

انجمن افغانان
لندن

**Afghan Association
of London (Harrow)**



ANNUAL REPORT 2021/2022



A Message of Thanks

“We would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who has made a contribution towards our work.”

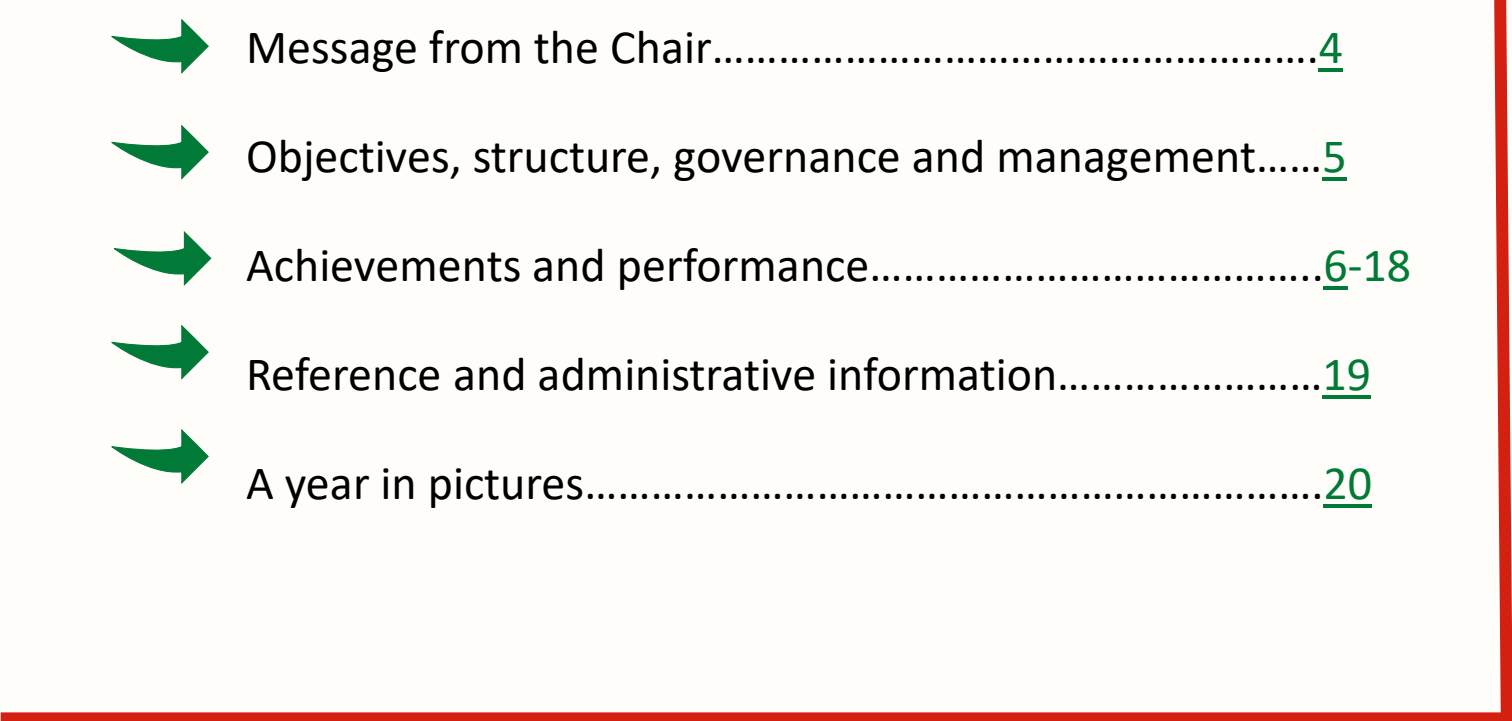
It is no exaggeration to say that 2021/2022 has been one of the most challenging years in the history of the Afghan Association as a charity. The Coronavirus epidemic has affected the community profoundly. The Charity’s dedicated staff, and valued volunteers, have responded to the crisis with vigour and dedication. We are grateful to our current funders for their generous support of the Coronavirus Epidemic Emergency Response Project; in particular **the National Lottery Community Fund and Harrow Giving**. The project has made huge difference during the current crisis.



Contents



- ➔ Message from the Chair.....4
- ➔ Objectives, structure, governance and management.....5
- ➔ Achievements and performance.....6-18
- ➔ Reference and administrative information.....19
- ➔ A year in pictures.....20





Message from the Chair

I am delighted to introduce the 2021/2022 annual report. The external context for the Afghan Association's work as a Charity has been highly challenging, particularly in the face of two major events: a catastrophic crisis in Afghanistan and the continuation of Covid-19 epidemic.



The Charity's dedicated staff and volunteers responded speedily by establishing the **Refugee Crisis project** and the **COVID-19 Emergency Response Project** to help and support the most vulnerable members of the community; in particular newly-arrived refugees. These – and other - projects have been a great success as illustrated in numerous positive feedback letters, received from members of the community, appreciating the Afghan Association's response in this time of unprecedented crisis.

We were heartened by public generosity and support, including large donations of goods which were distributed to newly-arrived refugees by our staff and volunteers. Thanks also to our funders for their generosity in supporting the Charity specifically with the refugee crisis. On behalf of the Charity, I thank all our supporters for their ongoing support and financial help during a most difficult time:

Community Fund / Tudor Trust / Trust for London / John Lyon's Charity /

Harrow Council and Harrow Giving / Young Harrow Foundation / City Bridge Trust

I also wish to thank my Board of Trustee colleagues for their support over the past year. The contribution they make to the charity is very much appreciated and valued enormously.

Ms Zohal Nabi

Chair, Board of Trustees



Objectives, Structure, Governance and Management

The main objectives of the Charity are to:





- ➔ To relieve poverty amongst the Afghan community in the NW London Boroughs, by the provision of an advice and interpreting service.
- ➔ To advance education amongst the Afghan community in the same areas, particularly by the provision of language classes and a library.
- ➔ To provide facilities for the recreation and other leisure-time activities for people who are in need of such facilities by reason of their social and economic circumstances with a view to improving their quality of life.
- ➔ To assist the aged, particularly those from the Afghan community; and
- ➔ To protect and preserve public health by the provision of advice.

Trustees are jointly the governing body and have ultimate responsibility for the operational administration of the Afghan Association, its premises, finances, and the employment of staff. The trustees may appoint co-opted members in order to bring specific skills and expertise to the charity.

Achievements and Success

Decades of conflict, poverty, and more recently the COVID-19 pandemic were already taking their toll on the people of Afghanistan. Recent conflict and change of government, coupled with the worst drought in 27 years, have tipped the country into a humanitarian crisis. Economic collapse has sent food prices soaring. Afghanistan's health care system has reached the brink of collapse. The Afghan community in the UK is following the unfolding crisis in Afghanistan with great anxiety and trepidation. These unfortunate events have no doubt seriously affected their wellbeing and mental health. They are afraid, confused and in desperate need of help.

AAL has run a number of projects and services over the last year, providing help and support where most needed:

-  *Refugee crisis emergency response project*
-  *Covid-19 emergency response project*
-  *Refugee well-being support*
-  *Social events for newly-arrived refugees and case study*

-  *Womens' Group activities*
-  *Elderly Group activities*
-  *Youth and sport activities*
-  *Over 40s football*
-  *Chess club*

-  *Volunteers*
-  *Partnerships*
-  *Research project*
-  *Feedback*



Refugee Crisis Emergency Response

The devastating scenes of Afghan refugees desperately trying to flee the country emerging on TV screens and social media have been heart-breaking. We are still flooded with calls and emails of desperation from our community in London, especially from family members waiting for the arrival of traumatised parents, children and siblings.

In quick response to the crisis, we initiated an Emergency Response Project to help newly arrived refugees from Afghanistan as part of the Government's resettlement programme.

This project is one of the most successful projects that the Afghan Association has initiated, and is assisting hundreds of vulnerable refugees to rebuild their lives in the UK. As always, we have been heartened by the public generosity and support, including phone calls and emails offering donations of all kinds.

We have distributed a large quantity of donations including books to newly arrived refugees, who desperately needed practical help and support. Our dedicated staff and our impressive pool of volunteers are helping with general advice and information on welfare, legal advice on immigration, as well as organising social events for newly arrived families.

The Afghan Association's advice team and volunteers are constantly in touch with people seeking asylum in the UK including families evacuated as part of the resettlement programme.





Covid-19 Emergency Response

We have recruited sessional workers and a pool of volunteers to provide practical support, information, and friendship for isolated and vulnerable members of the community.

More than 2000 community members have benefited from the Afghan Association's services, in particular from provision of advice, information, practical support and befriending as part of different Emergency Projects.

We have shared and distributed COVID-19 vaccine guidance which has been translated into community languages. We have assisted Harrow Council in producing a video on Coronavirus in Afghan languages which was widely shared with the community.

Our help to spread the word and to share useful sources of information has been appreciated by the Afghan community, Harrow Council and COVID-19 Advocacy Project Lead. We have received emails and phone calls from both local authorities, health projects and our community thanking the Afghan Association of London for supporting the community in such an unprecedented period.





Wellbeing support for Afghan evacuees in London

The Afghan Association's support to newly arrived Afghan refugees to settle into new lives in the UK has been acknowledged by health institutions, government agencies, other charities and the Afghan community in London.

The Afghan Association has assisted Thrive LDN to create a range of updated resources to support the mental health and wellbeing of the Afghan community. The range of resources provide the Afghan community - both for newly arrived evacuees and the many Afghans already living in the capital - with practical tools and ideas to encourage good mental health and wellbeing. The Afghan Association was thanked by Thrive LDN.





Social events for newly-arrived refugees

The Afghan Association of London's Women Group Leaders and women project volunteers have been the lifeline for newly-arrived Afghan women, providing practical help and support including a very successful event in partnership with the E5 Baby Bank Charity. The event was extremely successful and we have received positive feedback from the participants. A large quantity of donations including children's toys, Afghan food, and Primark vouchers were gratefully received and distributed.

Ms S, one of the newly arrived refugees who was forced to flee Afghanistan came to the UK, leaving everything behind. She feels despair and abandonment, as she was not able to say goodbye to her loved ones. She is still living in a hotel where the family was accommodated with her husband and the children. She still has terrible nightmares, waking in the middle of the night in tears, suffering from severe insomnia. Ms S. appreciates her regular contact with the Afghan Association's Womens' Group Leaders and has taken part in numerous activities. Taking part in social activities and interaction with other people outside the hotel has indeed brought solace and peace to her. She has regained her confidence, building self-reliance. She is now venturing outside unaccompanied, taking her children to school and doing her shopping. She appreciates the lifeline being offered by the Afghan Association.





Womens' Group Activities



*A generous funding from **Tudor Trust** has enabled the Charity to successfully recruit two Women Group Leaders to provide a wide range of services and activities to Afghan women.*

The project in particular focuses on provision of essential healing and support to newly-arrived refugees after the recent refugee crisis in Afghanistan. In partnership with Wo Rasta, a very successful arts and crafts workshop was held in our offices for children and Afghan women. It was a day full of fun activities where kids and adults put all their effort and talent into making different patterns of art and crafts.



Elderly Group Activities



As part of the Coronavirus Epidemic Emergency Response Project, we have created a social group to ensure the most vulnerable members of the community overcome isolation.

The WhatsApp group is becoming an essential part of the social interaction between community members in particular the elderly. We have assisted two elderly people to use WhatsApp for the first time. ***“It is fantastic to be in touch with my friends and family in such a difficult time. So, thank you very much.”*** Mr M



Youth and Sport Activities



*We are grateful to **John Lyon's Charity and Harrow Young Foundation** for funding the Afghan Association's Youth and Sport activities. John Lyon's Charity's funding has enabled the Afghan Association to establish and run numerous youth and sport and extracurricular activities. Our youth and sport activities are excellent opportunities for young people to keep fit and healthy, and overcome isolation by making new friends and having fun.*

The Afghan youth are vulnerable and experience isolation and exclusion from different aspects of social life. They are affected by the lack of support, resources (sport and leisure facilities) and support networks. Many young people have difficulties settling into educational institutions and consequently fail to do as well at their studies. They, therefore, have limited employment opportunities and as a result may adopt a pessimistic outlook to life. In addition, young people are dealing with a range of issues such as lack of UK qualifications, lack of work experience, low self-esteem and confidence, little motivation or aspiration and a lack of positive role models. AAL facilitates different youth and sport activities.

Football is one of the most popular sports amongst the Afghan community. We have assisted four football managers to participate and successfully complete a coaching qualification. The feedback from participating teams is extremely positive.

Football Tournament

The Afghan Association has organised a very successful football tournament, participated by numerous football teams in March 2022. The event was a great success and appreciated by participants and football enthusiasts, considering a long period of inactivity as a result of COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions.



Over 40s Football and Chess Club



Over 40s Football

The over 40s Football team is becoming very popular with new members joining every week. The feedback from participants has been very encouraging.

Chess Club and Chess Competition

The Chess Club meets every Monday 18:30-22:00. It is becoming one of the most popular activities in Harrow.



Volunteers

The Afghan Association has benefited tremendously from the volunteering project in a number of ways: increased activity for the charity; increased variety of services, creating new projects, reaching out to more users. Volunteering is now an integral part of the Afghan Association's service delivery. During the epidemic, our volunteers have contributed tremendously to the Afghan Association's Coronavirus Emergency Project, providing essential support to the most vulnerable members of the community.

It is important to highlight that they have also benefited further from their volunteering experience – by helping to learn new skills, maintain and expand skills, knowledge and social networks.

We very much appreciate all the help given by our hard working and dedicated volunteers which has made such a difference to the lives of our community members.

A Big Thank You to all our volunteers!





Partnerships

We have established strong mutually beneficial links with local, London-wide and national organisations and charities.

We would like to thank **Harrow Council, Harrow Giving, Harrow School, Young Harrow Foundation** for funding our numerous projects. An extra thank you to **Harrow School** for funding a fantastic Christmas project, helping our community with financial support and vouchers, and for allowing our youth project to utilise their pitch facilities. We would like to thank **Refugee Council** and **Refugee Action** for capacity building support and **Voluntary Action Harrow** for practical support with fundraising.





Research Project

The Afghan Association of London is working with London Metropolitan University on a research project called ***“Recently arrived migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in London: accessing support in hostile times”***.

The Afghan Association of London’s staff and volunteers are doing a fantastic job and their contribution is highly appreciated by London Metropolitan University.






Feedback

“With no friends, no knowledge of the English language, in a new place, I was absolutely lost without your help, THANK YOU.” K. A newly arrived refugee

“I was dreading loneliness in my old age. Volunteering with the Afghan Association as part of the elderly project opened a new horizon to life for me, meeting other people, reading social media comments, making new friends. Thank you very much.”

“I watched the shocking footage of the terrible situation of the Afghan people in Kabul last year trying to leave on the planes. I wanted to help in whatever way I could. I found the Afghan Association. I helped to sort out donations. We went to hotels and gave out donations to refugees who desperately needed help.” Betty Curley.



“On hearing about the urgent evacuation of thousands of Afghan people to the UK, as well as their dire circumstances, I decided to make a patchwork quilt for at least one of them. A quilting friend put me in touch with the Afghan Association of London. Word spread and now in total we have delivered 74 quilts and donations of bedding. We all hope the quilts and bedding will be of practical help to the Afghan refugees and we would like to welcome them all to the UK.”



Reference and Administrative Information

Statement of trustee's responsibility

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law. The Trustees prepare financial statements that provide a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity, the incoming resources and application of resources including the income and expenditure of the Charity for the year.

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 Charity (Accounts and Reports) regulations and the provisions of the trust deed. They 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.

Financial Statement

The Board of Trustees are pleased that AAL has finished the year in a relatively stable financial position. AAL has secured additional funding from different sources including donations from the public in response to the refugee crisis. The Afghan Association enjoys a period of relative stability. However, we will continue with our search for additional sources of funding.

Declaration by the Trustees

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Charities Law

By order of the Trustees:

Signed: 

Date: 21/07/2022

Name: Zohal Nabi



A Year in Pictures





Thank You

www.afghanassociationlondon.org.uk

aalharrow@aol.com

0208 8616990
