



Impact Report

April 2024 – March 2025



Sufra: A definition (Pronounced 'Sof-rah')

The word 'Sufra' originates from the Persian word 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 woven palm leaves, but now denotes any kind of tablecloth that is laid on the floor, whether at home or in community settings, to serve food to invited guests. Unfolding the 'Sufra' is a display of hospitality and generosity, where the role of host and guest is often indistinguishable.

Guest: Our definition

At Sufra, beneficiaries or service users are referred to as 'guests' – each person is a recipient of our hospitality.

About Sufra NW London

Sufra is a charity in North West London that prevents hunger, fights poverty and builds community.

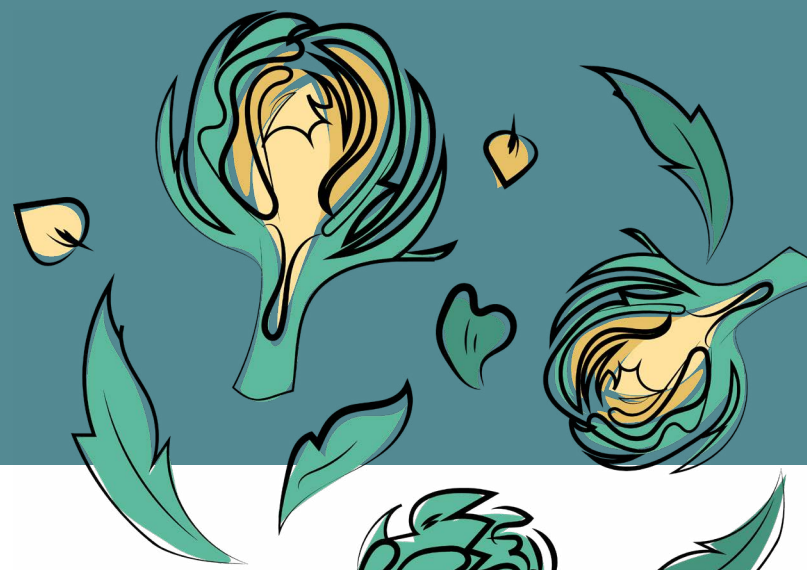
With the help of our volunteers and partners, we coordinate a network of food banks, kitchens, a community shop and café. These act as a gateway for guests to access more holistic support – including welfare advice, asylum support and our award-winning community garden.

We aim to work with our guests to find solutions to their challenges together, whilst campaigning against the causes of hunger and poverty.

Sufra holds multiple Quality Standard accreditations, including Trusted Charity at Level 2, the Advice Quality Standard (AQS) and the Green Care Quality Mark. We are also registered with the Immigration Advice Authority (IAA).

Additionally, we maintain active membership in the Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN), Feeding Britain, and the Brent Food Aid Network.

To find out more or support our work, please visit www.sufra-nwlondon.org.uk



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A Message from the Executive Director

Poverty in Brent and across London is relentless, but so is our community's determination to fight back. Every week, we meet people facing impossible choices—parents skipping meals so their children can thrive, neighbours supporting each other through crisis, and volunteers giving their time to make sure no one is left behind.

The scale of need is huge. This year, we supported **14,335** people to access nutritious food – that's more than **48,000 instances** of support to those in crisis. Every meal served and every food parcel distributed helped reduce hunger, improve health, and restore dignity for people in crisis. Our food banks alone reached 4,471 people – almost **20,000** when you include family members. Through our Community Kitchens, we served over **25,000 hot meals** to an estimated 9,000 people, each one providing a critical moment of connection.

Our pioneering Community Wellbeing Service, now established at the New Horizons Centre in Willesden, has quickly become a lifeline – offering affordable groceries, holistic advice and support, hot meals, and a welcoming space to build resilience. Our SALIENT Voucher trial is also breaking new ground in how charities like Sufra can work to prevent hunger and poverty – more about this next year.

As the cost of living continues to bite, our Advice and OpenARMS teams have unlocked over **£145,000** in vital income for those who need it most. In the meanwhile, our Community Garden, my favourite place to spend time at Sufra, has flourished as a space of healing, learning and connection – where volunteers and guests grow fresh produce together, nurture wellbeing, and cultivate hope from the ground up.

But our work goes beyond immediate support. Hundreds of volunteers – many of whom have been guests themselves – have given over 16,000 hours of their time to Sufra this year, proving that real change is built on solidarity. Through our community engagement and advocacy work, we've campaigned for fairer policies, championed the voices of those with lived experience, and shown what's possible when a community stands together for change.



Thank you for believing in our mission. Together, we're not just responding to crisis – we're building a future where everyone has the chance to flourish.

Rajesh Makwana BEM
Executive Director, Sufra



Our Vision, Mission & Principles

Our Vision:

A community united to address the causes and consequences of poverty.

Our Mission:

Working with partners, we fight poverty and build community by providing access to food, emergency support and impartial advice, alongside opportunities for volunteering and self-development.

Sufra
FIGHT POVERTY
LOVE COMMUNITY

Our Values and Principles

1. We take a holistic approach, based on human rights:

- Food aid is essential – but it is not the solution to food poverty.
- Our approach is holistic and designed to reduce dependency on food aid.
- We recognise that there are different approaches to reducing food poverty.

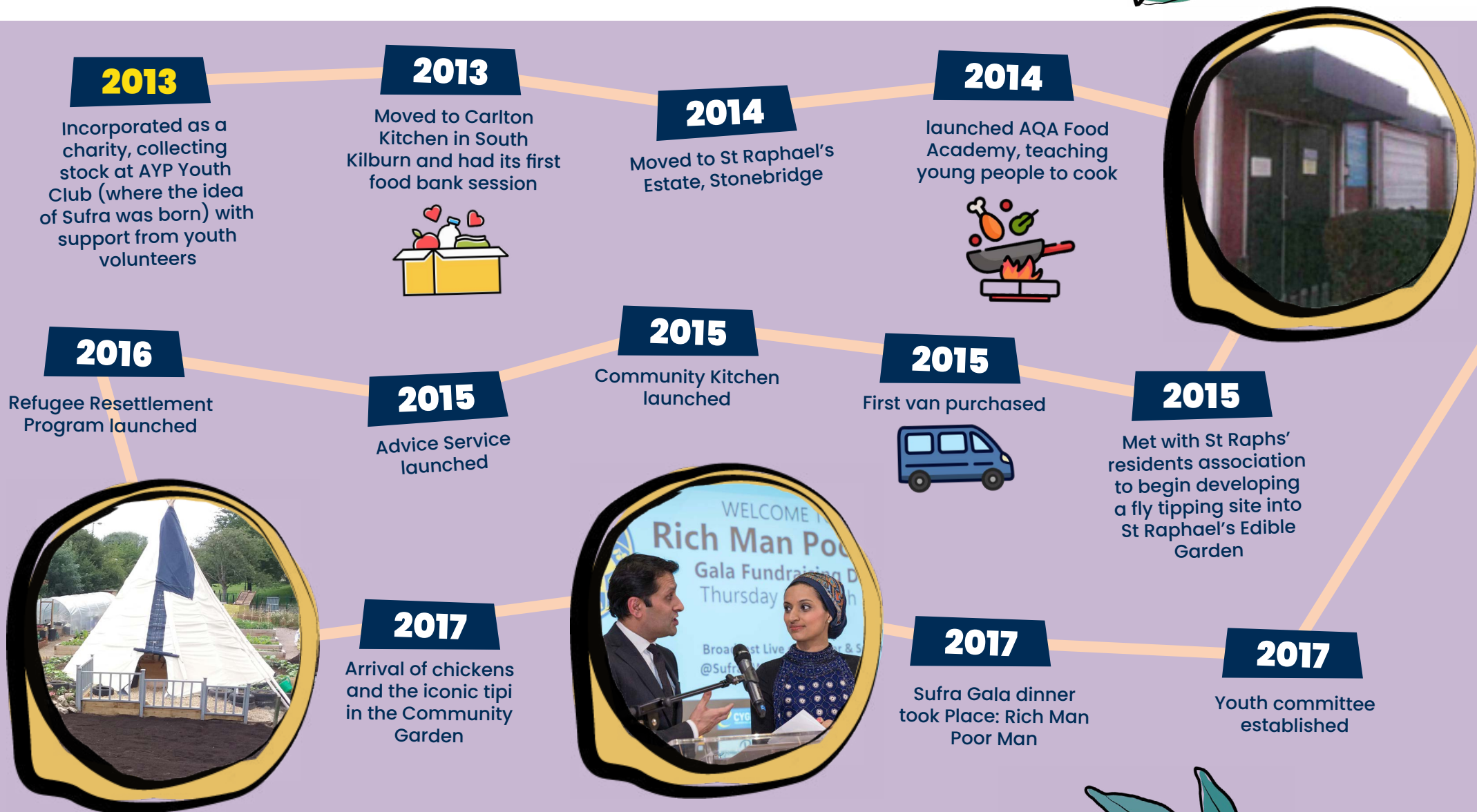
2. We are embedded in the local community:

- We are a grassroots charity embedded in local communities, mainly in the London Borough of Brent.
- We are more effective when we collaborate with others and build a stronger community where we operate.
- We serve people of all and no faiths without discrimination.

3. We respect the dignity of our guests and the needs of the planet:

- We are committed to upholding and enhancing the dignity of our guests.
- We value the wellbeing and development of our staff, volunteers and trustees.
- We are committed to environmental sustainability. We recognise the importance of caring for our environment.

History of Sufra



History of Sufra

2018

Catering Service and Crepe Stall (Oh Crepe!) launched

2018

Mohammed Mamdani resigned as Director of Sufra, succeeded by Rajesh Makwana

2019

Diarmuid O'Hegarty stepped down as Chair of Trustees and Susan Crane appointed as new Chair

2020

Lockdown: complete restructure of services and huge increase in demand of 300+%

300+%



2022

New Community Kitchen launched in partnership with Ark Elvin Academy and the Raheem Sterling Foundation

2022

Rajesh Makwana received British Empire Medal (BEM) in recognition of Sufra's work



2021

OpenARMs Programme launched to meet needs of changing demographics

2021

Additional food bank hubs established with the Pakistan Community Centre and Ansar Youth Project

2021

Partnership with Laurence's Larder and Granville Community Kitchen to develop 5-day-a-week hot meal provision in Brent



2023

Community Wellbeing Project piloted at Bridge Park Leisure Centre, in partnership with Brent Council

2024

Sufra rebrand and new website launched with tagline: Fight Poverty, Love Community



2025

Community Wellbeing Service established at New Horizons in Willesden, with Brent Council

2025

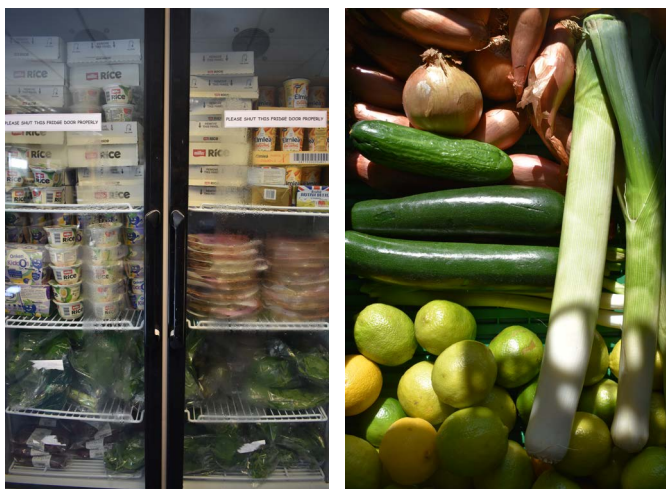
2030 Strategy and SALIENT Voucher Pilot launched



Emergency Aid: Food Bank, Clothing Drives and Essential Support



Sufra provides emergency food as well as toiletries, baby supplies and essentials, via three food bank sessions operating from two hubs. We also deliver NHS food parcels to GPs and hospital departments, and provide a Fresh Meal Delivery Service for those who are unable to attend the food bank. Through our Annual Winter Warmer Coat Drive, we provide vital warmth and comfort to hundreds of families facing harsh winter conditions, ensuring they are protected from the cold and able to get through the toughest months with dignity.



"We served such a variety of people—men, women, families, older folk. One elderly gentleman with a very round tum thought nothing would fit, but after some encouragement and a new XXL olive green anorak, he did a little dance of joy. A very pregnant woman asked if her unborn child qualified for a coat and was thrilled to find a warm baby-sized snowsuit. Two homeless men were especially pleased their jackets had zip-up pockets to keep their most treasured possessions safe. Only two people left empty-handed—everyone else went away snug, warm and very happy."

Winter Warmer Coat Drive

How We've Helped

- **4,471** unique guests supported by the food bank
- **19,982** total food bank recipients (including those attending several times over the year)
- **877** coats distributed at our winter warmer coat drive
- **220** registered referral agencies.

Who we have helped

- **60%** of Food Bank guests are women
- **42%** are under the age of 18
- **39%** are from a BAME background
- **11%** are refugees, asylum seekers or migrants
- **1 in 4** are claiming benefits

In September 2024, SALIENT Research and the University of Liverpool teamed up with Sufra to evaluate a new approach to preventing poverty. They launched the first randomised control trial comparing the outcomes of giving people the option to choose between pre-packed food parcels or supermarket vouchers so individuals could buy their own food.

Over 200 households were enrolled onto the trial between September – June 2025. We anticipate the results to be published in 2026.



Community Kitchen

Our Community Kitchens operate year-round, offering hundreds of meals each week to guests, including those who use Sufra's services. They welcome everyone to enjoy a free, freshly prepared three-course hot meal in a communal setting. By providing hot, nutritious food, our Community Kitchens also act as social spaces that help nurture community spirit and belonging.



Through partnerships with Brent Council, Laurence's Larder, Ark Elvin Academy, and Granville Community Kitchen, we host six weekly kitchen sessions and three daytime café sessions—supporting people in need without requiring referrals. Some of our meals are also distributed directly to people experiencing homelessness, thank to our partnership with Who is Hussain.



Community Kitchen

- **25,514** freshly cooked meals distributed via our Community Kitchens and Fresh Meal delivery service
- **9** Community Kitchens and Café sessions operational across Brent



Christmas Dinner

- **210** guests at our Christmas day dinner
- **41** volunteers and 6 staff on Christmas day
- **2** festive musicians
- And a partridge in a pear tree!



OpenARMs Eid Celebration

- **32** guests for a 3 course meal (and fruit platters!)
- Shared prayer
- Henna tattooing

Community Wellbeing Service

The Community Wellbeing Service began as a pilot at Bridge Park Leisure Centre in February 2023 to help local families manage the rising cost of living. It moved to the New Horizons Centre in January 2025 and soon become a full-time service. Unlike a Food Bank, it offers preventative support and a range of services under one roof to help families build financial and personal resilience.

For just £4 a week, members can access:



Community Shop	Community Café	Advice and Support	Community Kitchen
Members can access the shop once a week, bagging groceries valued at approximately £35.	The Community Café offers free lunches, snacks and drinks for members and their families.	Members are signposted to partners or given appointments with the advice team. Members also attend a variety of workshops and drop-in support services run by a range of partners.	The Community Kitchen welcomes all members of the community, regardless of membership status. In the evenings, attendees are served a freshly prepared three-course hot meal on site.



Community Wellbeing Service

- 61% of members report having to skip meals
- 75% struggle to pay bills
- CWS membership predominantly identify as 'Black, Black British, Caribbean or African'
- £48,600 worth of food saved from landfill

CWS Member – 'Shara'

Case study:

"I heard about the service when I came to New Horizons to see the family homelessness team. I was accessing universal credit but using most of my income towards my children, bills and rent. On the day I registered for CWS, my husband kicked me out of our house!"

All of my income from benefits was going towards paying the bills and the rent. I felt very socially isolated because I don't have any friends in the area and I feel judged for being an immigrant on benefits.

This service helped a lot because it lightens the costs of the week. It's a very welcoming space that makes me feel like a respected human being. If I wasn't accessing CWS, I would have to choose between buying groceries and paying bills. It feels like a relief not having to give up on things that are less essential but still necessary like my phone, and even buying an ice-cream for my child.

I love spending time in the cafe with my little boy, it is relaxing to come and sit with a hot drink and a biscuit. Everyone is very nice to us. Coming here has helped me financially and helped with my mental health as well. I hadn't seen a service like this before, where people are patient, where the space is well organised and welcoming."

Welfare Advice

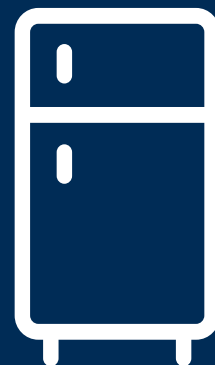
Advice

Our Advice Workers help guests to address the problems that lead them to the Food Bank or our Community Wellbeing Service – such as benefit disruptions, housing problems, and other financial difficulties.

In 2024-25, we grew our advice team to three advisors and kept offering signposting sessions connecting guests with specialist voluntary organisations. Food bank guests can book advice appointments through our dedicated phoneline.

- **1,144** people benefitted from our Advice Services, **OpenARMS** Programme and Signposting Service
- **£145,108** additional income gained for our guests

Items for guests
purchased through
our Emergency
Aid fund



Signposting and Guidance Support

Where can I get help to sort out my problems?
We offer free confidential signposting and guidance on a range of issues.

'I am going through a lot of difficulties with bills and cost of living. Thanks to Sufra's signposting service, I have learnt a lot of things and received support that I didn't know existed. The signposting has widened my knowledge in accessing other services'

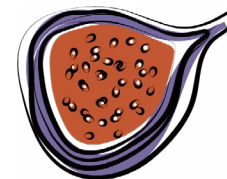
Topics

- Benefits
- Housing
- Homelessness
- Utilities
- Employment

Sufra is a charity in North West London that prevents hunger, fights poverty and builds community.

X f @ in
@SufraNWLondon
020 3441 1335
160 Pitfield Way, Stonebridge, London, NW10 0PW

Registered Charity No. 1151911



OpenARMs

Case study: Proving Your Worth

Omar arrived in the UK as a refugee from Iran, hoping for a fresh start. With nowhere stable to stay, he was soon made homeless —sleeping on a friend's couch until he was asked to leave, then forced onto the streets within a week.

Living with a degenerative mobility illness and severe mental health needs, Omar struggled to find work and access support. When he came to Sufra's Advice Drop-In, everything changed. Our team secured him emergency accommodation and helped him navigate the complex benefits system. Omar struggled with the standard rate of Universal Credit, which didn't account for his medical conditions. With our support, he accessed the disability element of Universal Credit, giving him better access to benefits and more money every month.

Omar's story is a powerful reminder of how the right advice and advocacy can restore dignity, stability, and hope.

Our OpenARMS programme offers specialised services for asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants with no access to public funds. We provide weekly coffee mornings, English classes, and cultural events such as Nowruz, Yalda, and Ramadan. We also covered transport and tickets for Winter Wonderland in Hyde Park for our ESOL class, and in late 2024, hosted E-Visa drop-ins to support guests with documentation during the BRP phase-out.



Case study:



Volunteering

Our volunteers are the heartbeat of Sufra. Week after week, they show up with energy, compassion, and a determination to make a difference—whether welcoming guests at the food bank, answering calls, or delivering food to doorsteps. They're often the first friendly face our guests see, and the reason so many feel at home here.

This year, 258 volunteers gave over 16,000 hours of their time, supported by more than 50 corporate groups. Their dedication is what turns our vision into reality.

VOLUNTEER ANALYSIS

We prioritise accessibility: One in four volunteers at Sufra has a disability or health condition.

"It helps keep me distracted when I go through severe depression."

At Sufra, 68% of volunteers come from an ethnic minority background, versus 18% across England and Wales, highlighting Sufra's diverse community in Brent.

"An inclusive approach where everyone is welcome, regardless of their background."

Over 85% feel supported as a Sufra volunteer

"Meetings and events for volunteers make me feel valued and give me a chance to meet others."

Sufra welcome volunteers from all backgrounds – the more the merrier! You can sign up to be a volunteer via the our form on our website. Our roles include:

- Fresh Food Packing
- Storeroom Packing
- Food Hosting
- Food Delivery
- Community Shop Assistant
- Community Cafe Assistant
- Community Kitchen
- Pathway Triage
- Telephone
- Garden
- Signposting
- Advice Triage
- Community Food Champions



www.sufra-nwlondon.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/



Community Engagement and Advocacy

Sufra has a longstanding tradition of guests becoming volunteers. Our Community Engagement Programme now formalises this, offering supervision, training, and opportunities to gain skills and qualifications. But our Community Engagement work extends to far more than volunteering opportunities.

We formed a steering group for St. Raphael's Edible Garden, with 30 members meeting four times to lead on design, planning, and evaluation of garden projects, including a new garden outside our food bank and the annual Winter Wonderland event, attended by over 160 people.

Our Advocacy group, working with Citizens UK, campaigned for free bus travel for asylum seekers. Guests helped produce a campaign video, shared stories, and attended Mayoral Assemblies. In November 2024, London Assembly members approved a motion supporting free bus travel for asylum seekers.



St Raphael's Edible Garden

St Raphael's Edible Garden is an award-winning community food growing project. The garden supports environmental sustainability, improves local food security, promotes wellbeing and offers access to learning opportunities – all whilst bringing together one of Brent's most marginalised communities.

ST. RAPH'S GARDEN IN NUMBERS

653_{kg}

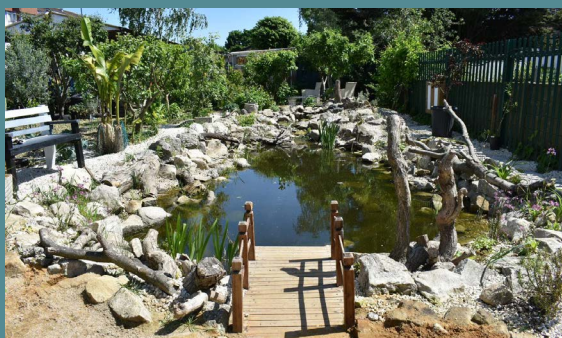
of CO2 were removed
from the atmosphere

over
596_{kg}

of organic produce
was harvested

43

students received
receiving AQA certificates
from garden courses



Pond refurb

More than 131 volunteers helped transform our pond by catching fish, redesigning the landscape, and adding many new aquatic plants.



Forest school

After a pause in 2024, we brought back our Forest School Programme. More than 20 children used their half-term break to learn outdoor cooking skills and turn recycled materials into crafts.



In Spring 2024, we ran a programme with **5 local facilitators** covering Fermentation, Foraging, Seed Paper, Microgreens, and an **AQA Circle of Soup workshop** with **113 attendances from 81 local people**. The **Autumn Programme engaged 44 people** in workshops on fermentation, pickling, jam and chutney making, and bushcraft.

Meet Team Sufra 2024–25

Staff:

Rajesh Makwana BEM – Executive Director

Gill Carter – Deputy Director

Fahim Dahya – Logistics and Facilities Manager

Sidrah Iqbal – Finance Manager

Jo Kay – Programmes Manager

Zena Kazeme – Advice Manager

Nina Parmar – Food Aid Manager

Billie Beckley – Garden Manager

Ben Witcombe – Community Engagement Manager

Jasvinder Singh – Community Chef

Chloe Payne – Community Chef

Zehn Mohammed – Project Officer

Mohamed Osman – Facilities Assistant

Elalia Kireche – Pilot Project Lead

Nashad Mahamoud – Pilot Project Assistant

Freda Lawson-King – CWS Coordinator

Ariane Gory – CWS Coordinator

Pauline Chevet – CWS Assistant

Siham El Berjaoui – Community Kitchen Session Lead

Anaam Hussein – Administrative Officer

Sabina Lichacz – Fundraising and Communications Officer

Ella Marshall – Learning and Outreach Officer

Nicholas Smith – Community Food Grower

Amina Fiaz – Advice Officer

Aiysha Briscoe – Advice Officer

Dolores Miller – Advice Officer

Haydar Al Dabagh – Driver/Stock Coordinator

Wael Mahmoud – CWS Facilities Assistant

Samiullah Amiri – CWS Facilities Assistant

Ludwin Cardona – CWS Facilities Assistant



We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Aaseem Mulji for his unwavering commitment and service as a founding trustee.



After 11 years of dedicated service, Aaseem stepped down in 2024, having played a pivotal role in shaping Sufra's development. His thoughtful guidance and steadfast support have been instrumental in advancing our mission, and his legacy continues to inspire our work. We are deeply grateful for everything he has contributed.



Board of Trustees:

Susan Crane – Chair

Helena Krawitz – Deputy Chair

Pankaj Shah – Treasurer

Asad Abdullah

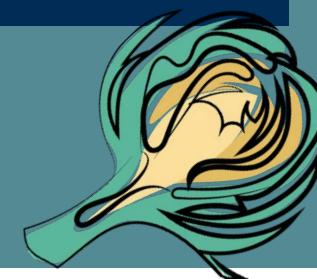
Lucy Bannister

Zemira Braganz

Ashraf Mohammed

Sanya Syed

Rozia Hussain



Get Involved

Donate Money

You can make a regular or one-off contribution via our website:

<https://bit.ly/donate-to-sufra>



If you'd like to donate via bank transfer, our bank details are:

Name of Bank: **HSBC**

Name on Account: **Sufra NW London**

Account Number: **01537873**

Sort Code: **40-46-10**

Make sure to tick the Gift Aid box when donating to allow us to claim an extra 25p of tax for every £1 you donate.

Emergency Aid Fund

Many of the individuals and families who access Sufra NW London's services are in a condition of extreme financial hardship and/or destitution. Whilst the charity provides in-kind donations of food, toiletries and clothing, some guests require additional financial support to pay for essential travel, electricity meter top-up or emergency accommodation.

By donating to this restricted fund, you can help us support our neighbours, such as the single mother who's just lost her job, the asylum seeker who's facing homelessness, or the pensioner who's using up his last savings on heating bills.

Select the Emergency Aid Fund in the donation form on our website to help us fight against poverty, for our community.

Donate Food

Food donations can be dropped off to our main premises at 160 Pitfield Way, Stonebridge, London, NW10 0PW on Mondays to Fridays between 10am to 5pm. Outside of these hours, food donations can be left in our yellow bins outside of the building. Please note, we can only accept non-perishable food.

For those unable to drop-off their donations, you can purchase your donation via online retailers such as Amazon, Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's and Ocado by setting Sufra's address as the delivery address.

You can also contact us to become a Community Food Champion and have one of our yellow bins at your workplace, community centre or place of worship, which we would collect weekly.



Thank You!

During this year of immense growth and development, we were privileged to have the support of some amazing organisations. So, we wanted to say a huge THANK YOU to the funders, donors, companies and partners who have supported us, including (but not limited to):



- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Accenture | 23. Garfield Weston Foundation | 45. Marks and Spencers | Charitable Foundation |
| 2. Ace Cafe London LTD | 24. Granville Community Kitchen | 46. Mercers | 67. Social Farms and Gardens |
| 3. Al Barakah School | 25. Greater London Authority | 47. Mott McDonald | 68. Society of the Holy Child Jesus |
| 4. All Ways Network | 26. Greenwood Place | 48. Murphy's | 69. St. Christopher's School |
| 5. Amazon Web Services | 27. Groundwork | 49. NACCOM | 70. St. Raphael's Family Wellbeing Centre |
| 6. Arcus Infrastructure | 28. Hand on Heart | 50. National Lottery Communities Fund | 71. St. Raphael's Voice |
| 7. Ark Elvin Academy | 29. Harlesden Mutual Aid | 51. New Horizons Centre | 72. Stratton Chase Foundation |
| 8. Arnold House | 30. Headley Trust | 52. North View Primary School | 73. Swire Charitable Trust |
| 9. Aylward Primary School | 31. Henry Smith Charity | 53. OCS | 74. The Advocacy Team |
| 10. Bearhaus | 32. Independent Food Aid Network | 54. Pakistan Community Centre | 75. The Felix Project |
| 11. Beta Charitable Trust | 33. Islamic Human Rights Commission (CIHRC) | 55. Park Lane Primary School | 76. The Football Association (FA) |
| 12. Betty Messenger Foundation | 34. Islamic Relief | 56. Pears Foundation | 77. The Hobson Charity |
| 13. Brent Council | 35. John Lyon's Charity | 57. Preston Manor School | 78. The Kiln |
| 14. Bridge Park Leisure Centre | 36. Jongen Charitable Trust | 58. Preston Primary School | 79. The Lady Fatemah Trust |
| 15. Cadent Gas | 37. Julia Rausing Trust | 59. Propel | 80. The Neighbourly Foundation |
| 16. Charity Aid Foundation (CAF) | 38. Jungels-Winkler Foundation | 60. Quintain Living | 81. The Raheem Sterling Foundation |
| 17. Citizens UK | 39. Kusama Trust | 61. Ramon School | 82. Tudor Trust |
| 18. City Harvest | 40. Laurence's Larder | 62. Refugee Action | 83. University of Liverpool |
| 19. Drapers Charitable Trust | 41. Lesley Hynes Fundraising | 63. Ridge and Partners | 84. Volunteers on Wheels |
| 20. EE | 42. Lloyd's Bank | 64. S I Madressa School | 85. Wates Group |
| 21. Feeding Britain | 43. Lola's Cupcakes | 65. SALIENT | |
| 22. Food Bank Aid | 44. London Fire Brigade | 66. Skipton Building Society | |



Sufra

FIGHT
POVERTY
LOVE
COMMUNITY

Sufra NW London, 160 Pitfield Way, Stonebridge, London, NW10 0PW

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 [linkedin.com/company/sufra-nw-london/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/sufra-nw-london/)

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