



THE SKY PROJECT NEWSLETTER 2023

Forced Marriage and 'Honour' Based Abuse.

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Happy New Year from all The Sky Project Team!



Thank you to the entire Sky Project Team, Trustees and all their supporters. Particular thanks to:

Sabeena Pirooz (Director and Trustee)
Farook Sarfraz (Trustee, Founder and Safeguarding lead)
Charlotte Gage (Trainer)
Zara Liedl (Volunteer and Fundraising Co-ordinator)
Kulveer Mangat (Volunteer)
Gavin Wilshen (Volunteer content designer)
Shagufta Kasour (Trustee)

Message from the Director, Sabeena Pirooz:

'It has been another remarkable year as we press on with our mission to extend training to as many individuals/organisations as possible. Every year, I am deeply grateful to our dedicated team for their ongoing commitment in the fight against forced marriage and 'honour' based abuse. Each year is challenging in a different way to previous ones, yet consistently, we bring about positive change and continue to see the impact of our training sessions. I am grateful to each and every one of the team who passionately work to make a difference. Without our collective efforts, we would not be able to increase our awareness raising year on year. Thank you.

This year, in February 2023, we saw a significant legislative change with an increase in the age to marry from 16 to 18. There were numerous organisations and specific individual campaigners who worked hard to bring about this vital change for potential forced marriage victims. The end result was victorious and will give children the additional protection which they so desperately need if marrying against their will. We know that the outcomes can be horrific, so this change in law will allow professionals to take action when needed.

Please continue to remember the 'one chance rule.' Those facing forced marriage and 'honour' based abuse may well only have a single opportunity to disclose their situation. Please, don't turn them away; instead, listen, believe them, and take action—you might save a life'.

Thank you to all our supporters, old and new, individual donors, and funders who ensure the continuation of our work. Particular thanks this year to the companies and individuals who supported us by donating to our raffle including Red Letter Days and Box-E, Bristol.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

1. Training



We have continued our extensive training sessions throughout this year which have remained popular as ever.

One of our largest in attendance events in Bristol attracted over 200 people.

2. Charlotte becoming Accredited



A huge congratulations to our incredible Charlotte Gage, who, after a rigorous evaluation process has become a CPD accredited trainer for The Sky Project earlier this year.

Charlotte has continued to provide an excellent level of training to all those she delivers to whilst ensuring as much engagement as possible. We are incredibly proud of her achievement and so grateful she is part of the team.

3. National Day of Remembrance for victims of 'Honour' Based Abuse – Forced Marriage and Disability

NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR VICTIMS OF 'HONOUR' BASED ABUSE



Join us at our online event on Friday 14th July 2023 – 12pm-2pm - Forced Marriage and Disability

This year we will be looking at forced marriage and 'honour' based abuse as a disability rights issue and the challenges that this raises in terms of support for people with disabilities and learning difficulties.

This event is free to attend but we would be grateful for any donation when purchasing your ticket. Please remember that we are predominantly a voluntary organisation. We suggest an amount of £5 and those who have donated will be included in a raffle (with a top prize being an afternoon tea for two at various locations across the country). All monies raised will be put back directly into the charity.

Tickets can be purchased on Eventbrite where a donation can be made at: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/national-day-of-remembrance-for-victims-of-honour-based-abuse-tickets-660418699107>

We have limited spaces so please purchase early. We will be joined by three fantastic speakers:

 Rachael Clawson School of Sociology & Social Policy University of Nottingham	 (www.sunnyangel.com) Sunny Angel Survivor of forced marriage & Author of Wings	 Sulema Jahangir Partner at Dawson Cornwell Family Solicitors
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Website: www.skyproject.org.uk Follow us on Twitter @TheSkyProject2

This year, we focused on Forced Marriage and Disability. The conference was a packed event, with over 100 tickets sold. We were so privileged to have the following speakers:

1. Rachael Clawson – Lecturer at University of Nottingham
2. Sunny Angel – Forced Marriage Survivor and Author of 'Wings'
3. Sulema Jahangir – Family Partner at Dawson Cornwell Family Solicitors

Rachael illuminated us with her eye-opening research into forced marriage and disability.

Sunny Angel provided us with a brave and harrowing account of her lived experience of surviving a forced marriage with a husband who had disabilities and Sulema gave an educational and fascinating talk about her work from a legal context around forced marriage and 'honour' based abuse.

Some feedback from those who attended:

'The focus on forced marriage with those without capacity is so important, thank you.'

'What an inspiration you are Sunny, thank you for being so brave'

'Thank you for sharing your story Sunny, we are all accountable to stop this horrific torture.'

'Thank you everyone for a very interesting session. I have learnt a great deal and appreciate everyone's time and input'

'It is very interesting to hear more about the legislation, particularly given how complex such matters can be on a case by case basis.'

4. Legal Hero Award



In September, the work of Sabeena and The Sky Project was recognised nationally by The Law Society through Sabeena obtaining a Legal Hero Award. She attended the event with Zara, a volunteer for The Sky Project and Senior Associate at Blaser Mills. Both were incredibly inspired by the work that many Lawyers do on a pro bono basis.

The award Sabeena received is specifically designed to recognise those who have made the biggest change to the lives of others; and indeed The Law Society went so far as to describe Sabeena as someone who:

'has made a lasting and tangible difference to victims of forced marriage and 'honour' based abuse'.

5. Collaboration/Working Group



We are grateful to be working with a collaborative re-grouping of the Forced Marriage Working Group which will now become part of the Harmful Practices Group within Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership.

Working together, sharing resources and knowledge, as well as best practice is key for preventative action. We look forward to seeing what 2024 has to offer within Bristol.

We also continue to work with other organisations across the country.

This year, we have been working with Dr Maz Idrees, programme Director at Manchester Law School and Expert on 'honour' based abuse (HBA) and forced marriage (FM) by assisting him on research regarding how HBA and FM are dealt with in the courts. More discussion and research outcomes will be discussed further in 2024.

6. Activism



On international Women's Day, The Sky Project reminded those of our fight for a world that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive; where difference is valued and celebrated. We #EmbracedEquity.

7. Welcome Kulveer



A very warm welcome to our new addition to the team, Kulveer Mangat.

His enthusiasm with new ideas (particularly for fundraising) has enhanced our team and we welcome him whole heartedly. Kulveer has already been dealing with a number of tasks and he will be working closely with Zara with new fundraising projects.

8. Christmas card competition

Well done to Lena Pirooz who won a Christmas card competition organised by Thompsons Solicitors.

She decided to donate half the funds to her school and The Sky Project raising £125!

Thank you Lena and we think you would agree that her card is definitely a winner.



9. WE NEED YOU!!!



The Sky Project is in need of funds over the next coming year. Please consider us as your charity of the year and/or support us in any way you can.

Our project relies on donations and we value any sum given. For any training needs, please contact us directly at skyproject@hotmail.co.uk. We are able to train a minimum of 10 people upwards.

Our aim is to continue to deliver to as many people as possible with minimal costs, but we do rely on donations to keep us running.

Thank you to everyone involved, particularly those mentioned. Happy New Year!

[READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE](http://www.skyproject.org.uk)

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