



Annual Report 2018



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

Registered Charity: 1133510



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REPORT AND INTRODUCTION FROM THE TRUSTEES

Introducing the Karis Neighbour Scheme annual report for those who are interested in and who support this unique organisation is always a huge privilege. I have had this chairperson's privilege for about 20 years but recently I was helped to see how unique Karis Neighbour Scheme is through the eyes of an organisational consultant who was asked to consider how we operate. The view was expressed that Karis Neighbour Scheme is unusual in being able to maintain its core vision and activities with its long-serving staff team over such a long period. My first desire therefore, as chairperson, is again to pay tribute to these staff. The pages of this report will demonstrate the fruits of their labours, but only those that actually meet them realise the depth of their commitment and the compassionate care they demonstrate as they work for Karis Neighbour Scheme.

I also want to pay tribute to my fellow trustees. During this year they have had the wisdom to see that, in order to guard the essence of what Karis Neighbour Scheme is, we need to be constantly willing to review how we operate and how we evaluate what we do. They have had the courage, foresight and faith to realise that this has meant the need to advertise and appoint to Karis Neighbour Scheme a full time CEO and then to realign how we all work around this new key role.

Maddy Bunker has joined Karis Neighbour Scheme this year in this new CEO role and she deserves particular tribute for the way she has begun to understand the complexity of what Karis Neighbour Scheme does; what are the core and non-negotiable values; what ways of operating can be improved; how the variety of what Karis Neighbour Scheme does can be more cohesively integrated and how all of this can be effectively, but not obtrusively, evaluated.

In times of change it is helpful to refer to foundational values and so I have been reflecting again on the story of that gives Karis Neighbour Scheme the 'Neighbour' in its title. The story of the 'Good Samaritan' came as a response to a rhetorical question that Jesus was asked: 'Who is my neighbour?' The well-known story was intended to challenge preconceptions about for whom we feel obliged to care. It describes not only profound compassion towards a stranger but practical action in caring for the needs of the stranger which was costly both in terms of time and financial resource. I believe that in the pages of this report you will see that Karis Neighbour Scheme continues to illustrate the reality of being that kind of 'neighbour', and so demonstrating something which can be modelled by others and which helps bring transformation to individuals and communities.

On behalf of all at Karis Neighbour Scheme I thank you for your interest and support as we continue to express that costly care which leads to transformation.

Ross Bryson
Chair of Trustees

REPORT FROM CEO

It is a joy to write my first CEO's report. I started in post in July 2018 and I am very grateful to the trustees, staff, volunteers and clients who have all made me feel very welcome.

Karis Neighbour Scheme is a relatively small charity but is achieving a large amount in the community and supporting many individuals. It has been exciting to gain understanding of the different projects and activities that we run as well as building relationships with partners and other organisations.

It has been a busy and successful year. The stories within this report reflect the many examples of where we have been able to effectively work alongside people.

These stories reflect a community that is being impacted by austerity and the cuts in funding to the public sector. Our work in providing community advice is needed more than ever, as many people need help to access their correct benefit payments and other support. Our partnership in running a job club is also crucial in order to assist people with getting in to work.

This year we celebrated ten years of 'Time for Tea'. We are especially grateful for the ongoing partnership with Church Central in running this event. It is amazing that we have held 53 'Time for Tea' events over this time with the help of many volunteers.

The Babybank continues to be very busy and there is a huge ongoing need for equipment and clothing for babies, which makes the donations that we receive for this project absolutely vital.

One of the objectives for Karis Neighbour Scheme is to ensure no one is neglected or forgotten about. We do this by building links with and between other groups and organisations, standing with people in the midst of hardship, helping them find the support they need and responding where needs are going unmet. As CEO, as well as strengthening and protecting our projects, my responsibility is to work with staff and community to uncover these unmet needs and look at whether we can play a part in filling these gaps.

Karis Neighbour Scheme would not be able to do all this without the support of our many faithful volunteers. I am immensely thankful for all the volunteers who bring commitment, skill and fun in their involvement.

We are also extremely grateful for the support we receive from our funders and donors as well as the individuals and local churches who continue in their commitment to us.

Voluntary and financial support has obviously been essential to our continued flourishing and it is exciting to think that we will be celebrating our 20th birthday later this year. It will be wonderful to look back and celebrate both our history and also what we are doing now. We are planning some great events as well as telling stories from our first 20 years, which should inspire and excite us as we move into the next stage of our story.

Maddy Bunker
CEO



DEVELOPMENT

Harry Naylor has been with Karis for a little over 13 years now, most recently in the Operations & Finance Manager role, continuing to take a lead on finances and fundraising.

Overall we have seen another good year at Karis. We've seen some changes in the core staff team with Maddy Bunker taking over from Becky Cuthbert in the CEO role and Michaela Brookes joining us to take over the Administrator role from Meg Koh.

Our work has continued to grow, with Baby Bank thriving in its new home at our space at The Square, receiving incredibly generous support and adding a Family Outreach worker to the team, and the Ladywood Job Club becoming established alongside our Community Advice work.

Despite the previous year being a 13 month year, we've seen just shy of the same number of people, 1114 (this doesn't include patients seen by our Listening & Guidance service), and we continue to see over 100 people a week, more than 20 people a day. We've also recently been making strides towards better evidencing the difference we make to the lives of the people we support, which has been challenging given the way in which we journey with people through all the complexities of life.

FUNDRAISING

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.

Overall, we had a successful year of fundraising. Our expenditure overall was down slightly, but this is due entirely to a reduction in spending in our Listening & Guidance service, this area of work continued to receive funding from Birmingham & Solihull and Sandwell West Birmingham CCGs. We received £50,532 in funding towards the project this year as well as carrying forward £20,274 from the previous year.

In the rest of Karis Neighbour Scheme, across our other projects, our expenditure rose to £159,471, 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 £98,743 in grants over the past 12 months, up from the year before. A further £3,432 was received in relation to service provision.

Individual giving and donations are also a significant proportion of our income, and this year included £57,877 of regular giving and one-off donations as well as gift aid of £2,337. This saw giving and donations drop slightly – after a large increase the year before - while gift aid dropped slightly. This continues to represent a little over a quarter of our income.

We want to extend a particular thank you to all the generous individuals who have supported our work, especially our regular donors, and the churches and other local groups who have supported us financially.

Other small fundraising efforts have raised around £400. We've had over £200 raised by some of the older people we support who wanted to give back and have been making crafts to sell and organising bric-a-brac sales. We've also raised over £200 from our monthly 'Play for Good' games days.

INTRODUCING KARIS NEIGHBOUR SCHEME

Who Are We?

Karis Neighbour Scheme is a community project working in inner city Birmingham. We work throughout several local communities offering friendship and support to those who are isolated or marginalised and who are often facing disadvantage or hardship.

We value working in relationship with people and look to express care and compassion in the midst of the difficult circumstances people find themselves in, at the same time as offering a helping hand in practical ways. This is true of our staff and the many volunteers who give their time to help others. As a result we will tend to 'journey' with people, through changing circumstances.

We are a relatively small organisation and we recognise we are not always best equipped to deal with every problem. However, we work closely with other groups, charities and services to try and ensure that people can get the help they need and we work 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.

Who Do We Help?



We currently work across the Ladywood, Edgbaston and Harborne areas of Birmingham. The communities in these areas are very diverse, with different strengths and challenges. We have been working in these areas for nearly 20 years and despite seeing a lot of changes throughout that time we continue to faithfully serve our neighbours.

While we work with a broad-cross section of our communities, there are two areas of our befriending work which have a particular focus. We befriend a large number of refugee and asylum seeker families in Ladywood and North Edgbaston, and we support a lot of isolated older people in Harborne and Edgbaston.

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 a weekly group as well as other social events and an art group.

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

Alongside our befriending support we provide an advocacy & advice service, including providing advice on welfare benefits and helping to fill in forms, make phone calls and signpost to other support through appointments and a weekly drop-in session. We partner with another local charity to run a Ladywood Job Club as part of our advice work.

We also offer support with practical tasks such as gardening, decorating and DIY, usually for people we already know through our befriending work – this neighbourly support is provided by volunteers and can include small tasks around the home like moving furniture or passing on donations of furniture. We also help people who are moving to or from temporary or emergency accommodation.

We also provide a Listening & Guidance service, based in General Practice, offering confidential pastoral care from Chaplains for Wellbeing. This service is available to patients of 7 GP practices in the area.

Our Team...

Trustees

We currently have a board of seven trustees, the average length of membership of the board is 7 years.

Amanda Smith, previously a non-executive director of a family owned business, joined the board in 2017 and has recently taken on the role of chair

Ross Bryson has been a GP for over 20 years at the local Karis Medical Centre and is a founding trustee

Rebecca Cuthbert has been involved in a number of charities with experience in family support, community development, project management and cross-sector partnerships

Gillian Harley-Mason is also a local GP with responsibility for safeguarding at the practice

Marc Kusicka is a Chartered Accountant based in Birmingham, previously having worked at Deloitte LLP

Kathryn Miles has a background in Public Health at the University of Birmingham

Steve Watts is a leader of a local church and has been involved in serving the area for over 20 years

Staff

We currently have a team of ten staff who oversee and co-ordinate Karis Neighbour Scheme's activities.

Core Team - **Maddy Bunker**, CEO, **Harry Naylor**, Operations & Finance Manager, **Michaela Brookes**, Administrator

Children & Families - **Ruth Fuller**, Children & Families' Worker

Karis BeFriends - **Helen Bell**, Project Co-ordinator - **Patti Tan**, Project Assistant

Ladywood Community Advice - **Bram Scott**, Welfare Rights Advisor & Co-ordinator - **Sam Clarke**, Welfare Rights Assistant

Listening & Guidance - **Helen Watts & Elizabeth Baker**, Chaplains for Wellbeing

Volunteers

We rely on a team of around 80 volunteers to enable our work to happen. People give their time in various ways and may be involved once or twice a year or several times a week! We're so grateful for the continued enthusiasm, effort and commitment of all our volunteers. Our volunteers come from a broad range of backgrounds and are drawn mainly from in and around the communities we work.



Supporters

Our supporters are also invaluable and contribute a great deal to our work as a charity. As well as regular giving, we also receive support from others who give of their time and resources. We are incredibly 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 YEAR



448 contacts providing practical help,
supporting 274 individuals and families

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

80 referrals to the local foodbank and/or
emergency food parcels distributed

59 lifts provided or times we accompanied
people to appointments



Over 80 volunteers involved in our projects
throughout the year

707 people supported with advocacy &
advice

195 people attended the
Ladywood Job Club

Over 1500 issues dealt with through the
Ladywood Community Advice service





Nearly **400** local families supported in various ways over the year

had contact with **230** children

provided activities for **32** families with more than **60** children during school holidays

117 adults and **135** children came to the Welcome to Ladywood drop-in

66 adults and **52** children came to our English classes

294 one-to-one contacts with **105** families



57 older people visited in their own homes

61 people came to regular Sunday Afternoon tea parties

22 older people came to a regular Tuesday morning group

an average of nearly **250** people supported every month

around **50** new referrals every month

5514 contacts supporting **1114** people over the course of the year



THE STORIES...

This year we've helped 1114 people from the local area through the Neighbour Scheme. 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.

Ursula was referred to us by a support worker at a housing advice charity, she needed some items for her new born baby as she had just moved into temporary accommodation and had virtually nothing, being unprepared for the arrival of the baby. Through our Baby Bank we provided a large new born parcel with essential equipment, clothes and nappies.

After six months she came back to see us as she wanted to return the clothes we had given her. We got chance to talk about her situation and she was finding living in a hostel with her young baby really hard. As a result we went to visit her, it was striking that in making a fuss of her 6-month old baby we realised that no one else had done this yet, underlining just how isolated she was.

As a result we invited her to come to our Welcome to Ladywood drop-in and she started coming regularly, enjoying the chance to meet others and help out in any way she can, clearing up at the end of the session or bringing along food to share. She has also been volunteering at our Baby Bank helping to sort donations and prepare parcels for other families. We've also continued to visit Ursula at home, taking her out so she isn't stuck in all the time. She has since moved to a home and we were able to come alongside her helping her to clean the house in preparation for the move and moved her things in our small van. We've also helped her with the process of finding cheap furniture and getting carpets fitted.

Even before she moved out of the hostel it was wonderful to see the transformation in her outlook and demeanour. She was making friends and thriving in being able to give back through her volunteering. In her own words (before being re-housed):

"Your help came at the right time, when I really needed it. When you came to visit us you made us feel wanted, at a time when everything was difficult. The Drop-in was nice, we made friends, everyone was friendly, we felt welcome. It has been so good to give back after I received so much. It's overwhelming to see all the effort and energy that goes into helping people at Baby Bank."

Abigail attends our Senior Life Group every week on a Tuesday, she says it *"is the highlight of my week. I felt isolated before."* She travels with two other ladies and this led to a friendship blossoming between them. They had all lost their husbands and were living alone, meaning before we met them they were feeling lonely and isolated.

Coming along to the group, and in particular travelling together, has made such a difference to Abigail and the other ladies, they now phone each other regularly and now pop over to each other's houses.

Pauline had been through a period of being unwell and had not been coping at home. Her kitchen had become very cluttered and needed a thorough clean and she was struggling to get on top of it while she was recovering.

One of our volunteers was able to visit her and spend some time helping with the tidying and cleaning. We went at a pace that Pauline could cope with, and one visit our volunteer just spent time talking and having a cup of tea because Pauline wasn't feeling up to doing anything.

We had known **John** and **Philippa** for a number of years, they had been waiting on a decision on their asylum application and had built up links in our area, John in particular has invested a lot of time in a local grow site, enjoying growing his own vegetables. They had been moved around a lot through the process and were moved out to Dudley at one point, but they still travelled back to Ladywood regularly because of the links they had here.

Part way through this year they finally received their refugee status, but were left homeless as a result, having to leave their National Asylum Support Service accommodation. We took John and Philippa, who are an older couple, to the local housing office and helped them make a homeless application. We actually made two trips to the housing office as when we arrived at first it was mid-afternoon and we were told it would be better to come back the following morning. We were able to give them a lift to get them there an hour before the office opened to ensure they were first in the queue.

When they were given accommodation it was some distance from the place they had been staying temporarily, so we were able to help them move their things in our van and have since helped them find some essentials like mattresses and chairs as they are trying to build themselves a new home in the first settled accommodation they have had for over 10 years.

Alina is a mum who lives locally, we have known her for a while but hadn't seen her for a little while. She got back in touch as she needed some help in the home with a few practical jobs. We were able to organise a small team of volunteers to spend an afternoon helping out with some painting and other little jobs. Not long after she also got in touch to say she had a sofa one of her friends was getting rid of and knew of another family that needed it, she asked if we could help move it.

We were able to find a volunteer and use our small van to collect and drop-off the sofa so it could benefit another family who need it and we were really happy to have been able to enable this 'neighbourliness' between others.

Annabel came regularly to our Senior Life Group, but she phoned one day to say she was unable to come as she had fallen in her flat and couldn't get up. We called for an ambulance and were able to go straight there and, with the help of a neighbour, get into the flat to reassure and wait with her until the ambulance arrived.

She wasn't in hospital long but when she was discharged the hospital needed someone to collect the necessary equipment and some food to enable a quick and safe discharge. We were able to help Annabel with this and liaise with her social worker around her care package requirements and helping her to return to going out in order that she can remain independent.

...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 January 2018 to 31st December 2018 (unless otherwise stated)*:

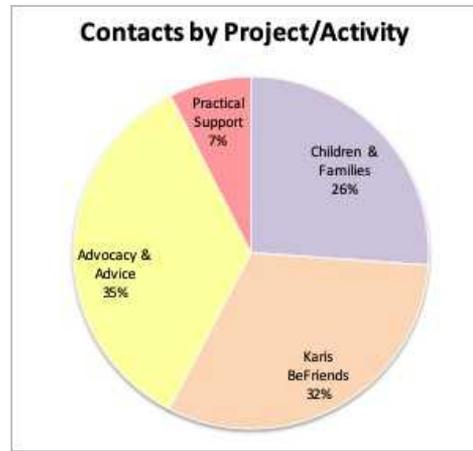
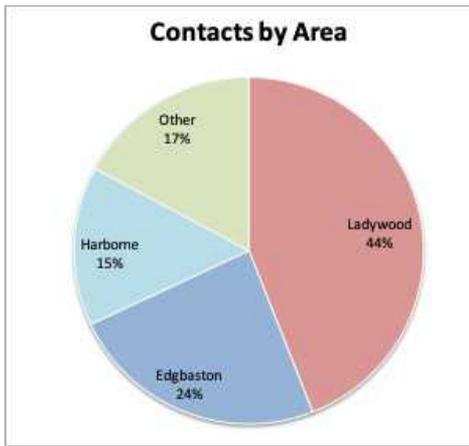
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17**	2018
Total no. of individuals supported:	766	879	1078	1122	1114
Total no. of contacts:	5310	4853	5982	6167	5514
Average contacts per month:	443	404	499	474	459
“ “ “ week:	106	93	115	110	106
“ “ “ day:	21	19	23	22	21

*Excluding contacts from our Listening & Guidance service

**13 month year

Demographics

	Individuals (%)	Contacts (%)
<i>By Gender</i>		
Male	31	21
Female	69	79
<i>By Age</i>		
16-24	8	3
25-34	20	15
35-44	20	19
45-54	13	11
55-64	11	9
65+	12	33
Undisclosed	15	10
<i>By Ethnicity</i>		
White (British)	18	29
White (Irish)	1	3
White (Other)	10	9
Mixed (Wh. & Carib.)	1	1
Asian (Indian)	2	1
Asian (Pakistani)	4	5
Asian (Bangladeshi)	1	1
Asian (Other)	4	4
Black (Caribbean)	10	9
Black (African)	25	22
Chinese	1	1
Other	4	6
Undisclosed	18	9

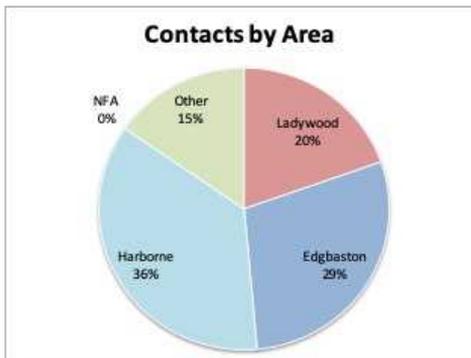
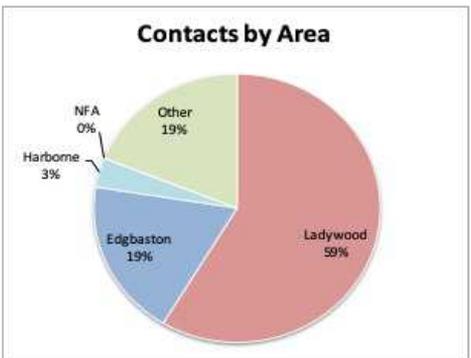
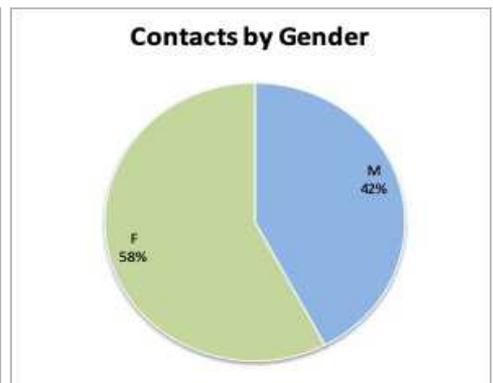
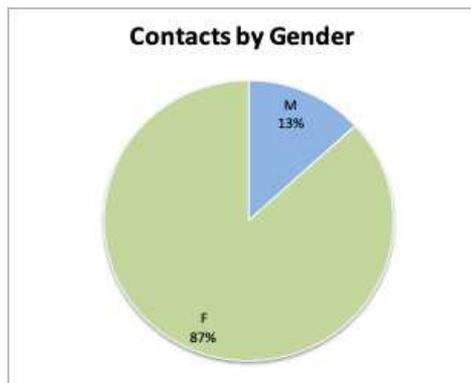
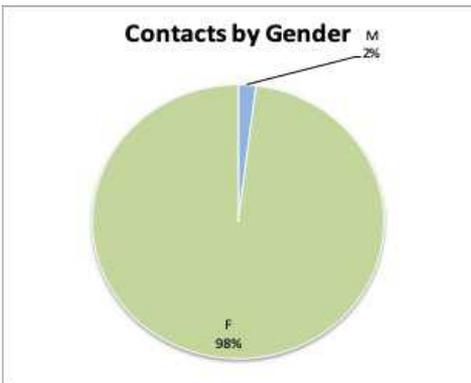
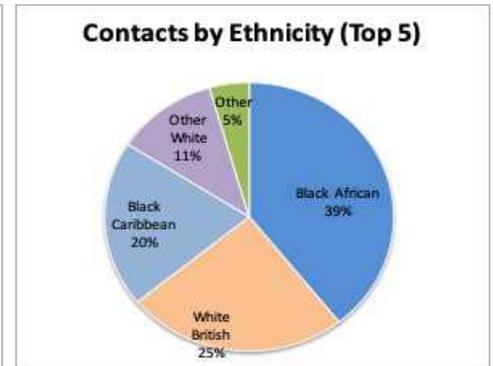
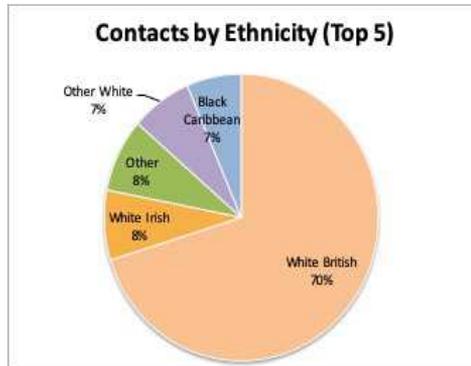
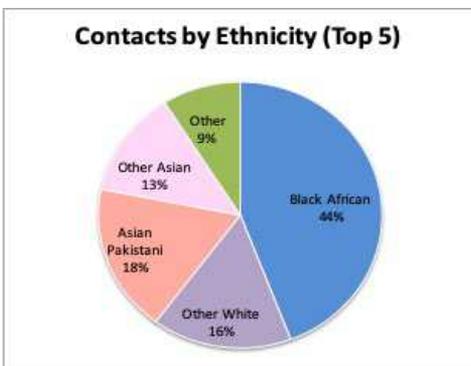


Breakdown by activity

Children & Families

Karis BeFriends

Advocacy





ADVOCACY & ADVICE

Our Ladywood Community Advice project has continued into its fifth year, with us continuing to see a high level of need for the benefits advice and basic advocacy support we offer.

Bram Scott, our Welfare Rights Advisor, supervises a small team of volunteer advocates who see people at a weekly drop-in. People can see Bram about benefit issues at the drop-in session as well, but he provides appointments at other times of the week for issues which are more in-depth such as lengthy benefit applications i.e. PIP and dealing with tribunals. This year we have also had volunteers seeing people on an appointment basis to deal with the increasing demand for help with issues such as utility bills, housing, travel and so on.

We have continued to link to a debt advice worker from Birmingham Settlement who is available to see people at Circul8 Credit union although a change of personnel means they are no longer available on the same day as our advice drop-in. We have also hosted workers from Severn Trent Trust Fund who are able to see people about support with their water bills and an advisor from the Birmingham Carers' Hub who have been able to see people about issues related to their caring.

As well as these links we will signpost to other specialist advice where needed.

These links ensure there is a better range of support on offer and bring these much needed services into the community where they are easier to access for some of the most vulnerable people we see.

509 people accessed Ladywood Community Advice over the course of the year. We had 1160 contacts, dealing with in excess of 2000 issues.

Overall the support from Community Advice has helped increase families' incomes by nearly £1,000,000, make debts more manageable and helped people apply for additional support through grants of well over £20,000. It has also helped take the pressure off families and individuals who struggle to deal with other issues because of language barriers or struggling to understand the paperwork they've received.

One of the particular needs this year has been around the roll out of Universal Credit, with increasing numbers of people moving to the benefit. Accessing the online journal has been a challenge for some people who are not confident using computers and we have been supporting people to get on to check payments and update their journal where required.

This is a challenge as the need is ongoing, and while we do show people how to do it themselves where we can, there are others who for one reason or another, learning difficulties or poor mental health for example, are struggling to get to grips with the process. There is a gap in provision for this support, and we have found ourselves filling the gap.

Alongside this advice provision we also partner with Suited for Success, a local charity providing smart interview wear and interview coaching, and St John's & St Peter's Church, to run the Ladywood Job Club. This is the first full year we have been running the job club and staff and volunteers have helped 195 people with updating CVs, job searching and looking for training or volunteering opportunities. On average we saw 12 people a week.

We run the session in the Digital Den at the Ladywood Community Centre, giving people access to computers who otherwise don't have that opportunity – this has been important for some attendees because of increasing expectations of job centres for the amount of job searching people need to do, which is challenging if you don't have access to a computer or the internet. Similarly we supported many people who lack confidence on computers and needed help to access online job boards and create an electronic version of their CV.

As well as these specific project areas, we also help people with advocacy & advice through our other projects, with staff often helping with general advocacy or signposting in connection with befriending.

We also run a weekly drop-in at a local GP practice, as an easy way of GPs and other staff at the centre referring people to us, but we also offer advocacy support at those sessions which is easily accessible for patients.

Taking this into account, in 2018 we directly helped 707 individuals through 2050 contacts with advocacy & advice, benefiting well over 1000 people when taking into account partners and dependents.



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 ten years now.

It's been another full year for the Children & Families project; We've had 1840 contacts with 387 families.

The development of Baby Bank Central has been a big feature of 2018. Keen to build relationships with the many new clients we were meeting through growth of the project we decided to use a generous donation to recruit a 'Family Outreach Worker'. This role built capacity into our befriending work and has enabled us to offer home visits to Baby Bank clients. We were delighted to welcome Liz Brown to this role in April since which time she has visited 34 families at home.

The spring also brought news of a contract termination for Birmingham City Church's warehouse requiring a search for a new home for both their Foodbank and our joint work on Baby Bank central. The rapid growth of Baby Bank central meant we were sadly unable to find premises that were big enough for the two projects and with heavy hearts we were forced to part ways. Baby Bank is working out of temporary accommodation near five ways, while we look for suitable premises. Thanks to very generous help from supporters our move was not nearly as arduous as we expected, however, the shutdown required did mean that we didn't see as many clients as expected in May affecting our overall annual contacts. However, we still supported 187 families with parcels.

One to one befriending remains a special part of the work, and this year we were able to carry out 294 sessions with 105 clients. Mostly we visit clients at home, sometimes we go out for coffee or a walk with clients, other times we help to celebrate special occasions when friends and families are few and far between. One lady referred by her midwife, was living in a hostel with her toddler son, and having fled Domestic abuse was very isolated. She had no plans to celebrate her son's 2nd birthday as she had no money and no friends. Our Children & Families worker suggested they make a cake together. The cake was beautiful and the mum was so proud of her achievement, this two hours of icing and laughing seemed to transform her.

This befriending time with clients allows us to form relationships, and our team of staff and volunteers actively seek out ways to communicate care and our client's worth. This year we made a special effort to celebrate 'Spring Day', a day important to Albanians where they enjoy the beginning of spring, visiting friends and wearing bright colours. Keen to adopt this heart-warming custom we visited all our Albanian clients at home, delivering daffodils, sweets for the children and a beautiful card designed by one of our volunteers, complete with greeting in Albanian. We invited them all to a 'Spring day' party we were holding at the Welcome to Ladywood Drop-in.

The Drop-in, now in its 16th year, is a precious 'Place of Welcome' for local people particularly women. We enjoy a meal together, playing and singing for the children and this year we started to sort some of the Baby Bank donations during our sessions in a bid to look outwards, aware that it's more blessed to give than receive. Normally we average around a dozen to the sessions, with numbers rising and falling with the temperature, but this year our numbers have often doubled. The atmosphere is warm, welcoming and cheerful and we love the relationships that form, often across cultures.

2018 has been a bit tough for ESOL with fewer volunteers than really needed meaning we haven't been able to accept new students. Despite this the class has continued to be a place of encouragement and achievement for a core group of students and we've been delighted with their progress.

This year we've also been pleased to obtain a number of grants for individuals who were struggling to buy essentials i.e. school uniform, carpet, washing machines, clothes for a sick child & furniture. Also, the Mother's Union AFIA (Away From It All) fund kindly granted us money towards a coach trip to Hatton and to a family for 5 separate day trips which was a huge blessing to them after a particularly difficult year financially & emotionally.

We remain indebted to the service of our volunteers & generosity of our supporters who faithfully give and in so doing enable us to bring both relief and friendship to those who are struggling.



KARIS BEFRIENDS

Helen Bell is our Project Co-ordinator for the Karis BeFriends project and has been leading on this project for over 13 years now, Patti Tan works alongside her 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.

The Karis BeFriends Project supports older people in Harborne, Edgbaston and Ladywood who are isolated or lonely. We offer befriending, practical help and advocacy through visiting people in their homes, accompanying them out into their community, and organising regular social events. Giving opportunities for older people to continue to flourish and connect with others, knowing a sense of community and being able to walk alongside someone and offer emotional support in the later stages of their lives. Last year we supported 181 older people through 2063 contacts. Throughout the year we received referrals from local GP surgeries, health professionals, social workers, relatives, friends or older people themselves. The continual flow of requests for help demonstrates the ongoing need in our local community.

One of the highlights this year was in June, celebrating 10 years of our 'Time for Tea' bimonthly Sunday afternoon tea we put on with the support of Churchcentral. We spent time looking back over the last 10 years, having had 53 'Time for Tea' events, gathering 40/50 older people each time, with a total of 202 different older people coming along over the years! We shared experiences, told stories, remembered, heard from and thanked volunteers, and celebrated all those older people who have come along! We enjoyed the usual quizzes, food and entertainment and cutting of the cake (made by one of the older people).

Sadly two of our regular attenders passed away that same weekend, however, hearing from those who were close to them demonstrated the difference this kind of ongoing support meant to them right up to the end of their lives. One relative sent us a note saying *"Thank you for including my mum in the afternoon teas, I know it was the delight of her life really, she loved it!"* and another described the support their mum had received over the last 13 years of her life saying *"Karis Neighbour Scheme is all encompassing; it seems to have arms all over"*

We have continued to look for opportunities to gather people together, to encourage friendships to develop and to encourage and enable one another. For example, through our regular Arts and Craft group that draws a small local group from different backgrounds and ages to be creative together, or our trips out and about. Our weekly 'Senior Life Group' sees people enjoying a meal together, participating in activities, discussions and quizzes, listening and learning from each other as we face everyday challenges and celebrate together. Recent comments from attendees include: *"I am slowly getting to know everyone, especially Mary, who has started visiting me and we phone each other. We are helping each other to tackle our isolation and loneliness."* and *"I have told my family, who live 100's of miles away all about Senior Life Group and they all know how much I enjoy it. I look forward to it each week. I think all the volunteers are amazing! This group has been a lifesaver, getting me out to meet people. Coming each week cheers me up and it's one of the best things I have ever done. What would I do without it?"*

Some we support are housebound, with no family of their own, therefore benefitting from regular visits in their own homes, we can be someone to call on to help practically, a support in changing circumstances, or connecting them with additional support when needed. During the year we have helped individuals move house, encourage to declutter, assisted with paperwork and phone calls, and referred to Adult Social Care and other agencies. We also encourage and accompany when people are struggling due to physical limitations of anxiety, one lady commented: *"I am so grateful for all the help I receive, especially now I am becoming less mobile and unable to get about like I used to. To have someone take me out of the house to the post office or to the corner shop has become so important for my wellbeing and keeping my independence and to go out on trips to the Lickey Hills and coffee shops is such a treat for me and something I look forward to very much."*

So there have been many highlights this year, we have continued to benefit from being an active partner within the Body, Mind and Spirit Partnership (made up of local Churches/Organisations supporting older people), as well as working with Churches and other organisations and business' within the local community and seeing the positive impact of so many volunteers involved. However, the real highlights continue to be hearing and seeing the difference the Karis Befriends Project makes to individual lives.



The Service

Our Listening and Guidance Service offers one-to-one sessions in a GP surgery with a Chaplain for Wellbeing. The service is for patients facing loss - loss of hope, loss of relationship, loss of job, loss of direction, loss of health and end of life care. The service is also for patients who just want someone to listen to them and need to talk through an issue. Based on a model of 'whole person care' the service encompasses the inter-linkages between the physical, psychological, emotional, social and spiritual dimensions of health. It is for patients of all faiths and beliefs and celebrates the value of keeping people's own life stories at the heart of their care.

The NHS Context

The service was commissioned by two NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups across Birmingham and Sandwell (BSol and SWB). Spiritual care is an explicit component of whole person clinical care encouraged by modernisation strategies with the National Health Service. However, although spiritual care services are well established in hospice and hospital settings and are increasingly developed in mental health services, they are still very limited within General Practice, and our Listening and Guidance Service is the first example of NHS commissioned Chaplaincy in General Practice in England. While the service is still small, it is our vision to develop the availability of the service more widely so that it can impact many more patients.

Patient Outcomes

In the last year we have received over 450 new patient referrals into our Listening and Guidance Service, with nearly 300 in Sandwell & West Birmingham and 175 in Birmingham & Solihull, in addition to patients still being seen from the previous year. Patient Feedback from the sessions is very positive and expresses a variety of ways in which the service makes a difference. Many of the outcomes that patients have expressed focus on: new hope for the future, a better understanding of one's situation, feeling more in control, more at peace, increased self-confidence, renewed engagement with community life and a return to work. The patient quotes are very inspiring:

With a tablet you take it and you think, is it doing what it should be doing [...] [whereas] having the Chaplaincy Service, it's like whatever is eating me up I could let it out verbally [...] the antidepressants it's just like kind of numbing things down [...] sometimes I felt that didn't really help me [...] talking to someone was more easier [...]."

It's making me more positive in my approach to life and the things I attempt to do.

The chance the Chaplain provides as being able to pour out of (part) of my burden has been very helpful. It means it has helped me not getting worse, deeper in my depression.

I feel the chaplain helped me to understand how I've been feeling and identify some of the causes.

Always listening and not judging.

It has contributed to finding a more relaxed and peaceful state of mind.

We were able to discuss all aspects of life including spiritual wellbeing which was of great importance to me

It has given me a reason to carry on with my life.

In addition to patient feedback we also take a 'wellbeing score' (WEMWBS) at the beginning and throughout the course of sessions. This scale asks 14 questions and provides a single score ranging from 14 to 70. The improvement in WEMWBS scores we see for our patients corroborate the strong evidence from the patient feedback and show an average improvement of 9.5 points for patient wellbeing.

(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/research/platform/wemwbs/researchers/userguide/wemwbs_practice_based_user_guide.pdf).

Partnership Working

Integral to our way of working is close partnership with other agencies and organisations, health services and GPs. In order to provide 'wholeperson care', we often signpost on or support patients to navigate other services available. Embedded in Karis Neighbour Scheme, our Listening and Guidance Service benefits from strong links with community organisations, we can support patients to become volunteers and to engage with community projects and groups.

Staff Team

Helen Watts is our Senior Chaplain for Wellbeing, based at Karis Medical Centre, along with Elizabeth Baker, delivering the service in the BSol area. Sandy Thompson has been our Chaplain for Wellbeing based at The Mallings in Sandwell and delivering in the SWB area, however, this part of the service will be coming to an end in March 2019. Our Chaplains receive regular supervision both clinically and pastorally to ensure they are delivering a high standard of care to the patients they are seeing.

Future hopes and plans

We have been appealing to both CCGs that our service would be able to operate more efficiently and effectively if it were scaled up in size and if contracts were longer than a year. In addition to reaching more patients and keeping waiting times down, this would also enable us to offer staff contracts that were longer-term and longer hours, helping us to attract and retain staff.

Sadly, due to changes in the commissioning process at Sandwell & West Birmingham CCG our contract will not be renewed in 2019, meaning that part of the service will come to an end. This will impact on a lot of patients, with our work in the Sandwell & West Birmingham area having seen nearly 500 patients in the last year.

However, we expect our work in the Birmingham & Solihull CCG area will continue and we have plans to deliver our service from additional GP sites extending the access of our service and raising the profile of our provision amongst more GPs.

We are also hoping to develop volunteer roles within the service in the coming year. This will be even more innovation for what is already a pioneering service, however, we are progressing these plans carefully to ensure that the same high level of care the current service has provided over the past 5 years is maintained.

In addition to local plans we are doing what we can to raise the profile of GP Chaplaincy nationally and we have invested time in speaking to other interested parties about our service.

We recognise however, that we continue in a difficult economic climate where health and social care budgets are facing severe cuts. Whilst we are committed to trying to influence the CCGs that it makes long-term financial sense to continue investing in our service we are also aware that we may need to draw on other funding sources in the coming year if we are to develop the service in the way that we have planned.



PRACTICAL WORK

Our practical work is an important aspect of the work we do as a charity, although there are a number of practical ways we support people within our befriending activities, neighbourly help in and around the home is important in filling the gaps that can exist when people don't have the support networks we rely on day in day out.

Some of the support we provide is with jobs like clearing overgrown gardens, putting up curtain rails and small bits of decorating, painting a room or two. We rely on generous volunteers who give their time and skills to help meet these needs.

A trend over recent years has been a need for help for people moving to or from emergency or temporary accommodation.

This year we've helped an older couple from the Democratic Republic of Congo who have been waiting for a number of years for leave to remain to become refugees, they became homeless when they received their status and as well as helping with taking them to the housing office to make a homeless application and supporting throughout that process we helped them on several occasions this year moving in and out of accommodation until they were moved to permanent accommodation.

Another family, a mother and a young daughter, were also helped following receiving their leave to remain and getting temporary accommodation at fairly short notice, moving things to the new property.

Connected to this need around moving is decorating for people moving into these properties, often the properties are very run down and we can help people to paint one or two rooms when they move in to help improve their living environment. This year we helped a young family who had moved because of domestic violence and helped to strip the living rooms of wallpaper and give them a fresh lick of paint.

We've also helped several older people as they move from their own homes to alternative accommodation. This has often been over a number of weeks, helping people to pack and sort ahead of the move. One lady was moving as far as Norwich, which we helped with a lot of the practicalities of.

We also help with smaller tasks, from helping a lady switch her old tv with a new one on her stand, helping a lady clean her kitchen when it had gotten out of hand after a period of ill health and collecting food and equipment from hospital and dropping it to someone's home so they could be discharged.

We also make referrals to Birmingham Central Foodbank where people are facing crisis and don't even have the money for essentials. Thankfully the need for this support was slightly lower this year than the previous year, with 80 referrals (down from 90), although a similar number of individuals were helped in this way, 57 over the year (up from 53 last year). This suggests although crises are still happening, that they are being resolved quicker, meaning that only around a third of those supported needed more than one food parcel.

For those who are in longer term difficulties in terms of finances we also help with applying for small grants or Local Welfare Provision to help meet particular needs in the home.

This year this included finding funding for a mother who had been moved into a new property which was bare and needed carpeting, and a number of Local Welfare Provision applications for white goods and essential furniture following a move to new home after being in a hostel or other emergency accommodation.

In these kind of situations we also passed on some donations of furniture, such as sofas and chairs, which had been offered to us by others in the community. In several cases we just provided the van and some willing volunteers to help move things that people in the community had arranged to give to each other, facilitating rather than instigating this kind of support.

Overall we have helped 274 people this year with practical needs, through 448 contacts, helping to build a network of 'good neighbours' in our community.



Acknowledgements

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We couldn't do it without you!

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