



# WAVES OF MERCY

 HHUGS

IMPACT REPORT 2023

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*“Family is the first word that comes to mind when I think of HHUGS. HHUGS has been my backbone over the last ten years. May Allah reward them for all the work they have been doing. Even if the local community doesn’t remember you, or your family and friends don’t, HHUGS never forgets us.”*

## WHO WE ARE:

**A world where every family impacted by national security legislation is supported and embraced by their communities.**

HHUGS (Helping Households Under Great Stress) is the only UK registered charity of its kind, empowering and embracing families impacted by counter-terrorism and national security legislation, in the UK and abroad, through the delivery of pastoral, financial, and practical support for the past 19 years.

Established in September 2004 by a group of Muslim mothers, in response to the increasing number of ‘anti-terror’ arrests in London, the charity currently works with over 230 families (that’s more than 760 individuals) nationwide.

### Our Values:

Trust

Excellence

Respect

Responsibility and commitment

### We are committed to:

- Providing high quality, tailored support for families
- Restoring confidence, esteem, hope, honour, and dignity
- Improving the mental and physical well-being of our beneficiaries
- Reducing social isolation
- Strengthening family relationships
- Improving life-coping skills
- Raising awareness of the pain caused by imprisonment and uplifting families’ voices.
- Ensuring that children and families should not be judged or discriminated against because a member of their family has been investigated or imprisoned.
- Breaking the cycle of intergenerational offending and family breakdown.

# THE RIPPLES OF YOUR ACTIONS

## THE LETTER FROM CHAIR, FEBRUARY 2024:

As we step out of 2023, the echoes of our resilience continue. The past year has been a testament to our collective strength, a journey marked by the belief that the challenges we face are what keeps us united.

Although in the face of adversity we've stayed strong, the pain and injustices faced by our brothers and sisters around the world is embedded in our hearts. Our souls are heavy, and we end the year carrying its weight.

The lessons learned in the past year, serve as a compass, guiding us through the pain of the present. Just as every storm leads to a calm, we continue on with the conviction that the difficulties we encounter are from our Merciful Creator, who never tests us more than we can bear.

Closer to home, as a charity, the work we do at HHUGS on a daily basis alleviates the burden of families, right here in the UK. Even when the world feels too heavy to bear, or when the suffering of others may feel remote, we're reminded of the bond between believers because of your generosity.

In the last year, your waves of mercy soared, providing honour, dignity and hope to families through over **£1.2m**. Last Ramadhan, you sacrificed over **£682k** to answer the du'as of the distressed families and allow them to taste the sweetness of the blessed month and of Eid. I extend our sincerest thanks to all our donors, supporters and our impressive fundraisers who once again, took part in our Race 2 Jannah Challenge, raising over **£192k** for those in need.

As we enter the new chapter of 2024, we reflect on the achievements of the past year and acknowledge your resilience, kindness, and the strength that comes when a community comes together towards a common goal. Your acts of kindness have truly embodied a family spirit, that has radiated to our beneficiaries.

"My experience with HHUGS isn't just one of financial support, it is one that is embedded into me as my family, that's supported me in all aspects of my life. Some are granted families via blood - and for me it's through the Sake of Allah."

We would like to express our immense gratitude to all who played a role—those who extended a helping hand, offered a sympathetic ear, contributed from their hearts and pockets, amplified the voices of our families, and participated, whether virtually or in person.

Let's continue this shared journey of making a positive impact. To everyone who has been part of this incredible journey. Jazakum Allahu Khaira for being the driving force behind our mission to change lives.

Adnan S

– Adnan Aly, Chair

# YOU RELIEVED HUNGER

**"As cliched as this may sound, after Allah, it has been a means to allow us to survive."**

With inflation at a 31 year high and the cost of food rising by 12.5%, single mothers struggled more than ever in 2023 to feed their children.

Two million households reported someone in their household had not eaten for a whole day. As the seasons change, so do the demands of their households.

A healthy and nutritious meal is what every person deserves. Going without is damaging to both an individual's physical and mental health. That's why we provide our families with vouchers so that they are able to feed their households.

Your support has ensured single mothers had nutritious food for their children and by providing monthly food vouchers, you have relieved their hunger.

Thanks to you, in 2023, you provided food and clothing essentials for 93 families, **269 individuals - £480,396**

**"When I couldn't open a bank account, or when I didn't have any money, they swiftly began to support me. Without HHUGS' support, I would have found it very difficult. They gave me food vouchers, which helped when I didn't have anything to eat. Allah knows best, I may not have been alive today without it."**

***"The vouchers helped me to provide or my children with nutritional food regularly without worrying that wouldn't be able to give them more."***





# YOU SHELTERED FAMILIES

“Housing support for the family is very important. Very few people can cope with this problem, and thanks to Allah and your support, we do not live on the street, but have a ‘roof over our heads’”

Thanks to you, in 2023 your donations of **£116,524** restored security and warmth to shattered homes, helping **24 families, 81 individuals**. **£79,088** that you generously donated provided essential utilities and household bills for **42 families, more than 131 individuals**.

With their breadwinner taken from them overnight, many families struggle to pay rent and face the fear of losing their home. They aren't able to keep up with their bills, and it's only getting worse.

Rents in the UK are now at the highest rate on record – and there is little sign of them falling any time soon. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has recorded the biggest annual increase since its records began eight years ago.

You have sheltered **42 families** and saved them from eviction. By helping them with their rent and utilities they're able to sleep better knowing that their home is safe.

You have also provided **16 families with £8012** in essential furniture and appliances to ensure that their homes are functional.

*“I wouldn't have been able to pay the service charge for the home I was living in and would have been made homeless. I would literally have been on the streets starving, had it not been for HHUGS.”*



# ALLEVIATING THE BURDEN OF

# DEBT

**“Debt relief had a tremendous impact, since it’s relieved us from a burden which we couldn’t lift ourselves.”**

In 2023, you lifted the burden of debt from the shoulders of **78 individuals**. **26 families** were relieved of debts of a total **£41020**.

HHUGS families are stuck in a cycle of financial instability. With assets confiscated and benefits frozen, HHUGS families can quickly accumulate rent arrears and unpaid bills. They’re in a constant state of worry, wondering when the bailiffs will come knocking. With limited financial resources, these become near impossible for them to pay off.

This year, because of your generosity, you were able to bring ease to their hearts and homes. You lifted a burden and gifted them a future free of worry and concern.

*“Sadly, my husband returned to Allah (swt), and not only financially but mentally it’s been hard. With the cost of living, your help from the bottom of my heart has been appreciated. May Allah (swt) reward you immensely, Ameen.”*



# YOU WARMED HEARTS & HOMES

Winter arrived, and it came frosty as ever.

As energy bills rose twice as high, the cost-of-living crisis and soaring food prices, more families around the country struggled through this season.

With 50% of Muslims in the UK trapped in a cycle of poverty, Winter was all the more difficult for HHUGS families.

But because of your drive to warm their hearts and homes, we were able to provide them respite from the cold, and improve their Winter season.

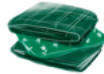
*"The winter support has taken the stress of winter off our shoulders, the kids can keep warm with both warm clothes and having the heaters on. Before we had to only turn it on when it was completely freezing."*

*"There is no other way to say this: my grandchildren and I would be very cold if HHUGS did not support us. It's not possible to pay the bills. I have a fractured spine so I'm always very cold."*

£21,755 winter clothing



£803 duvets



£653 heaters



£23,469 utilities



£33,874 on rent,



£511 radiator reflectors



£145,218 food



£4,913 on debts



320 individuals



# YOU GAVE TO THOSE CLOSEST

Thanks to your generous support, we distributed **£608.7k** of your Zakah in 2023, and **£2.4m** in the last 5 years.

By choosing to distribute your Zakah with HHUGS, you fulfilled a pillar of Islam, revived the sunnah of giving locally, and supported families who are in urgent need, right here on your doorstep. You provided long-lasting relief for those who are often overlooked.

With our 100% Zakat policy, your Zakah reached families whose lives were lightened by your generosity. As the only charity of its kind, the families HHUGS assist face realities many consider unimaginable in the UK.

That's why, by choosing to entrust your Zakah to HHUGS, you've taken the steps to impact families who are isolated and whose cries often go unheard.

Thank you for serving the near before the far.

*"As a recipient, I can attest that HHUGS not only eases the strain of tough times but also restores faith in humanity. Their compassion and dedication make a tangible, positive impact on lives. Grateful for the invaluable support they provide."*



# YOU REIGNITED THE SPIRIT OF RAMADHAN

Ramadhan doesn't always feel welcomed in everyone's home.

For some it is a reminder of happier times, of who was taken from them, and the yearning of a different reality. Children miss their father, wives miss their husbands, and the elderly miss their sons.

*"Doing suhoor alone, doing iftar alone, the whole of Ramadhan feeling isolated within my home."*

With the cost-of-living crisis, Ramadhan is all the more difficult. With the rising cost of food, the blessed month brings with it added pressure.

*"Honestly, Eid comes and the only thing that makes us feel this special day is the gift from HHUGS, the brothers and sisters and what they do!"*

*"I have a heavy heart around Ramadhan but I try my best to not show it, so that my daughter has a happy experience. I honestly think the HHUGS Ramadhan packs lift the heaviness for me. It reminds me I'm not alone. Alhamdulillah."*



To help HHUGS families prepare for Ramadhan, and experience the sweetness of the month, you gifted 352 adults and 186 children Ramadan gift boxes.



You also gave £11220 in Eid gift vouchers to 367 adults and 194 children. £6660 of Ramadhan food vouchers, distributed to 68 households





# YOU CELEBRATED JOY & TOGETHERNESS: AN ECSTATIC EID

We threw Eid parties across the UK for our families. Whilst their Eid may not be picture perfect, we wanted to host gatherings that uplifted them.

*"We feel loved, valued and not forgotten. HHUGS gatherings are so special because they appreciate and support us for the very reasons we are apprehended, treated differently and shunned."*

Behind all the glitter and sparkles, an Eid party is held for people to connect. Their basic need to feel seen is met. It's something that seems simple enough but it revives a heart, and gives hope.

*"I made du'a to finally attend a HHUGS gathering, and I remember the sister hugging me, it was such a relief - a whole family, for the sake of Allah, in a matter of seconds. I cried. It was a wholesome moment."*

**You gave £10054 to give families an Eid to remember:**

## LONDON

Gathering 78 adults men and 82 children



## BRADFORD

Gathering 37 adults and 38 children



## BIRMINGHAM

Gathering 38 adults and 22 children



# QURBANI: YOU SERVED THE BIGGEST AND BEST

There was an option for you to do your Qurbani in a simpler, cheaper and easier manner, but you chose to do something different. You made the bigger sacrifice, by spending more and giving closest to home.

Thanks to you, 2057.5kg of mutton was distributed to 745 people – 491 adults and 255 children – in 144 HHUGS' households, during special seasons when HHUGS' families feel the isolation more than ever.

Your generous donations of £6881 provided 183 families, comprising of 402 adults and 211 children, with treats for Eid.

*"JazakAllah for the meat. With the price of meat being so high in this climate of uncertainty, it's a relief to receive this gift. (May) Allah grant all of you at HHUGS, a great reward, and to all those who give towards HHUGS."*

# THIS SEPTEMBER, YOU GAVE THEM THE BEST START

Through our Back 2 School campaign you helped families with children aged from 5-18 years old in education, with the full cost of uniforms, including PE kits and shoes, as well as stationery, including books and school bags.

“With the cost of living crisis on top of trying to manage everything as a second mum with a teenager whose needs increase all the time, it isn't easy. Alhamdulillah, support like this makes a world of difference for us.”

“The support helps immensely especially with being a widow and having so many priorities, bills, whilst we're in the current cost of living where everything is just so expensive. It has helped us afford everything my child required from school. JazakAllah Khair so much!”

You showed up and supported these children this September.

You donated **£14,826**, enabling us to provide a total of **£19,110**, to support **46 families**, and a total of **130 children**.



**£14860** ensuring children had the correct uniform.



**£4250** on essential stationery to equip them for the year ahead.





# BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION

**For teenagers, not having a positive role model in your life can leave a hole both emotionally and physically.**

It can lead children to feel lost, and more vulnerable to being influenced or led towards delinquent behaviour. Children of prisoners are often left with no father figure, isolated and separated from their community; they're more at risk of being led astray.

That's why we provide recreational and academic support for children to provide them with positive experiences and role-models to support their growth.

Your support of **£4110** has helped fill this emptiness inside. You have helped HHUGS children tackle their inner turmoil and find comfort in the attention and affection they yearn for.

## INAYAH'S STORY

Inayah was just four years old when her life turned upside down.

At such a tender age, she endured trauma that no child deserves. Not having her father there during her early years, had an impact both then, and continues to do so. She continued the next 15 years of her life experiencing raids and releases from prison.

That's why it's so important we reunite these families with prison visits and that children see their parents even whilst they're removed from the family, to keep the bond strong between both parent and child. The harsh reality is that many are unable to make the trip due to financial constraints and costs involved.

Inayah's father was placed over 200 miles away. At such tender ages, they attempted to see their father as often as they could but it was difficult.

That's where our dedicated drivers came in, sacrificing more than 50 hours of their time. Because of your generosity, giving **£2488**, you have reunited **8 separated families** like Inayah's, for the course of **19 visits**, and children have been able to rebuild a relationship with an absent parent.

**"HHUGS sent brothers to pick us up from our home and drive us more than 200 miles to see my Dad when we couldn't find any other means of transport. We couldn't manage the journeys alone on public transport and we couldn't find a driver, and so HHUGS paid for the transport, so that we could see our father twice a month."**



# GIFTING THEM A BRIGHTER FUTURE

## You Healed their trauma

Through your generous donations of **£6825 more than 9 individuals** in the past year have embarked on their journey towards healing, receiving over **122 hours of psychotherapy**.

*"HHUGS paid for specialised therapy sessions which I was in dire need of. Therapy allowed me to regain some form of normality within myself and feel more confident."*

The events you go through shape how you see and view the world. The experiences of our families impact their mental health. They carry the trauma with them.

They're in need of healing. We help provide families with professional support services that give them access to the tools they need to process, understand and attempt to heal from these trials.

## You helped them blossom Empowering our families

Alongside providing our families with support for their day-to-day necessities such as shelter and food. We also help single mothers acquire skills so that they're able to provide for their own families, long term. Your support empowers our mothers, so that they're able to rebuild their lives.

You provided education or training, and business loans or vocational training, aiding them to become financially independent.

Your generous investment of **£2322.98** has enabled us to do just that, helping to empower **5 families** and resettle former detainees.

*"HHUGS paid for driving lessons for me, now I have a license and a car. I can look now after my family's needs"*

You also gave **£9979**, providing educational support for **10 families**

# AFSHAN'S STORY

Afshan was a stay-at-home mum with 2 children, and heavily pregnant with her third when her husband was arrested.

She was not only forced to be the breadwinner but struggled to take care of herself and young children alone.

*"It's not a matter of coping, because if I breakdown, then who will look after the kids? You just learn to be strong, you have to be resilient and get through it."*

When she had no one else, you stepped in to help heal and empower her. By offering her counselling sessions she has been able to work through her experiences:

*"They have also offered counselling sessions, and I think this is very important where these facilities are not always available through the NHS because of the backlog of services or put on hold."*

Afshan's life changed in a blink of an eye. She lost her stability, and plans for her future. You helped empower her so that she could care for her beloved children, not just in the short term but in the long term; an ongoing sadaqah jariyah for you.

*"HHUGS helped with one of the courses I was doing was online. They helped funded the purchase of a laptop so I complete my coursework. They even helped me in regard to my business as well."*

*"It's taken me almost 10 years to feel like I am in control of my life again...that would not have happened if HHUGS had not supported me in those early stages, helping me get back on my feet. Alhamdulillah"*



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