run by young volunteers nationwide that works to promote social and cultural cohesion within a multi-cultural Britain through a year-round programme of events in London and Manchester. For more information, visit www.ius.org.uk.

Sufra NW London welcomes new organisations and companies to join our core funding partnership in supporting the delivery of the charity's services.

Acknowledgements

With thanks to the following charities, agencies and companies for their support:

Daniels Estate Agents, Barham Park Primary School, Sainsburys (Hendon), Morrisons (Harrow), Kilburn Salvation Army, Help Somalia Foundation, B3/Bsafe, Sainsburys (Willesden Green), Asda (Park Royal), Brent Council Welfare Assistance Team, Choices, Kosher Roast, Wembley Observer, Brent Council Family Solutions Team, CVS Brent, Ansar Youth Project, Octavia Housing Association, Willesden Locality Children's Centres, Abbas Dhalla, Lonsdale Medical Centre, Brent HIV Community Services, Interfaith Youth Trust, Oasis Restaurant, Brent Somali Community Roots, Asda (Park



Royal), Philip Mundy (Fladgate LLP), Willesden Probation Office, Ali Khimji, National Algerian Centre, Liberal Jewish Synagogue, Samira Quraishy, Ariana Restaurant, Adam Forest, Abbas Premji, Acton Homeless Concern, IHRC Bookshop, Brent & Kilburn Times, Rumi's Cave, Kilburn Park School, Harrow Central Mosque, St. George's Catholic School, Addaction – Brent, Sri Lankan Muslim Cultural Centre, Home-Start Westminster, Ashford Place, Age UK Brent, Co-op Community Fund, London Probation Trust, Abbas Zahedi, Muslim Student Council, Look Ahead, Victim Support London, Harrow Times, Council of European Jamaats, Hussaini Islamic Centre, Sadik Premji (SP Accounting), Stanmore Jaffreys, Brent Housing Partnership, Al-Barakah School, Irfan Jiwa, Brent Mind, Brent Carers Centre, An-Noor School, Windermere Pub, Brent Irish Advisory Services, PLIAS, Brent Wellbeing Project and Energy Solutions



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