



Embracing Families, Empowering Lives

IMPACT REPORT | 2021-22

“The most beloved people to Allah are those who are most beneficial to people. The most beloved deed to Allah is to make a Muslim happy, or to remove one of his troubles, or to forgive his debt, or to feed his hunger. That I walk with a brother regarding a need is more beloved to me than that I perform i'tikaf in this mosque in Madinah (Masjid Nabawi) for a month... Whoever walks with his brother regarding a need until he secures it for him, then Allah Almighty will make his footing firm across the bridge on the day when the footings are shaken.”

(AT-TABARANI)



Rising with Resilience

2021 was a year of resilience, of rising stronger, of holding onto the firm belief that with every difficulty comes ease. Nonetheless, we can say, following two years living with the pandemic and still in the midst of a cost of living crisis, it has been a tough ride.

We had a duty to continue to serve our beneficiaries, however difficult the circumstances. We worked tirelessly to evolve and adapt to the new normal so that we were still able to deliver. That drive could not have been possible without you: our generous donors, our energetic fundraisers, and our precious volunteers.

*As we look back on the past two years, we savour the sweetness of our record-breaking success; you gave an unprecedented **£627,823 in Ramadhan 2021 and £610,453 in Ramadhan 2022** to alleviate hardship and empower lives. Our heartfelt thanks goes out to you all and to our indefatigable fundraisers, a record 107 who participated in our Race 2 Jannah Challenge, raising a phenomenal **£178,000 in 2022, and £193,000 in 2021.***

This year has been a celebration of what together we can achieve when we bravely strive forth. These months have been embroidered with your kindness and illuminated with rays of hope, for the present and the future.

We would like to celebrate our success with you - with all who contributed, lent a hand or an ear; with those who dug deep; those who shared, and uplifted the voices of our families; those who prayed; those who joined us, whether virtually or in person; with all who have been a part of this family, striving to change lives, even when their own has been rocky.

This time has taught us that, whilst there may be times where we dip, by persevering, we ultimately sail through a high, and revel in our achievement. It is all part and parcel of living, of experiencing and growing.

On behalf of our trustees, beneficiaries, and staff, we would like to thank you for your ongoing support, kindness, generosity and prayers. We hope this report highlights the incredible transformative impact you have had.

ADNAN ALY
CHAIR
1ST SHA'BAN 1444

Who are HHUGS?

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 225 families (that's more than 760 individuals) nationwide.

OUR VISION:

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

OUR VALUES:

TRUST

EXCELLENCE

RESPECT

RESPONSIBILITY
& COMMITMENT

WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

Strengthening
family relationships

Providing high quality,
tailored support for
families

Breaking the cycle of
intergenerational offending
& family breakdown

Improving life-coping
skills

Reducing
social isolation

Empowering families
and rebuilding lives

Improving the mental
and physical well-being
of our beneficiaries

Restoring confidence,
esteem, hope, honour,
and dignity

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.

Relieving hardship



Relieving Hunger

“A person cannot live without food or water. In the same way, HHUGS were our means of provision. They were our means of survival.”

In 2022, you gave **£281,824**, providing food & essentials on a monthly basis for **90 families & 324 individuals** - and in 2021, you gave **£211,099** supporting **72 families & 280 individuals**

Losing the main breadwinner in the home overnight means that it is not only just the plates that often remain half-filled. Gone too is the security of adequate nutrition for the children, and the guarantee of regular wholesome food.

New data released by the Food Foundation shows a rapid 57% jump in the proportion of households cutting back on food or missing meals altogether in just three months. Two million households reported at least one member had not eaten for a whole day.

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

“When HHUGS started supporting us, we knew we weren't going to starve. We received vouchers every month. It was a guarantee that there was going to be food on the table. We didn't have to go asking door to door for £10 or £20 for these basic things.”



Restoring Security: Sheltering Families

Thanks to you, in 2021 and 2022, your donations of **£146,322** restored security and warmth to shattered homes.

£102,626 covered the rent shortfall for 19 families, 61 individuals, and **£43,696** provided essential utilities for 31 families, 116 individuals.

With their assets confiscated and benefits frozen, in the midst of the cost of living crisis, families have struggled to keep up with their rent and utilities, leaving many vulnerable to losing their family home.

Rents have increased at the fastest rate for 14 years, rising nationwide by 11% in the past year, forcing the average tenant to spend more than one third of their household income on rent. Energy bills have equally soared, with an estimated 45 million people struggling to afford their bills.

"I found myself homeless with no money to my name. I felt very suicidal. I had nowhere to go. I just wanted to go back to prison. I hated sleeping on the streets in the cold Winter nights, not having money to eat. Those were my darkest days."

Thanks to your support, single mothers have been saved from the terrifying threat of homelessness.

"They helped me with rent payments, without which we would be homeless. I had so much debt but they helped me pay off my rent and utility arrears, which lifted a huge burden off my shoulders."

"We were in hospital, the baby had just been born but I had no place to go. The baby could have died if we had ended up on the streets, the weather was so cold. It was big news for me when HHUGS found somewhere, otherwise it would have been horrible for us."



Alleviating the Burden of Debt

“Whoever grants relief to a debtor or absolves his debt, he will be in the shade of the Throne on the Day of Resurrection.”

(AHMAD)

In 2021-22, you lifted the burden of debt from the shoulders of 179 individuals. 50 families were relieved of debts totalling £93,466.

Following the arrest of their husbands, wives of prisoners are left to pick up the pieces on their own. They quickly accumulate rent arrears and unpaid bills. In some cases, they inherit the debts of their husbands, which were previously unknown to them. With limited financial resources, these become near impossible for them to pay off.

“During the raid, the police took all our jewellery and money, our savings. We accumulated a lot of debt. It was the first time I was in trouble after working all my life. We just borrowed and borrowed until the family didn’t want to talk to us. People didn’t want us to visit their house because they thought we would end up asking for money.”

After two years living with the pandemic and the current cost of living crisis, many more families have spiralled into debt exacerbating their anxiety.

Polling conducted by the StepChange and YouGov found one in five people were expected to be driven into problem debt in 2022.

Your generous support has meant HHUGS families have been able to pay off their debt. With a heavy burden lifted from their shoulders, their future looks brighter.

“When you came into our lives, you made such a difference – the difference between life and death. HHUGS have been a breath of life.”

ZAKAH WITH HHUGS

Whilst not widely known, the scholars of the four classical schools of thought agree that the most deserving recipients of zakah are those in your own country. By entrusting your Zakat to HHUGS, you have fulfilled that obligation and provided for those who are often overlooked on our doorstep.

HHUGS distributed your zakah amongst the following three categories:

Al-Fuqaraa': The Poor

Al-Masakeen: The Needy

Al-Gharimeen: Those in Debt

Zakah funds also empower families, increasing employability and enabling fuqara' to sustain themselves independently long term.

Your Zakat has transformed lives for the better and uplifted families in poverty. You have answered the cries of the forgotten.

"HHUGS picked me up at a time when I really thought I would end up sitting outside a branch of Tesco begging. I feared I would wind up homeless. Their support means I can keep a roof over my head, pay my bills and cover my groceries with monthly shopping vouchers."

£1,550,000
ZAKAH DISTRIBUTED IN THE LAST THREE YEARS

100%
ZAKAH POLICY

WARM  HHUGS

The Gift of Warmth



The absence of a father and husband leaves an unimaginable trail of mental, emotional, psychological and financial burdens for everyone in the family. These struggles are only exacerbated by the difficulties of the harsh Winter season.

As the frost settled on the ground, without your support, HHUGS mothers would have been forced to choose between 'heating or eating' as they have been unable to keep up with rising energy bills. With more than 1 million more people having been forced into poverty this winter and with 7 million experiencing fuel poverty, UK deprivation levels have been pushed to their highest for two decades. Children in such homes are four times more at risk of developing multiple mental health problems. 38% of people had to skip meals for an entire day because they couldn't afford to buy enough food.

For the past two Winters, your generous support has alleviated the harsh effects of this season. You have helped remove the anxiety around Winter for those who couldn't afford to protect themselves adequately against it.

"Without HHUGS, this winter would have been difficult to get through. It was colder than we usually experience at this time of year so the heating was more expensive than is the norm."

"I was really worried about bills this Winter as I am already struggling with the high price, I wouldn't have made it without the help of HHUGS."

"HHUGS for me and my family is like the shield on this difficult life, after Allah"



£170,488

DISTRIBUTED DURING WINTER 2021-22



59 FAMILIES
125 ADULTS
108 CHILDREN



£14,315

TO CLOTHE 108 CHILDREN & 67 ADULTS



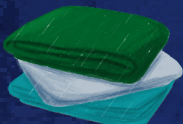
£19,967

ON WINTER FUEL



£1,011

ON 24 HEATERS



£1,748

FOR 108 DUVETS



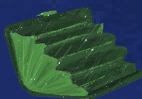
£43,495

TO SHELTER FAMILIES



£76,290

TO FEED 70 FAMILIES



£13,661

TO RELIEVE DEBTS

IN RECENT WINTER MONTHS, YOUR SUPPORT HAS PROVIDED:



£19,519

CLOTHING VOUCHERS FOR 60 FAMILIES



£767

RADIATOR REFLECTORS FOR 34 HOMES



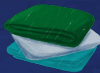
£1,032

HEATERS FOR 22 FAMILIES



£493

DRAUGHT EXCLUDERS FOR 33 FAMILIES



£1,600

DUVETS FOR 25 FAMILIES



£16,603

FUEL SUPPORT FOR 42 FAMILIES

"It is helping me a lot especially as my house is an old basement flat, full of damp all year round and so hard and stressful for me to keep the boiler on to make the house warm because it makes me get a big bill of gas and electricity. But after HHUGS started helping me with the winter support, we have been able to have a warm house without any worries Alhamdulillah. Thank you so much HHUGS from my family and I."

Restoring Hope

The Gift of Festive Joy

R A M A D H A N

The arrival of Ramadhan is often bitterly painful for vulnerable and isolated families. It is a reminder of yet another Ramadhan without their loved one. Single mothers struggle under financial strain, bereft with worry for their husbands spending the month alone in their cells. Children long to sit beside their fathers at the iftar table once again. At a time where we congregate with our loved ones, they spend Ramadhan alone, abandoned by family and friends. In such households where food is scarce, gifts and new clothes are considered a luxury out of reach.

Yet as we emerged from the pandemic, you reminded us of the generosity of the Ummah. You not only helped fill their plates, but you filled the void in their hearts and homes too. These occasions are too often a reminder of what is absent, of isolation and unspoken traumas. But because of your support, the revival of the Ramadhan spirit entered households not too far from your own. **You helped plant smiles on young faces, and made the occasion of Eid special once again.**



“The most beloved of deeds to Allah, the Mighty, the Magnificent, is that you bring happiness to a fellow Muslim, or relieve him of distress...or stave away hunger from him.”

(AT-TABARANI)



YOUR GENEROSITY IN RAMADHAN



£4,445

FOR FOOD PACKS TO 63 OF OUR
LOWEST INCOME FAMILIES IN 2021



£6,570

FOR FOOD PACKS TO 66 OF OUR
LOWEST INCOME FAMILIES IN 2022



RAMADHAN GIFT BOXES

With your support, our families receive gifts specifically chosen for them, bringing joy to the whole family.

IN 2021

£7,098

485 ADULTS & 326 CHILDREN

IN 2022

£7,893

428 ADULTS & 241 CHILDREN

"JazakAllah Khair for the gift box. There was something for everyone inside it. All my children were happy. May Allah shower you all with his mercy and blessings and screen you on the Day of judgement for making life that much easier for the prisoners' families. Ameen. You sure know how to brighten up a family's day when they are struggling."



RESTORING JOY ON EID



£12,500

GIFT VOUCHERS FOR 625 CHILDREN AND ADULTS - 2022
£12,365 FOR 684 INDIVIDUALS IN 2021



£5,825

GIFTS FOR 584 INDIVIDUALS IN 2022
£5,763 FOR 621 FAMILY MEMBERS IN 2021

You restored joy to the celebration of Eid with gifts of clothes, toys and treats.

You delivered much-needed delight to our families through gift vouchers, giving them the independence to choose a gift according to the child's age and interests. Though their fathers may have been absent that day, your gifts showed them how cherished they still are.

“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!”



E I D

Connecting the Isolated with the Community

No one deserves to be left alone in times of hardship, even moreso on such a precious occasion as Eid. Often presumed guilty by association, HHUGS families are ostracised by their own communities. At such times when other families come together, the wives, children and elderly parents of prisoners feel the emptiness and isolation more intensely than ever. Single mothers are unable to connect with others, as it can be difficult to socialise with people when you fear judgement and fear being cast out. Children are unable to enjoy themselves, and play with other children as they fear being bullied.

Your support enabled us to facilitate Eid gatherings where families could connect with others who truly understand. Made even more precious by gathering people for the first time together after the pandemic, by stepping in, you filled the emptiness inside with the sweet embrace of a community that cares.

YOU GAVE
£8,497

IN 2021, PROVIDING 175 WITH
THE DELIGHT OF EID AT TWO
GATHERINGS

YOU GAVE
£15,188

IN 2022, CONNECTING 458
INDIVIDUALS WITH THEIR
COMMUNITIES AT 4 GATHERINGS.



“I had a good time, it was really fun, I enjoyed the company. I haven't left the house in two and a half years.”

In these joyous occasions, families gathered and were able to enjoy themselves in a space where they felt safe, connected and cherished. They were able to momentarily detach from their burdens, and socialise with families in similar situations, without the fear of judgement.

Although we may see it as just a day of fun, for these families it was the only chance where they can gather with others, and provide their children with the opportunity to play, relax and connect with others. These parties have been days to remember, with bouncy castles, baklavas, wacky scientists and ice-cream sundaes.

“Thanks to HHUGS, Eid became better for us too. It makes you feel like there are people out there who care about you and respect you, you know? And you feel the whole vibe of Eid, especially when we got to attend the gatherings they organised. These were things we missed out on when we were young, so it was lovely to interact with people, at last, who can understand your situation; people who won't alienate you, and who offer comfort just by being another human and fellow Muslim. It meant a great deal to my younger siblings. They couldn't sleep the nights before because they were so excited that they would be able to play with other kids and not feel judged.”

“I suffer from social anxiety. I've been to a few Eid parties, but it was very challenging for me to go. I went for the sake of my kids. It was really good to meet sisters there. The sisters there, from HHUGS always push me. Wallahi, they call me every week and are like, “Are you okay, sister? How are you, sister? You know, you have to come, you have to do this,” and wallahi, that pushes me so much to actually come out and do a lot of things.”



QURBANI

The Greater Sacrifice

By offering Qurbani with HHUGS, you made the greater sacrifice - the biggest animal, under the best conditions, and ensuring HMC approved meat for those most in need closest to home.

Thanks to **137 of you in 2021, donating £26715, more than 522 people received Qurbani from HHUGS, 2490.8kg distributed amongst 327 adults and 195 children.** By giving the best you could, they were able to enjoy meat; a luxury in their households.

"There is no money more cherished than that money which is spent for Qurbani on the day of Eid."

(at-Tabarani)

In 2022, **115 of you chose to raise the bar again, donating £24725, to provide over 2063kg of meat, distributed amongst 545 people, 358 adults and 153 children in 214 HHUGS' families;** a rare treat for many.

Although donating for Qurbani overseas was the cheaper option, by performing Qurbani in the UK, and giving it to the needy who are nearest, in your own country, you followed the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw), as agreed by all four schools in Islam.

"I was shocked when I saw the generous amount of meat delivered to our house last weekend! Since our loved one was arrested last year, I've had to cut right back on extras like meat because there are many additional demands now on our low income. Having meat in the freezer is something we will benefit from during the months ahead. At each meal we will remember HHUGS and all those who donated for this generous gift."

"I have stopped purchasing meat as the cost for my family of seven, is well beyond my means. I have been unable to gain employment and even retain a bank account. To receive Qurbani was a huge blessing. It was an amazing gift at a very difficult time. The children know that it was gifted to them by HHUGS. They make du'a for all those that made it happen, from the donors to the people that delivered it to my front door and everyone in-between."

BACK 2 SCHOOL

Standing Tall, Thanks To You



HHUGS children face social exclusion and narrow academic opportunities, as poverty prevents them from being able to participate fully in school. Like two thirds of children in poverty, they experience shame and bullying as a result. We believe these children deserve to stand tall on their first day of term.



YOU RAISED IN 2021

£14,861

FOR 144 CHILDREN TO HAVE NEW
UNIFORMS, STATIONERY & ESSENTIALS

IN 2022, YOU GAVE

£18,407

FOR 170 CHILDREN



"With the price increases and stretching the monthly universal credit payments, it makes a huge difference getting some support for uniforms and other school expenses."

All the families who received Back to School support said it restored their dignity and reduced their worry and stress.

"We do not yet have a work permit and have no income, so it is very difficult for us to buy the necessary things for our child's studies. With your help, we can give our child what he needs to learn. Last year, with your support we were able to buy school uniform and stationery. Jazakum Allahu khaira!"

"Our child was very happy that he has everything that other school children have. That he was able to wear new clothes and not have anxiety about wearing ill-fitting, worn out things."



Uniting Families Torn Apart

“The importance of good family and other relationships, which are rehabilitation assets, needs to be a golden thread running through the criminal justice system.”

Following an arrest, prison visits are the only opportunity for families to spend quality time with their loved one. The impact of visits cannot be underestimated.

One of the most comprehensive studies on children of prisoners, undertaken across four European countries, found that regular contact with parents is crucial in maintaining children's emotional wellbeing and capacity for resilience. Prisoners receiving visits from family are also 40% less likely to re-offend.

“Travelling long distances to see their parents puts a strain on young children and on those caring for them.”

(University of Huddersfield (2013))

These trips however are far from easy. The average journey is a 120-mile round-trip. For an elderly parent in poor health, or a single mother with small children in tow, mobility constraints and high travel costs, make it a daunting task.

Our volunteer drivers reunite families by gifting their precious time.

In 2022, 31 separated families have been united, for the course of 35 visits.

“My son would ask me, ‘how many more sleeps until we see him?’ I remember saying, ‘how is anyone going to take us?!’—but these volunteers, who had their own families to deal with, took us all the way up north on Eid. I was so grateful to them.”

“HHUGS picked us up from our home and drove us more than 200 miles to see my Dad. When he was moved, we couldn't manage the journeys alone on public transport and we couldn't find a driver so HHUGS paid for the cost of the transport, so we could see our father twice a month.”

Rebuilding Lives



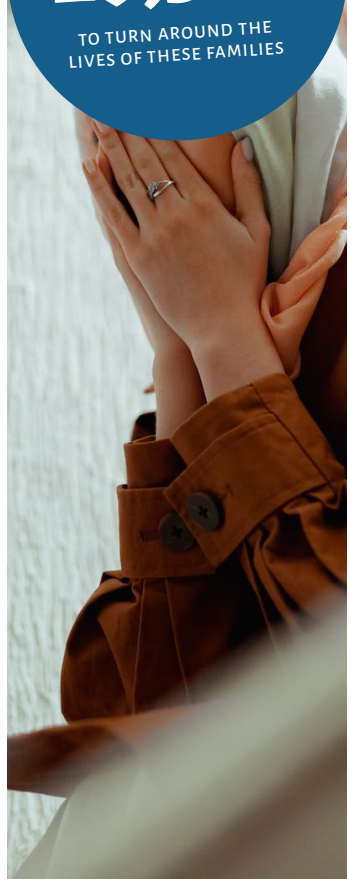
Healing Trauma

Bearing the loss of your father and husband in dramatic circumstances cannot be underestimated. Women and children have often endured traumatic raids, witnessing the distress of their family members, their loved ones dragged away in handcuffs, followed by years of struggle to survive through poverty and isolation. This devastatingly harms the emotional and psychological wellbeing of a prisoner's family.

Professional support services are essential in helping individuals to access the tools they need to process, understand and attempt to heal from these life-altering trials, for both former prisoners and their families. In the current climate, many families struggle to find culturally and faith sensitive services that can guarantee their confidentiality.

YOU DONATED
£9,500

TO TURN AROUND THE
LIVES OF THESE FAMILIES



More than 15 individuals in the past year have embarked on their journey towards healing, receiving over 107 hours of psychotherapy.

“The therapy has provided me a safe space to speak to someone, without fear of any judgment, knowing that it's safe, secure and private; that whatever you feel and you're struggling with, that there's someone you can offload to who is a professional, that understands how the mind works. It has changed my life so much and I am grateful that I have that. Alhamdulillah for HHUGS providing me with that safety net.”



Empowerment & Resettlement

Creating a Future of Self Sufficiency

Hindered by material poverty and social isolation, the wives of prisoners struggle to fill the absence of losing their main financial provider. Many face the additional challenge of language constraints as well as limited skills and work experience. Without support for childcare and funding for education, it can be a daunting task to improve their situation, while the fallout from an arrest of a loved one further reduces their chances of employment.

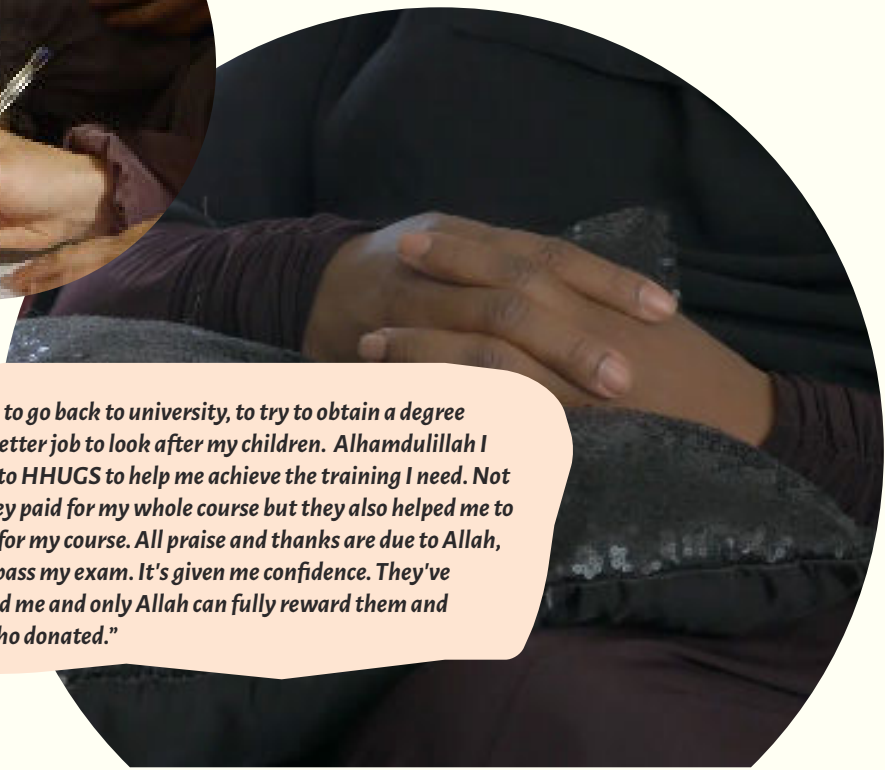
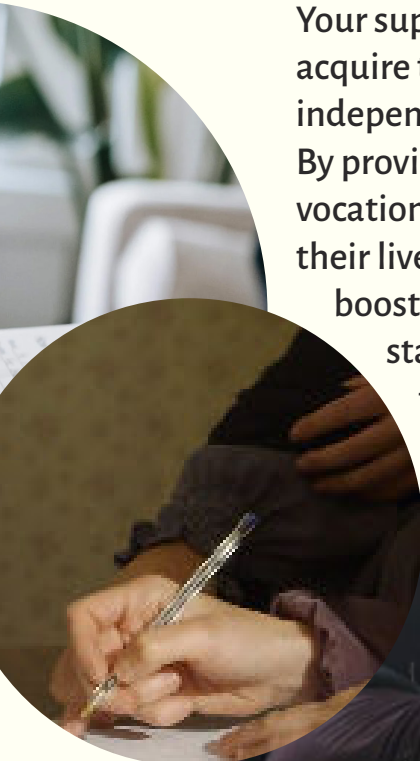
With the pandemic having cost thousands their livelihoods and rising inflation, this is a time of even greater hardship for single mothers who already have the odds stacked against them.



"The financial and emotional stress really took its toll on me and I fell into deep depression. HHUGS encouraged me and financed the courses necessary for me to retrain in IT. Even though I had lost my confidence and doubted my ability, HHUGS continually encouraged me until I was finally able to start working and support my wife and children again. Without them, I probably wouldn't have survived the emotional trauma I went through."

“The best way to predict the future is to create it.”

Your support means that single mothers can acquire the skills needed to gain financial independence, through education and training. By providing business loans and funding vocational training, you have helped rebuild their lives and create a brighter future, thereby boosting their confidence to create financially stable and happier homes for the long term.



“I wanted to go back to university, to try to obtain a degree and have a better job to look after my children. Alhamdulillah I am grateful to HHUGS to help me achieve the training I need. Not only have they paid for my whole course but they also helped me to buy a laptop for my course. All praise and thanks are due to Allah, I was able to pass my exam. It's given me confidence. They've always helped me and only Allah can fully reward them and everyone who donated.”



Nurturing Our Youth

YOU GAVE
£7,420
TO GIVE THEM A
BRIGHTER TOMORROW

Building a Brighter Tomorrow

“This is the true sponsorship...bringing him up like one's own son, which is not limited to feeling compassion for him and being kind to him, but teaching him, disciplining him and educating him in the best manner.” (al-Manawi)

On top of the trauma they have endured, children of prisoners are often stigmatised and ostracised by peers at school, and the community at home. Bullied and lost, many succumb to mental-health problems and often even turn to truancy and delinquent behaviour. Girls are particularly vulnerable when they lack a solid male role model in their lives and can resort to looking for that lost love in harmful places. All children struggle in the absence of social support and role models who cherish them.

"As a boy growing up, the hardest moments were school assemblies and parents' evenings. Everyone's fathers were there, but mine wasn't. I ended up going alone to these things where your parents should come with you. When other children spoke about their dads, I couldn't. It hits you hard when everyone is talking about what their father does. Every young man's role model is his father. Growing up as a Muslim, it's even more difficult. Normally, your father would guide you through those times, but I had no role model, no one to look up to, no one to direct me. Everyone disappeared after my dad's arrest, I didn't have anyone to talk to. I held a lot of stuff inside me. I was forced to grow up too fast. I was always worrying about my mum and my siblings, our lives and the future, and my father. When I was too young to defend her, my older sister got bullied. I had to defend both of us. It took my childhood away."

By providing academic support and recreational activities, you have helped HHUGS children tackle their inner turmoil and find comfort in the attention and affection they yearn for.

"My children haven't seen their father for 8 years which has built up anger, resentment and caused them to act out. My son's behaviour worsened when he started secondary school. He went off the rails and became rebellious, coming home late, and not listening to me. I've had police at my door because of his behaviour. He's stolen money from me. I try to teach him right from wrong, I felt I tried everything."

"I reached out to HHUGS for a mentor. Both of my children now look up to him as a positive Muslim male role model that the boys have always needed. He is very understanding and tries to make my son see the consequences of his actions. Most importantly, he has helped him get closer to Allah. My son now has respect for me, no longer takes money from me and comes home on time. Our relationship has got better. I'm really grateful that the boys have been given a mentor who is very supportive and motivated them to do better."



THANK YOU!



REGISTERED CHARITY IN ENGLAND AND WALES. No. 1117924

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