



KARIS NEIGHBOUR SCHEME

Practical help | Advocacy & advice | Befriending | Emotional support

Annual Report 2014 - 2015



Offering practical support, friendship and advocacy
in the local community through volunteers

Registered Charity: 1133510

CONTENTS

Report and Introduction from the Trustees	Page 4
Report from CEO	Page 5
Introducing Karis Neighbour Scheme	Page 6
A Snapshot of the past Year	Page 8
Stories	Page 10
Statistics	Page 12
Administration	Page 13
Fundraising	Page 13
Advocacy	Page 15
Children & Families' Work	Page 17
Community Regeneration	Page 19
Karis Be Friends	Page 21
Practical Work	Page 23
Introducing WholeCare	Page 24
Listening & Guidance	Page 24
Accounts	Page 26
Acknowledgements	Page 27

REPORT AND INTRODUCTION FROM THE TRUSTEES

‘We live in such a broken world’.

We have all heard comments like this as we consider the world in which we live.

As a General Practitioner working with people from a wide range of backgrounds, I have the privilege to be entrusted with insights into people’s lives, which often confirm this ‘brokenness’. For some it is the consequence of financial factors; for many it is as a result of broken relationships – relationships that could have been nurturing and supportive but which have become destructive and damaging, or the loss of relationships leading to despair or loneliness; for yet others their profound brokenness has arisen from terrible conflict in their home countries and they find themselves in a new and strange environment, struggling to process so much loss and abuse.

It is amongst these people and in this ‘brokenness’ that Karis Neighbour Scheme works.

When confronted by ‘brokenness’ it appears that human beings often respond with a deep yearning for its opposite – we long for ‘wholeness’.

A desire for ‘wholeness’ in our personal and community lives seems to be deeply rooted in the human spirit. Many cultures use words which express a desire for ‘wholeness’ when they greet or say farewell to each other: Salam (Arabic) and Shalom (Hebrew) are examples of this practice which stretch back for thousands of years.

Often this concept of ‘wholeness’ is linked to people’s faith and awareness of spirituality. In the Hebrew scriptures the Divine Being is portrayed as One whose presence brings ‘wholeness’ (shalom) to his people and the embodiment of this Being is called the ‘Prince of Wholeness’ who will bring ‘wholeness’ to mankind. The Christian tradition holds that Jesus fulfills this role and that his parting words to his followers included the phrase ‘my wholeness I give to you’.

A yearning for the kind of ‘wholeness’ which embraces body, mind and spirit; which is personal as well as communal and political lies at the foundation of Karis Neighbour Scheme and influences its programmes and priorities. I commend this annual report to you and would urge you to read it with this in mind.

May I also thank you for your interest in and support of this unique organisation. With its few staff and many volunteers much has been achieved in this last year. Many people, whose stories few will hear, have been enabled to take small steps away from ‘brokenness’ and towards ‘wholeness’.

Ross Bryson, Chairperson
Karis Neighbour Scheme

REPORT FROM CEO

Rebecca Cuthbert has been in our Chief Executive Officer role for a little over a year now, she oversees the development of both Karis Neighbour Scheme, including all our established projects, and WholeCare, which covers the Listening & Guidance service being commissioned by two local CCGs.

It has been a privilege to work Karis Neighbour Scheme over the last year. The vision and passion of staff and volunteers are wonderful to be a part of and it is surely these that make KNS unique and so effective at connecting with local people and thus having the impact that we do. I recently picked up an answer phone message 'I haven't been in touch with KNS for a while', said the caller, 'but I want you to know that I will never forget what KNS has done for me.'

Actually, on digging deeper we usually discover that it is often not *what* was done, but the *way* in which it was done that most impacts people: the kindness, the flexibility, the acceptance and the prioritising of the relational above other things.

It seems that there is as much a demand as ever, (if not more), for a good 'neighbour', and the supply of resources and assets within and around these communities is strong – it is a privilege to be a catalyst that can bring these together.

At a time when the money in people's pocket's isn't stretching as far, and public and grant funding are under pressure, we are constantly surprised and thrilled to be on the receiving end of people's generosity; individuals, local churches and organisations, trust funds and others who are all driven to support our work.

Money given to KNS goes a long way because of the high ratio of volunteers to staff. So the generosity of funds is multiplied by the generosity of time and this is the key ingredient that enables KNS to reach a growing number of clients.

In addition to our traditional projects, we have seen the WholeCare Listening and Guidance service grow and develop this year to become an established, highly valued service which is the most active provider within the Edgbaston Wellbeing Hub.

It has been a privilege to offer GP Chaplaincy listening sessions to patients who need someone to talk to in order to make sense of whatever difficult situation they are facing and to move towards a place of feeling more in control and more at peace. We are looking forward to the year ahead and hope to convince the CCGs, by the outcomes we are achieving, that the Listening and Guidance pilot should be extended and developed.

As we look ahead to the coming year we are also excited about the growth of the Karis BeFriends staff team and we plan to put more effort into growing volunteers so that more clients can be supported. Although the Community Regeneration post as we know it will not be funded beyond March 2016, we are looking at how we might sustain and build on our current community development work.

Finally, our focus remains on finding funding for the Community Advice and Children and Families Projects, which continue to receive an increasing number of referrals. These projects remain central to KNS' core activity and are highly valued by the Karis Medical Centre whose patients are key beneficiaries.

We have received dedicated funding from a generous family, so that we can pay for some specific fundraising to be done for the Children and Families project and we hope to see the fruits of this over the coming year. We are exploring options for both private grant and contract/public funding across our projects and continue to position ourselves so that we are better able to attract a mixed economy of funders.

INTRODUCING KARIS NEIGHBOUR SCHEME

WHO ARE WE?

Karis Neighbour Scheme is a small community project working in inner city Birmingham. We work throughout various local communities offering support to people facing disadvantage or hardship.

We value working in relationship with people and seek to offer friendship and emotional support as well as helping in more practical ways. As an organisation, from the staff team to the growing number of volunteers who give their time to support our work, we value everyone who we come into contact with and try and demonstrate this in how we work.

We try to meet people where their needs are and have worked to 'fill the gaps' where services do not exist in the area. Over the years this has led to the development of a number of projects offering a broad range of support within the community.

We are aware that as a small organisation we are not always best equipped to deal with every problem. We work closely with other groups, charities and services to ensure that people can get the help they need if we cannot offer it ourselves. We do not seek to compete with, replace or duplicate existing services.

WHO DO WE HELP?



We currently work across the Ladywood, Edgbaston and Harborne areas of Birmingham. The communities in these areas face different challenges and have a diverse range of needs.

We support a broad cross-section of the communities in these neighbourhoods through our various projects, however, we have a particular focus on those who are marginalised or isolated. For example we work with a large number of refugees and asylum seekers in the Ladywood and North Edgbaston area, and in Harborne we support mainly older people who are living on their own.

However, we do work with all sorts of people, who are facing hardship and disadvantage in various ways, both material and emotional.

WHAT DO WE DO?

We offer support to lonely and isolated older people through our befriending project, Karis Be Friends. This includes visiting people in their homes and putting on various social events.

We also support local families, through a *Welcome to Ladywood* Drop-In group and also our English for Speakers of Other Languages classes, particularly for refugees and asylum seekers. Our Children & Families worker also visits families in their homes to offer befriending and support.

We provide an advocacy and advice service, in partnership with several other local organisations, with a weekly drop-in session where we offer money advice and advocacy such as help with explaining letters, filling in forms, making phone calls and signposting to other support.

We offer support with practical tasks such as gardening, decorating and DIY. We offer food, toiletries and other essential provisions to those most in need as well as some limited provision of furniture and household appliances through donations we receive.

We are also working more widely with other groups and local residents as part of a community regeneration project, this has included a variety of initiatives from a Ladywood Community Development Trust to a community newspaper and website, an annual community fun day and a local job club.

OUR TEAM...

TRUSTEES

We currently have a board of five trustees. **Dr Ross Bryson** is a GP at the Karis Medical Centre, he has been at the practice for over 20 years and has been a trustee since Karis was set up in 1999, he is currently the Chair of Trustees. **Mrs Rebecca Cuthbert** has worked for several charities and public sector initiatives. Her previous experience covers family support, community development, project management and cross-sector partnership working. **Mr Russell Lowman** has been an elder at Churchcentral, a citywide church, with responsibility for operations and communications. **Mr Chris Poole** has been Operations Director at Friends of the Elderly, having also previously been head of strategy, innovation and organisational development at World Vision, and innovation and business improvement leader at Atkins architecture. **Mr Steve Watts** is an elder at Church Alive, a local church in Ladywood, and has been involved in the area for around 20 years, having previously worked as a secondary school teacher, he is also involved in a number of other community groups in the area.

STAFF

We have a team of seven staff who oversee and co-ordinate Karis Neighbour Scheme's activities. **Rebecca Cuthbert** is our CEO, **Ruth Fuller** is the Children & Families' Worker, **Helen Bell** is the Karis BeFriends' Project Co-ordinator, **Patti Tan** is the Karis BeFriends' Project Assistant, **Harry Naylor** is the Community Regeneration Worker and Project Administrator, **Bram Scott** is the Money Advisor and **Sam Clarke** is the Administrative Support Worker, both as part of the Ladywood Community Advice partnership project.

VOLUNTEERS

We rely on a team of around 80 volunteers, who give their time in various ways, to provide the friendship and support Karis offers, whether this is giving time to visit someone in their home, helping look after children at the ESOL classes, clearing someone's garden or helping at the office. Without their considerable efforts and commitment so much of what we do would simply not be able to continue.

Our volunteers represent a broad range of backgrounds and come from all different walks of life. Having been set up as a community group, out of the concerns of people living and working in the area, we have always sought to maintain our grounding in the local area and build and strengthen links within the community. Most of our volunteers live in the south west area of Birmingham and around 56% are residents in the area we work in.

Sometimes, those we have supported or befriended move on to volunteering and this is fantastic to see, especially when people who were isolated or lonely or struggling, when we first met them, have become settled or confident enough to then go on to help others in similar situations.



SUPPORTERS

Our supporters are also invaluable and contribute a great deal to our work as a charity. This is not just financial support, though their generosity in this regard is not to be underestimated, but also in offering support in kind such as donations of food or clothing, responding to particular practical needs, getting involved in fundraising and raising awareness of our work. We do have a formal 'Friends of Karis' scheme, however, we also receive support from others who give of their time and resources. We are also grateful for the support of numerous local churches and the partnership of other organisations and community groups we work alongside. A list of many of our supporters, along with a list of funders who have supported our work this year, can be found at the back of this report.

A SNAPSHOT OF THE PAST YEAR



45 practical jobs done for local people including gardening, decorating and DIY

26 people supported with lifts or accompanied to appointments

215 referrals to the local foodbank and/or emergency food parcels given

59 families received support from Baby Bank including cots, pushchairs, nappies and milk

15 people attended our arts & crafts group



Over **80** volunteers have given their time and skills to Karis Neighbour Scheme

we had **17** new volunteers start their volunteering

541 people supported with advocacy & advice

over **2000** enquiries dealt with through the Ladywood Community Advice project

over **£240,000** of debt dealt with





more than **300** local families supported in various ways over the year

had contact with **227** children

provided activities for over **70** families with more than **90** children during school holidays

95 adults and **97** children came to the 'Welcome to Ladywood' drop-in

113 adults and **59** children came to our ESOL classes

171 home visits to around **50** families



62 elderly people visited in their homes

58 people came to regular Sunday afternoon tea parties

20 older people came to a regular Tuesday morning group

over **500** people attended a Summer Community Fun Day held in Ladywood

over **4000** local children reached by a 'Family Summer Fun in Ladywood' booklet produced by the Ladywood CDT



THE STORIES...

This year we've helped 879 people from the local area. While a number of people need help with a particular problem and we only see them once or twice, there are many who are facing ongoing hardships or difficult circumstances.

We come alongside people to offer friendship and support, especially those who are isolated and don't have help from anywhere else. In doing this we have the privilege of getting to know people and not only support them through the lowest points but celebrate with them in the successes and joys as well.

The stories below give some sense of the difference we have made to people's lives. As always, we have changed the names of the people in the following stories.

Holly & Betty are two ladies who are in their 90s. They got involved with Karis through our Time for Tea events and Senior Life Group. Holly recently expressed she was feeling lonely and wanted more contact with others. Her husband had died a number of years ago and her children have their own families now and live some distance away.

Betty has recently been diagnosed with Parkinsons disease.

Both these ladies love to walk, having been members of a rambling group for many years, but have reached a point when the journey to and from the walk often tires them out. A couple of our volunteers are keen walkers and offered to take Holly and Betty out for the day.

They went locally and walked for a good way, before finishing off with hot sandwiches in the local cafe, all washed down with a cup of tea. Holly and Betty shared their stories of previous 'epic' walks and the volunteers thoroughly enjoyed their time with them, becoming firm friends through their shared interest.

Being able to help these lovely ladies do something they enjoy has been brilliant and something they have really valued.

Amina lives in an asylum seeker hostel, we visited to get to know the women there, bringing toys (and cake!) for a play session with the mums and their babies. The other women in the hostel told us Amina kept to herself. We knocked on her door to say hello.

Half an hour later, Amina came and joined us in the shared living room, with her baby, and told us part of her story, having had a difficult and abusive past and currently had no support, her family having cut her off.

We continued to support Amina, the worker who had been visiting her even leaving letters to be posted while she was away on annual leave so that she continued to feel supported. When the worker returned from her leave Amina had noticeably brightened and expressed that 'my baby and I are so pleased that we now have a friend'.

Over the next few months our Children & Families Worker took Amina out on walks, for coffee and to our Welcome drop-in where she met and got to know others. We also offered practical help including advocacy connected to her asylum case and clothes for the baby provided by the BabyBank. While Amina very much appreciated the practical help it was definitely the sense of friendship she appreciated most.

Gina is partially sighted and we've been supporting her with filling in forms and doing practical jobs around the house for several years now. On a visit she expressed she needed shelves in her kitchen cupboard. We were able to find a volunteer who measured up, arranged to buy the wood, and fitted shelves in three large cupboards, and helped fit a bright light to assist her.

Gina was really thrilled and has told us she has been showing all her friends her new shelves!

Mary is a volunteer befriender who visits Florence:

"I was first introduced to Florence in August 2015. She had been referred to Karis by her GP through the Edgbaston Wellbeing Hub because she was lonely. I have been visiting her regularly ever since. It has been a real joy getting to know Florence. We chat about everything under the sun over a lovely cup of tea!

We have gone out for short walks round her area and I have also accompanied her to various appointments when she needed the support. In her words 'just to have someone with me makes a lot of difference'."

Sammi came to our advocacy and advice drop-in for help claiming benefits after she received her leave to remain as a refugee. She met our Children & Families Worker and shared her interest in community work and her experience of working with women in her home country. She visited our Welcome to Ladywood drop-in and started volunteering regularly, where she has been a wonderful support. She has been learning English very quickly and is proving a great help in translating for others.

One of the areas of need Sammi and her family had was on moving to their new accommodation there was no carpet, we were able to help Sammi receive a grant to help with the costs of carpeting the home and have enjoyed knowing the family as they are settling into their new life here in the UK. We were thrilled to hear recently that her husband has found work.

Annie suddenly lost most of her sight one morning, she had hoped it would get better but after two weeks and no signs of improvement she managed to make her way to see her GP. Because she had been unable to get out her benefits has stopped and on top of the distress of her loss of sight, she was now struggling financially.

Her GP was able to introduce her to KNS right away through our drop-in session at the surgery and we provided an emergency food parcel, helped her pick up her prescriptions, made an appointment to see our money advisor later that week and gave her a lift home. Over the next few months we helped Annie get to appointments with our money advisor and other support services such as Focus. We also helped her sort through her post and make phone calls, particularly to her landlord about rent arrears that had built up after her benefits stopped.

During those initial few months when we saw Annie she would be very anxious at first, but would always leave a lot happier, having had help to address the immediate concerns that she was struggling to cope with.

Violet had just received leave to remain and needed to make a homeless application, we supported her during this uncertain time and helped her three weeks later to move into her new home. We helped her to clean the house, took round camp beds as a temporary measure until they were able to get their own furniture, along with other essentials like bedding and crockery, and helped her to hang curtains.

...AND THE STATISTICS

We collect a range of information about the people we've been supporting and our contact with them over the course of the year. In presenting this information we've tried to pick out the headline facts and figures that will be most informative, relevant and useful.

The following statistics cover the period from 1st December 2014 to 31st November 2015 (unless otherwise stated):

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
Total no. of individuals supported:	790	798	766	879
Total no. of contacts:	4842	4653	5310	4853

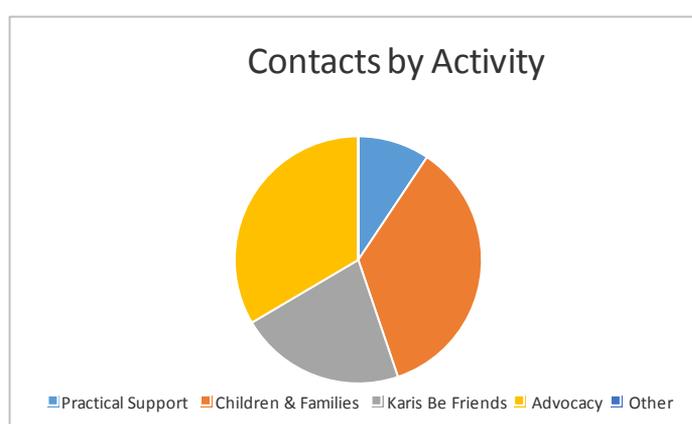
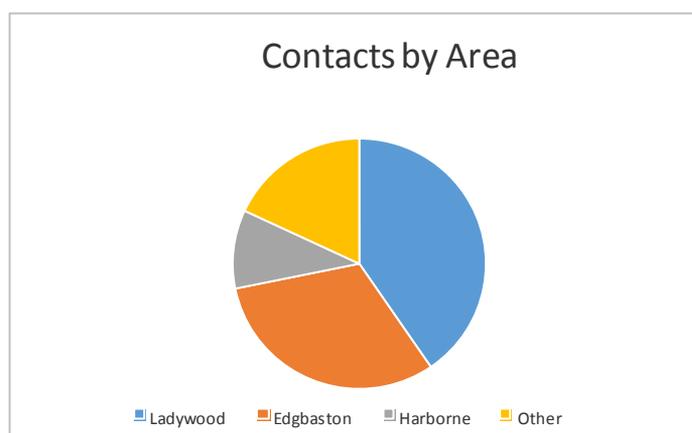
Average contacts per month:	404	388	443	404
“ “ “ week:	97	93	106	93
“ “ “ day:	19	19	21	19

Demographics

	Individuals (%)	Contacts (%)
<i>By Gender</i>		
Male	31	20
Female	69	80

<i>By Age</i>		
16-24	5	3
25-34	18	27
35-44	23	20
45-54	14	10
55-64	11	9
65+	15	26
Undisclosed	13	6

<i>By Ethnicity</i>		
White (British)	19	25
White (Irish)	2	2
White (Other)	13	10
Mixed (Wh. & Carib.)	1	1
Asian (Indian)	3	6
Asian (Pakistani)	3	4
Asian (Bangladeshi)	<1	<1
Asian (Other)	3	6
Black (Caribbean)	8	5
Black (African)	28	24
Other	8	9
Undisclosed	12	5



ADMINISTRATION

Harry Naylor has been working in the Project Administrator post at Karis Neighbour Scheme for a little over eight years now. The administration of the scheme covers a broad scope of activities including record keeping, monitoring and evaluating, producing publicity materials, welcoming people to the office, answering phones, fundraising and supporting other staff.

Administration for a small charity like Karis Neighbour Scheme has tended to be a bit of a catch-all term, and this continues to be the case. Alongside the day to day tasks of keeping accounts and financial records, dealing with new referrals or volunteer applications, responding to requests for information about the scheme, general office administration, report writing, and fundraising, there are always a range of other requests and tasks to support the various projects we run.

These can be very varied, and it is one of the joys of working for a small, responsive organisation like Karis Neighbour Scheme.

Also, although increasingly our work is out in other venues in the community, our office is still a place people come to find help and support, whether it is to use the phone or just sit and chat over a cup of tea, and offering a warm welcome to people who pop in is something we all do. I continue to really value the opportunities this presents to meet people and be a helping hand.

One lady who come in recently after being sent to us by the job centre expressed a great deal of gratitude for something as simple as being able to use the phone to call about her benefits. The experience of a place where “someone can just help you” was so different from the lack of care she’d experienced elsewhere that she was really taken aback by it. It was a really encouraging reminder of what a difference it can make to express grace and kindness, even in simple, practical ways.

FUNDRAISING

With WholeCare receiving significant funding from Birmingham South Central and Sandwell West Birmingham CCGs we treat this contracted service as a distinct division within the charity. The service received £70,863 in new payments this year and carried forward £34,237 from the previous financial year.

The rest of our projects had a largely successful year in terms of fundraising, although our Children & Families work has had a challenging twelve months. Overall, our expenditure on these projects rose to around £136.5k, up from the previous year.

Our thanks to all the funders and donors who have supported our work, a full list of acknowledgements is at the back of this annual report. Grant funding continues to be the biggest proportion of our funding, we received a total of £83,598 in grants over the past 12 months, slightly down on the previous financial year, however, this is partly due to the fact that some grants from the previous year had been deferred.

Individual giving and donations are, however, not an insignificant proportion of our income and included £31,911 of regular giving and donations and gift aid of £6,368. While regular giving and donations were down slightly on the previous year, gift aid had increased. This represents around 30% of our income for Karis Neighbour Scheme (excluding Wholecare KNS).

Consequently we would like to thank all the very generous individuals who have supported our work, especially our regular donors, as well as the churches and other groups who have supported us financially.

Other fundraising efforts have raised a little over £3,200, which is over double the previous year’s total.

A clothes swap in July helped raise £345, an intimate gig with Harry Bird and the Rubber Wellies held at one of our volunteer’s homes raised nearly £200, sponsorship from runners in the Birmingham Half Marathon raised £132, and a regular monthly board game event held at The Square which started in the summer has raised £347 so far.



ADVOCACY

The Ladywood Community Advice project has been a significant part of our advocacy & advice work over the past year. This joint project between ourselves, the Ladywood Project and Circul8 Birmingham Inner City Credit Union (BICCU) has seen our existing work grow significantly since it began in April 2014. Importantly, grant funding from Tudor Trust has enabled us to employ a Money Advisor, Bram Scott, who is based at the Ladywood Health & Community Centre.

We provide an open drop-in session one day a week, and have regularly seen over 30 people a session over the past year. To be able to respond to this level of need we have also enlisted the help of a sessional Money Advisor to work alongside Bram on the drop-in day, and have been kindly supported by Birmingham Settlement with one of their advisors, Jelena Dukic, who is a specialist in issues around debts.

Alongside the money advice we continue to offer advocacy, through volunteers and staff from the partner organisations, this includes support with basic issues, such as filling in forms, help getting online to find information or make applications, requesting repairs, making phone calls, or explaining letters.

This help is even more important for people for whom English is a second language, where speaking to someone face to face is easier than making yourself understood on the phone and reading and writing can be a challenge. Appointments to see Bram are available at other times during the week and this can often include more involved issues such as filling in benefit applications or dealing with appeals.

The Ladywood Community Advice project has seen 477 people over the past year and had 1371 contacts across the drop-in sessions and appointments provided. Since starting 20 months ago the service has dealt with 3373 separate issues, ranging from rent arrears to school places. It has supported people with a little over £400,000 of debts and helped people access over £1.3 million in income and nearly £33,000 in grants or other financial assistance.

The project has also helped people with signposting to other help and support, including providing referrals to the local foodbank, accessing crisis fuel grants from the Ladywood Project, and a bill payments scheme offered by BICCU.

In addition we have been running a weekly drop-in session on a Monday morning at the Karis Medical Centre. This session has been focused on making it easier for patients to access the support we offer across all of our projects, but the nature of referrals has meant this has also been a good opportunity to provide general advocacy and signposting to other specialist advice services where necessary.

We do continue to provide advocacy more broadly through our other projects and people can still access phones and/or the printer and photocopier at our office in order to deal with issues themselves. We continue to receive referrals from one of the local jobcentres for people to make calls to speak to benefit offices about their claims following a change in policy meaning clients can no longer use phones at the jobcentre.

Staff and volunteers also help with basic advocacy at our groups, such as at our English classes, and during befriending visits, this may be explaining a letter someone has received or helping find information about services or other support.

In all, including Ladywood Community Advice and our other projects & activities, 541 people received support with advocacy & advice over the past 12 months and we had 1647 contacts.

There are areas of need we would like to address in the coming year, in particular the Workshop job club which had been run by local residents for several years had to close at the end of the summer. This leaves a gap in provision around helping people to move towards employment, which is significant given high levels of unemployment in the area. We hope to look at whether our existing advocacy & advice work could be extended to include support for people looking for work and how best we might be able to offer this help. There are exciting opportunities to work with other groups on this, including Suited for Success, a new project offering donated suits and smart business wear to people for interviews for work or further education.



CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Our work with local families continues to provide much needed support through the 'Welcome to Ladywood' drop-in, ESOL classes and home visits, as well as trips and activities during the school holidays. Ruth Fuller is our Children & Families Worker and has been working with the project for seven years now.

Our Children & Families project continues to support families in the Ladywood area who are isolated, lonely, struggling or feeling worried. We seek to offer friendship and practical help through home visits, our English for Speakers of Other Languages class, 'Welcome to Ladywood Drop-in', Baby Bank, trips and social activities, and Advocacy & Advice

It's been a challenging year with a reduction in hours for Ruth our Children & Families Worker due to a shortfall in funding however, we've still managed to support 251 families and their children with the help of our 18 faithful and committed volunteers.

Visits remain a priority of the Children & Families Work because of their importance in relationship building. We made 171 visits last year. A major and very welcome development in the work has been the emergence of four mother and baby asylum seeker hostels in the area. We've spent a lot of time getting to know these families and providing practical help. This has resulted in a number of play sessions involving much cake and singing! These relationships have been really precious; we've navigated many highs and lows, even within the year. We've helped a lady who received leave to remain to furnish her new place, a mother and her baby with their complex claim for housing and benefits after receiving papers, we took another lady to hospital in an emergency and subsequently supported her after the birth of her premature baby. We've organised baby massage, art sessions, walks around the reservoir, birthday parties as well as emotional support in the midst of sadness in their separation from loved ones and fears over their uncertain futures.

International Lunches were inspired by both our new relationships with the asylum seekers and the Children's Centre who wanted to work in partnership with KNS to provide more services to local families. We ran a session once a week for asylum seekers with a free lunch (courtesy of Birmingham Central Food Bank) where we explored different aspects of our cultures, we had a lot of fun together; our favourite time was spent sharing songs from our childhoods.

English for Speakers of Other Languages: Our incredible volunteers have taught 113 students this past year and had a 957 contacts with those students. Our crèche volunteers have cared for 59 children while their parents learnt English. The childcare we provide is essential for many of the students who otherwise wouldn't be able to study. ESOL remains a cheerful and welcoming place for students who are newly arrived or only have a basic grasp on English. We seek to bridge the gap between just starting out and going to college and hope to give students the skills and confidence to seek more formal education once their circumstance allow.

Baby Bank Central formally began helping families in December of 2013 in partnership with Birmingham Central Foodbank & Birmingham City Church. Birmingham Central Food Bank provides space in their warehouse for the storage of donated, second-hand items which we then sort and give to clients. Families in need access the support via referral agencies such as Children's Centre, Health Visitors and Social Workers. Once referred, clients are invited to an appointment at Baby Bank Central where they can collect their items, we normally take this opportunity (over a cup of tea) to find out if they have other needs and signpost/help accordingly. We were very grateful to receive a grant from Grantham & Yorke which covers Ruth's salary for six hours a week to administer and manage Baby Bank and our growing nappy bill! We're also indebted to HSBC who have generously provided an enthusiastic team of volunteers who come weekly to sort baby clothes and help us prepare parcels.

Welcome to Ladywood Drop-in remains a great place for friendship and community. We continue with a programme of craft and hospitality and seem to find any excuse to celebrate and share incredible food together. Last year we welcomed 96 adults and their 97 children to the Ladywood Methodist Church where we hold the Drop-in. We're aware that the school holidays can be a difficult time for the families we support so we provide a programme of trips and activities when school is out. Last year we took in Hatton Country park, Sandwell Valley, Polesworth Abbey, the Cinema, the Lickey hills, and the Think Tank all thanks to generous grants from Mothers' Union, Lord Austin, Joseph Hopkins Charity & Polesworth Abbey.



COMMUNITY REGENERATION

Our community regeneration project has now come to the end of its seventh year. Harry Naylor has continued in the community regeneration worker role and has been working to support local residents by helping to build stronger community connections, developing resident led initiatives and enabling residents to have more of a say about and take action on their priorities.

The Community Regeneration project covers our work with local people to help build stronger, more resilient communities – through developing local leadership and the ability of communities to shape decisions made about their neighbourhoods, and supporting local people to address the things they hold to be important.

A lot of our work over the past year has focused on building stronger connections between local community groups, the sharing of information about what's happening in the area, supporting the development of resident led groups & initiatives, and helping groups we're working with reflect on and learn from what they're already doing.

LADYWOOD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST

The Ladywood Community Development Trust (CDT) has been an emerging organisation, coming out of a partnership of local resident groups who had previously partnered on the Ladywood Ward Community First panel which ran for 4 years and helped distribute £50,000 in small grants to local projects.

We've been supporting the CDT to put in place some of the framework necessary to establish themselves as an organisation, including registration as a Company Ltd By Guarantee, growing a membership of local residents and building connections with other key groups in the area.

The Trust has had a number of success stories throughout the course of the year, including being able to fund a joint promotion of activities for children and families over the summer holidays after this was identified as a need. The Trust helped to co-ordinate with groups ranging from a resident run dance group to big city-wide organisations such as Birmingham Museums, and produced a brochure which was distributed to around 4000 families through all local schools.

There have also been opportunities for the CDT to draw in other groups and organisations who may benefit the local community, one such group has been The Real Junk Food Project, who have been supported by the CDT to start a regular café serving food that has been intercepted from going to waste on a Pay As You Feel basis.

Another developing possibility includes Community Shop, who provide a membership supermarket for people on low incomes as well as a raft of support services. The CDT helped to arrange initial meetings between Community Shop and the local authority to look at the possibility of bringing a Community Shop to Ladywood.

We are currently looking at supporting the CDT to develop a plan for the next few years as we are anticipating our project and involvement will come to an end in 2016.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

There are a range of other activities we've been involved in during the course of the past 12 months, from supporting the large annual Community Fun Day which took place in July, to working with individual residents to help them develop their ideas or initiatives.

A few success stories here include having linked a former Michelin starred chef, now retired, into The Real Junk Food Project to allow him to continue using his skills and explore his ideas to teach local people how to cook affordable, fresh food.

We have also supported a local residents group to hold regular tabletop sales and events to raise funds for their community gardening.

Our space at The Square, near Five Ways, has been useful to support groups like The Real Junk Food Project with storage space and to hold meetings and training throughout the year.



KARIS BE FRIENDS

Helen Bell is our Project Co-ordinator for the Karis BeFriends project, she has been joined towards the end of this year by Patti Tan as a Project Assistant. Karis BeFriends offers support to older people in Harborne, Edgbaston and Ladywood, who are isolated or lonely, including regular befriending visits and social get togethers.

Our Karis BeFriends (KBF) project encourages older people to continue to connect & flourish later in life. We focus on befriending support to older people in their own homes & within their communities, in the Ladywood, Harborne & Edgbaston areas of Birmingham. We had 62 older people referred this year, from local GPs, social workers, other health professionals, relatives, friends or themselves. Throughout the year we supported 180 older people, through 1530 contacts, mainly through visits at home, contact over the phone, accompanying them out in the local community or to appointments, and organising trips, regular groups or social events. 62 people were visited at home and 84 have regularly attended groups, either our 'Time for Tea' events held at the Onneley Centre, or our Senior Life Group at the Kenrick Community Care Centre.

We usually have about 40 older people come along to each Time for Tea event, with at least 25 volunteers from a local church (Churchcentral) helping with lifts, baking, in the kitchen or sitting and chatting at the tables, often there is a theme, quizzes and entertainment, maybe a short talk and opportunity for the older people to contribute, share their ideas and feel part of the community. Deidre, an 86 year old resident from Ladywood, who regularly attends said "I always look forward to going to Time for Tea, it makes me feel so good, I'm on a high when I get back!" The Senior Life group offers chance to enjoy the company of others, to share and have discussions and it often seems to be the highlight of the week for those who come along. It is also run with the help of volunteers from Churchcentral, and although it has been sad to see 4 of our regular members pass away during this year, we have welcomed 5 new members and encourage people to keep going out even when it can be a struggle.

Our volunteers' contributions are invaluable and we couldn't do all we do without them. Around 75% of our contacts were due to volunteer involvement in individual befriending, helping with group activities, advocacy or practical tasks. Having increased numbers of volunteers enables us to provide more contact and regular visits to those we support, particularly those who have increasing difficulty getting out. Arleen, a befriender, said "I have been visiting a lady for the last 8 years, we go out for lunch or coffee but usually I call round for a cup of tea and a chat. Like most friendships it involves caring and sharing, time and our lives. It has been a privilege and a joy spending time with her."

We have continued to be part of the Moving Together in Body, Mind and Spirit Partnership (made up of local Churches/groups providing support to older people) and have received grant funding from Birmingham City Council. This enabled us to increase our staffing from August. In addition to my role we were able to employ a Project Assistant for 18 hours a week. This has been so helpful in enabling us to support and visit the growing number of older people referred, and supervising and matching up existing and new volunteers.

We have also been involved in the Ageing Better in Birmingham project this year. Two of the older people we support (85 and 89 years old) have been part of the Age of Experience group, which has engaged older people in shaping the project and I have helped as a facilitator within this group. We recently received funding to run an Ageing Better Mini Hub and had a successful first event in November inviting people to come along to hear about Ageing Better and to listen to a professional Storyteller, who encouraged us that we all have a story to tell, the benefits and value of sharing our experiences, and helped us start on the journey of telling our stories.

Our partnership working with other groups has continued to be key, including support from Birmingham City Church, Waitrose Harborne, Veolia Environmental Services (Credit Control Department) and St.John's (Harborne) with our Christmas party and delivering gift bags. Ongoing support from Churchcentral, the Onneley Centre and the Kenrick Community Care Centre with our Time for Tea & Senior Life Group activities. We have also hosted a group of Physiotherapy students and a Psychology student on short placements.

Over the last year there have been many highlights as the project continues to grow & develop. It is clear that there are challenges to face as we go forward, particularly uncertainty around funding & a growing number of older people. However we continue to be convinced of the value of this work as we see & hear the difference it makes to individuals' lives. "When you're completely on your own Karis Neighbour Scheme is something I'm very thankful for. It's not just the company but the practical help too; accompanying to appointments, knowing there is someone I can call on, what would I do without it!" Joan expressed, while being accompanied by me to a hospital appointment and sitting chatting in the waiting room (Joan is 89 years old and lives in Harborne, we've known her for 7 years).



PRACTICAL SUPPORT

The provision of practical help for people in hardship, whether financial or due to other circumstances such as isolation or poor health, is an important part of the support we offer. A great deal of the practical help we have provided over the past 12 months has been alongside support on offer from our other projects.

Primarily we look to offer neighbourly help to people in need, including help with jobs in and around the home, such as decorating, gardening, DIY and other odd jobs, passing on donations of furniture and appliances, and help moving to or from temporary accommodation.

We do also provide some more acute support including signposting to Birmingham Central Foodbank for emergency food parcels (as well as giving small parcels out of our store cupboard where this provision is not immediately accessible), help applying for grants and financial assistance, and provision of baby equipment and other essentials through Babybank, a joint initiative working closely with the Foodbank and Birmingham City Church.

There has been a significant increase in the amount of practical support we've given over the past year, compared to the previous 12 months.

This year we helped 205 individuals and families (up 34% on 13-14, 153) and had 458 contacts (up 37% on 13-14, 334). A lot of this increase is attributable to the Babybank. Between about 5-10% of the people we supported we would assess as acute cases, where either they have accessed three or more types of support or we have had four or more instances of providing practical support.

We completed 45 practical jobs in the past 12 months (down from 54 jobs in 13/14), this is one of the areas where we see a greater need than we are able to respond to, in particular we have limited capacity to do bigger jobs such as decorating and big garden clearances.

We intend to see if this is an area we can respond to in the coming months, growing the number of volunteers we have who can commit time and skills.

Some examples of the kinds of jobs we've helped with this year include:

Helping several asylum seekers move their belongings to temporary accommodation following the granting of refugee status. People only find out where they are moving to at very short notice and have to leave NASS accommodation almost immediately. One young lady we helped to move twice in a fortnight as she was moved from one temporary accommodation to another shortly after arriving.

We helped clear a family's back garden and take away clutter from the house following a referral from a social worker. We were able to take several van loads of rubbish to the tip to help ensure the children had a safe environment at home.

Arranged for a volunteer from the Summerfield & Ladywood Timebank to help change a lock for an older gentleman after he had lost his keys to his front door.

We have also provided a lot of help with lifts & accompanying out to appointments, particularly for older people we befriend, and have provided help on 51 occasions to 26 individuals.

We passed on 22 donations of furniture, appliances and other household items this year.

Provision of food parcels has remained largely similar to the previous year, a total of 107 people (13-14, 99) were either referred to Birmingham Central Foodbank, a local Trussell Trust foodbank run by Birmingham City Church, or received a small emergency parcel from our food store. In all 215 parcels (13-14, 191) were distributed to these clients, meaning on average each client was supported with two food parcels.

INTRODUCING WHOLECARE

WholeCare is an arm of the charity with its own Management Board and organisational structure, set up to deliver services through NHS commissioning. Set up in mid-2014, WholeCare has been instrumental in the development of Listening and Guidance, a GP Chaplaincy service.

We are currently working with Birmingham South Central and Sandwell & West Birmingham CCGs to deliver the Listening & Guidance service as a pilot project. This has proved a successful first venture into the world of commissioning and delivering services directly for the NHS.

As this is a substantial new aspect of our work as a charity we are reporting on the activities of WholeCare separately in this section of our annual report.

LISTENING & GUIDANCE



The service has now been running for 20 months and we are approaching the last quarter of our 2 year pilot. The service took a good 6 months to get fully up and running due to problems with finances being released and thus delays to staff recruitment. Momentum has been now built, we have a full team on board (5 Chaplains for Wellbeing P/T) and are busy delivering a full service of Listening and Guidance. That is 20 hours of GP Chaplaincy within Sandwell and 40 hours GP Chaplaincy within Edgbaston Wellbeing Hub per week. We were able to support 78 clients in the last quarter in Sandwell and 86 in Edgbaston and importantly we have been able to offer 78% of clients an appointment within 2 weeks of them being referred, (although this is now slowing in Sandwell due to increased referrals).

Managing supply and demand of clinics can be challenging for a small service where it takes time to recruit staff and to find room space within an appropriate health centre. We hope that the recent addition of staff on the Sandwell team will mean we can once again cut waiting times in Sandwell and respond quickly to the positive demand for our service. We are excited and confident about the impact that we are having and are keen to extend the reach of this service beyond the pilot scheme so that many more people can benefit from the unique offer of holistic care in a location that is local to them.

The service consists of offering hour-long, one-to-one sessions within a primary care setting. The patient is given the opportunity to explore the life events which are causing them distress, most people want the service because they are experiencing loss of some kind which has taken away their confidence, wellbeing, security or sense of meaning and place in the world.

Within the Edgbaston Hub we have become the spoke receiving the most referrals (25+% of the share of all Hub referrals). We are active on the Triage team, which helps to welcome people into the Hub, explain the services available and then support the patient to select the spoke most appropriate for them. Perhaps due to our place on the Triage team and location within the Karis Medical Centre, we have become well known and trusted and are doing what we can to raise the profile and awareness of the service across practices.

Patients for whom it is appropriate take part in various forms of evaluation so that we are able to assess the impact of the service. Most common is our use of the WEMWBS (Warwick and Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Score), which is showing that patients who receive our service long enough to record two scores, are showing a marked improvement in their wellbeing (An average 7.8 point increase in the first year data).

In April we began to introduce the PROM (Patient Recorded Outcome Measure), which is used to record patient's opinions of their outcomes within spiritual care services. Both measures used give us opportunity to receive feedback both qualitative and quantitative in order to analyse, understand and improve the impact we are having.

"It's given me a reason to carry on with my life"

"I believe in myself a lot more now, am stronger and feel I have a purpose"

The evidence this year has shown that our service helps most patients to have a better outlook on their situation, either often (33%), or some of the time (44%). Perhaps more importantly, as comments from the less positive PROM feedback sheets suggest, those who don't feel better about their situation still appreciate having a Chaplain for Wellbeing to listen to them and walk with them through the difficult time of their life even when things don't improve. This 'handholding' is a very important aspect of the Chaplain for Wellbeing role.

"Without this help I would have felt very alone and isolated and abandoned, I have been and continue to be in a very difficult stage of my life..."

Listening and Guidance can be many things to many people, depending on their needs. Dr Bryson and others have summarised the unique aspects of the service as 'listening, compassionate presence, facilitating the search for meaning, discerning the signs of life, offering appropriate ritual, offering prayer, providing support in death and dying, and pastoral care of staff'. As one patient explained, "The spiritual aspect is very important, and many other organisations are not giving spiritual care." Although most patients don't use the word 'spiritual' to describe the needs that they are bringing, it is clear that there is demand for services that are able to take the time to look at the whole person in a compassionate and dignified way, to really listen and to help the patient to rebuild a sense of purpose and meaning for their life.

Although we have put a hold on the development of Professional Volunteer Listeners as part of our service, we are keen to develop the breadth of the GP Chaplaincy team and hope to establish clinics at new sites over the next year. We are confident that we will continue to satisfy the requirements of the CCGs and look to secure further funding to develop and extend our service in future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, a huge thank you to all our volunteers and supporters.
We couldn't do it without you!

Thanks also to,

Age UK Birmingham, Philippa Allenby, ASIRT, BHSF, Birmingham Central Baptist Church, Birmingham Central Foodbank, Birmingham City Church, Birmingham Mother's Union, Birmingham Settlement, Birmingham Voluntary Service Council, Blue Coat School, Business In The Community, Central Ladywood Neighbourhood Forum, Christ Church Summerfield, Church Alive, Church of the Redeemer Edgbaston, churchcentral, Circul8 Credit Union, City Centre Neighbourhood Forum, Coplow Street Grow Site, Councillor Carl Rice, Deaf Cultural Centre, The Digbeth Trust, Family Housing Association (Birmingham), Friends of Chamberlain Gardens, The Gift Project, Graham Harvey Services Ltd, Harborne Medical Practice, HSBC, Hope Projects, Jewellery Quarter Neighbourhood Forum, Karis Medical Centre, Kenrick Centre, Knowle Parish Church, Ladywood Children's Centre, Ladywood District Office, Ladywood Community Development Trust, Ladywood Furniture Project, Ladywood Health & Community Centre, Ladywood Methodist Church, Ladywood Project, Lordswood House Medical Practice, Midland Heart, Morrisons Edgbaston, Narthex, Newman Trust Homes, Norman Power Centre, North Summerfield Residents' Association, Onneley House, Oratory RC Primary School, Outreach Shop, Polesworth Abbey, Quinton Methodist Church, The Real Junk Food Project Birmingham, Restore, Ring & Ride West Midlands, Shencare Community Transport, Shiloh Computers, Sport4Life UK, Spring to Life, St Augustine's Church Edgbaston, St George's Church Edgbaston, St George's C of E Primary School, St Germain's Church Edgbaston, St John's Church Harborne, St John's & St Peter's Church Ladywood, St John's C of E Primary School, Summerfield & Ladywood Timebank, Summerfield Resident's Association, Thrive Together Birmingham, Veolia Environmental Services Ltd and Waitrose Harborne.

FUNDERS

Ageing Better in Birmingham, Baron Davenport's Charity, The Barrow Cadbury Trust, BHSF, Birmingham City Council, Birmingham South Central CCG, Birmingham Diocese Mother's Union, Christian Vision, Church Alive, churchcentral, The Cole Charitable Trust, Digbeth Trust, The Edgar E Lawley Foundation, The Eveson Charitable Trust, Friends of Karis, Grantham Yorke Trust, Harborne Parish Lands Charity, The Henry James Sayer Charity, The Harry Payne Trust, Hinchley Charitable Trust, The Kerygma Fund, Ladywood Community First Panel, Ladywood Methodist Church, Limoges Charitable Trust, The Lord Austin Trust, Knowle Parish Church, Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG, St Augustine's Church Edgbaston, St George's Church Edgbaston, Tudor Trust, Waitrose, and all those who took part in (or sponsored) fundraising events during the year with a special mention to Peter Dalton for running the Birmingham Half Marathon and Jenny Morgans for funds raised hosting the brilliant Harry Bird and the Rubber Wellies at their home.

We are very grateful for all the financial support we have received.



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