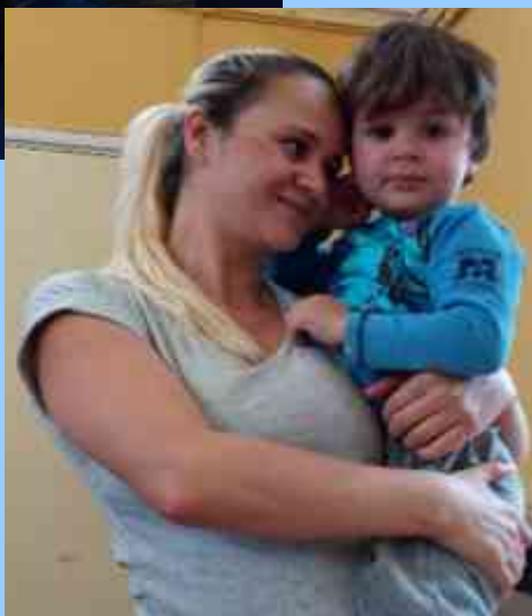




Annual Report 2020



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

Registered Charity: 1133510
Registered Company: 06595341





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Report and Introduction from the Trustees

Looking back over this past year, I introduce our Annual Report with an overwhelming sense of gratitude. This year has stretched and challenged us as an organisation and as individuals. Karis Neighbour Scheme (KNS) has had to develop, adapt and change ways of working in order to look after those needing help from our project teams and volunteers.

Through all this, there is still a sense of flourishing, just as the heat of a crucible refines to produce the very best quality, the stories in this report will show how KNS continued being a good neighbour, bringing hope and focusing on the wellbeing of clients in the tough times of Covid-19

In 2020 Karis Neighbour Scheme turned 21 years old, this used to be 'a coming of age' celebration. However, this year as a 21-year-old, KNS has proved above all that we are resilient, with a trusted place in the communities we work within and when the going gets tough, KNS will still focus on caring for the whole person.

As trustees we witnessed the impact being made, even in the difficult circumstances of Covid-19. Due to the longstanding presence of KNS in the community, we had the contacts, partnerships and the commitment of wonderful volunteers who made such a difference when people were experiencing so much isolation.

We are so grateful to our staff team, our volunteers who gave their time, and our supporters who continued to give financially; all this proved such an encouragement throughout the year. Our CEO Maddy Bunker has recently taken early retirement and our thanks go to Maddy for her leadership of the KNS team through this time. The trustees were delighted to be able to appoint an internal candidate as Maddy's replacement and Harry Naylor's experience with KNS after 15 years, has made him an ideal appointment for the next chapter of KNS.

I trust you will enjoy the stories enclosed from a year when all of us were challenged. Many found in KNS, a source of hope 'like an anchor for the soul, firm and secure' that we could share with others when the storms of life seemed all too strong.

Amanda Smith
Chair of Trustees

Report From CEO

As will be evident from the following reports, and as you may expect, 2020 was a very different year for Karis Neighbour Scheme. The impact of COVID-19 on a charity with a big focus on reducing isolation; spending time with people face to face, both at home and in groups; was significant.

Thankfully, our team responded with an incredible willingness to adapt; to respond to the needs of people in our communities; and to do what we were able in the face of the challenges of COVID-19.

I want to thank Maddy Bunker, my predecessor, for her leadership throughout 2020, she has since moved on from the organisation but she did a brilliant job of steering our team through the initial stages of the COVID-19 outbreak and everything that has followed on. Far from letting these challenges overwhelm our work she was able to invest in development, laying the foundations for a number of exciting opportunities which are coming to fruition in 2021 and you will hear more about in our next report.

I also want to commend each and every one of our staff and the many volunteers who have worked under difficult circumstances over the past 12 months, continuing to focus on making a difference for the people we support in the midst of the challenges of home working, zoom fatigue and the pressures of lockdowns.

This included a big shift towards meeting practical needs during the first lockdown, from weekly food deliveries for many of the older adults we know through our Karis BeFriends work, to a big increase in demand on our Baby Bank provision for families in crisis. Meanwhile other areas of our work, including the welfare rights advice provided by our Ladywood Community Advice service, and the Karis BeFriends Advice project – which only started in January this year – moved to telephone appointments and working remotely. This was also true of the Listening & Guidance service and our Chaplains for Wellbeing. Both still much needed areas of work.

Much of this work has been alongside other partners in the community, local charities, churches and businesses, GP practices, and the local authority, who have helped shape amazing responses to the needs arising from COVID-19. My thanks to all those we worked alongside this year. We are privileged to be part of these networks of support, something which we have long valued as an organisation, but which have particularly shown their worth in the past 12 months.

Another testament to the work of our team in 2020 is seeing that the reach and the impact of our work as a charity this year has remained similar to the previous year, despite the challenges of COVID-19. Indeed, feedback has indicated that the support we provided was a lifeline where so much of the usual fabric of life was put on hold. I commend to you the stories dotted throughout this report which show the many ways we have continued to bring wholeness to people's lives.

As we look ahead to 2021, we are aware that the challenges of the pandemic are not likely to recede quickly, and that there may be a changing landscape of needs in the longer term for our communities as a result. However, we will continue, as we have done over the last 21 years, to work to help our neighbours and our neighbourhoods thrive.

Harry Naylor
CEO





Fundraising

We have had a successful year of fundraising. We saw an increase in our expenditure, primarily due to the addition of our Karis BeFriends Advice work, a new area of work that began in January 2020, although we also saw a big increase in spending in connection with some COVID-19 specific needs over the 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. We were particularly grateful for the way in which emergency grant funding was made available through a number of routes which helped support our responses to the pandemic and enabled us to act quickly when needs became apparent.

Grant funding remains the biggest proportion of our funding, we received some payments this year which were due from the previous year, and additional grant funding for the KBF Advice project, but this has seen a significant rise in grant income for the year to £194,744.

A further £23,051 was received in relation to service provision, this is a drop on the previous year, though this reflects an arrangement with a local housing association which came to an end this year, although we saw an increase in other areas. There was an additional £19,369 received from Birmingham & Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group in connection with our Listening & Guidance Service.

Individual giving and donations saw a small drop to £66,762, with gift aid rising slightly reflecting the increase from the previous year to £1,880. Due to a rise in income from other sources this year, giving has dropped to about 20% of our income for the year from nearly a quarter in 2019.

Notably we also received a gift from a legacy of £33,166, as this wasn't planned for and came in later in the year, this is a main factor in the surplus carried forward into 2021.

There was an increase in giving via our virginmoneygiving online platform in the past 12 months, with the rise largely due to increased giving to our Baby Bank project by supporters who find us through our Facebook page. This helped raise £1,759 towards buying essential items for our Baby Bank parcels, and a further £1,017 towards our general work.

One area of fundraising affected by the pandemic was the fundraising efforts that we organise from time to time within the community, such as bric-a-brac sales that have been organised by some of the older people we support, or the 'Game On...' board game events hosted in our space at The Square. This has not seen a significant impact on our overall income, but we hope to return to these kind of activities, which also benefit the participants, when we are able.



Our thanks to all those who have generously supported us over the past 12 months, and enabled us to respond to the difficult circumstances our communities have faced throughout the pandemic, especially those who give regularly, and the churches and other local groups who have supported us financially as well as partnering with us in other ways.

Introducing Karis Neighbour Scheme

Who Are We?

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

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 over 20 years and despite seeing a lot of changes throughout that time we continue to faithfully serve our neighbours

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 we offer a helping hand in practical ways. As a result we will tend to 'journey' with people, through changing circumstances.

We are a relatively small organisation and although we may not be best equipped to deal with every problem, we work closely with other groups, charities and services. This means we can 'fill the gaps' where services do not exist in the area and ensure that people can get the help they need. Over the years this has led to the development of a number of projects offering a broad range of support within the community.

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 support local families, through a *Welcome to Ladywood* Drop-In group and our English for Speakers of Other Languages classes. Our Children & Families Worker and volunteers will visit families in their homes to offer befriending and support. We run Karis Babybank, providing donated baby clothes/equipment to local families in need.
- We provide an advocacy & advice service. This provides expert advice on welfare benefits from our advisors, as well as help to fill in forms, make phone calls and signpost to other support. Through our KBF Advice we can offer this support to older people in their homes. We partner with another local charity to run a Ladywood Job Club
- We offer support with practical tasks such as gardening, decorating and DIY, usually for people we already know through our befriending work.
- We 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.
- This year we began work on the Neighbourhood Network Scheme, a city-wide initiative looking to build closer links between social work and community groups and activities. We are working on this as part of a constituency wide partnership led by Birmingham Settlement.

Our Team...

Trustees

We currently have a board of 7 trustees, the average length of membership of the board is 9 years.

Amanda Smith, previously a non-executive director of a family owned business, joined the board in 2017 and took on the role of chair in 2019.

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 12 staff who co-ordinate Karis Neighbour Scheme's activities.

Core Team –	Harry Naylor , CEO, Michaela Brookes , Administrator
Children & Families -	Ruth Fuller , Children & Families' Worker, Liz Brown , Family Outreach Worker
Karis BeFriends -	Helen Bell , Project Co-ordinator, Patti Tan , Project Assistant
Ladywood Community Advice -	Bram Scott & Tasha Ramrous , Welfare Rights Advisors
Listening & Guidance -	Helen Watts , Senior Chaplain, Elizabeth Baker & Dilip Patel , Chaplains for Wellbeing
Neighbourhood Network Scheme –	Nettes Derbyshire , NNS Support Worker
KBF Advice –	Daniel Bains , Advice Worker



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 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 receive support from others who give of their time and resources. We are incredibly grateful for the continuing support of numerous local churches and the partnership of other organisations and community groups we work alongside. For a full list of our supporters and thank yous please see the last page of this report.

A Snapshot of the Year



358 families received support from Baby Bank, receiving parcels including...

36,079 nappies, **125** Moses baskets, **402** parcels for new mums, **55** cots and more

222 emergency food parcels delivered

514 new referrals overall



Over **60** volunteers involved in our projects throughout the year

Over **1,600** volunteer hours given



281 people supported with advocacy & advice

People helped to access **£423,000** of income through Ladywood Community Advice

189 individuals received Listening and Guidance Support



over **500** local families supported in various ways over the year

Over **1,500** contact hours providing support and befriending to children & families

323 befriending phone calls to families

169 contacts through families came to the Welcome to Ladywood drop-in



33 students attended our English classes

501 visits to families homes or doorstep chats



1500 telephone and befriending calls to older people

20 individuals attended 'virtual' tea party

961 home or doorstep visits to older people



An average of over **500** contacts every month

6,559 contact hours supporting **1,130** people over the year



The Stories...

This year we've helped 1130 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.

A family living in a local hotel were referred to us for baby items, which we provided. As we got to know the mum, **Hasna**, we discovered she also had a 13 year old son who had recently joined the family. He did not speak English, was being bullied at school, didn't know his siblings, couldn't communicate with them and was homesick. We organised specific ESOL classes for him with a volunteer, first in a coffee shop after school and then over Zoom. he's making terrific progress! When Ruth offered the volunteer a break over the summer, he didn't want one, so keen was he to get the lad sounding English before he starts again in September.

Here's what that volunteer said; *'I am 72 years old, have not taught for many years & am in the middle of lockdown. The opportunity to prepare lessons & to use old skills again has given me purpose and real satisfaction. The lessons are one of the highlights of my week; no lockdown blues here!'*



Tammy, a 92 year old in Harborne, had been isolating during lockdown and couldn't get any shopping. Our KBF volunteers took her regular food bags, put together by Waitrose staff.

She said: *"It's like Christmas day, the extra things they put in the bags, small box of chocolates, bunch of flowers, I can't remember the last time I had a bunch of flowers! I so appreciate it, thank you so much and hopefully I will meet you some day and you can come round for a cup of tea. Thank you and go on making old dears have a smile and know they are loved, treasured and remembered"*

Ana was referred as she had a very fractious baby and was really struggling with her mental health after the birth. Our team kept in frequent contact with her by phone listening to her and talking through the issues she was worried about and trying to re-assure from their own experience of being a mother. When rules relaxed a little they went for a few walks together and we saw her begin to grow in confidence and her baby do well. She still has lots of fears but is beginning to get into a routine and has re-connected with her family who have taken well to her baby and been helpful.

Michal struggles with multiple complex issues ranging from alcohol addiction to housing. He has often needed support from foodbanks and emergency funding for heating and electric due to poor money management. After having carried out a benefit check we determined that he had not been in receipt of his severe disability premium for a 5 year period, which resulted in a back pay of over £17k.

Michel was very anxious throughout the process, so we took small steps and guided him through towards a positive outcome. He now has the financial means in order to heat his home, pay for his own food and manage his tenancy. We have offered support of attending the credit union and budgeting support so that he can use the back pay to sustain his future.

Laura was an Albanian Lady who was very lonely and depressed. We went for a few walks around the reservoir getting to know each other. Her main need was to get her daughter into school but didn't know how to go about it, so I helped her research schools around her and apply online to three of them. She got a place and then we bought her some uniform so that she could start. She has settled well and absolutely loves school.

Sheila burst into tears in response to being offered another weekly food bag, "Thank you so so much, this has made my day, I was running out of things, thank you for phoning and thank you! Your kindness and gestures have helped me enormously to keep my spirits and my mood up during this painful and lonely period"

We began supporting **Tom** whom felt extremely anxious regarding his home and his mental health, as well as his finances. At the beginning of our support Tom was struggling to pay his bills & food, so our team delivered a food parcel to him. Next, our Welfare Advisor applied for Discretionary Housing Payments, assisted him to telephoning PIP as well as completing the form, liaised with the client's mental health team and requested support for an Occupational Therapy assessment to gain mobility aids. We were able to gain the right benefits for Tom, increasing his weekly income by £83.30. On top of this, we applied through the Council for a new cooker – replacing his that had been broken for 2 years. Tom said "Thank you for Everything, I would be lost without your help mate"

Mandeep was referred to us by her GP, having recently arrived in the UK and seeking asylum with her young daughter. Our team called her and her main need was clothes for her daughter and mental health help. So we referred her to another charity for clothes and delivered them, then met up for a walk. It became clear she needed to get her daughter on a waiting list for school - 2 hours later and a lot of phone calls, they managed it. We also referred her to for a food parcel and our Listening and Guidance service.

Amina was referred to Baby Bank by her Health Visitor after she fled domestic violence and was living in a hotel with her small baby. When our team called early in lockdown, she had run out of formula...we managed to get formula delivered to her that day. A few months later she was referred again for a cot in her temporary accommodation...we were able to deliver her a cot that day. She then said she was struggling for food, clothes (only had the clothes she was wearing), kettle, toaster and microwave and had no internet on her phone to find a GP and other local services. Joint with another charity in Ladywood and a generous response from our Baby Bank Facebook supporters, we were able to provide her with all the things she asked for.

...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 2020 to 31st December 2020 (unless otherwise stated):

	2015-16*	2016-17†*	2018*	2019	2020
Total no. of individuals supported:	1078	1122	1114	1226	1130
Total no. of contacts:	5982	6167	5514	6645	6559
Average contacts per month:	499	474	459	554	547
“ “ “ week:	115	110	106	128	126
“ “ “ day:	23	22	21	26	25

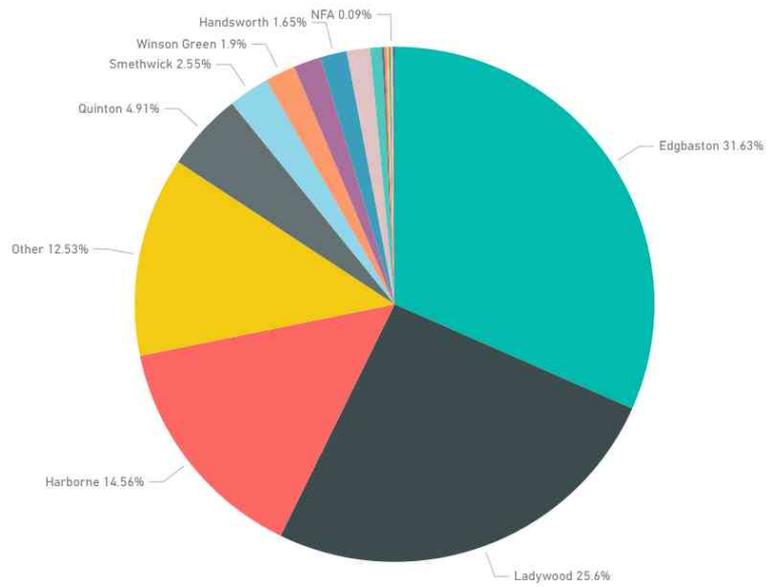
*Excluding contacts from our Listening & Guidance service

†13 month year

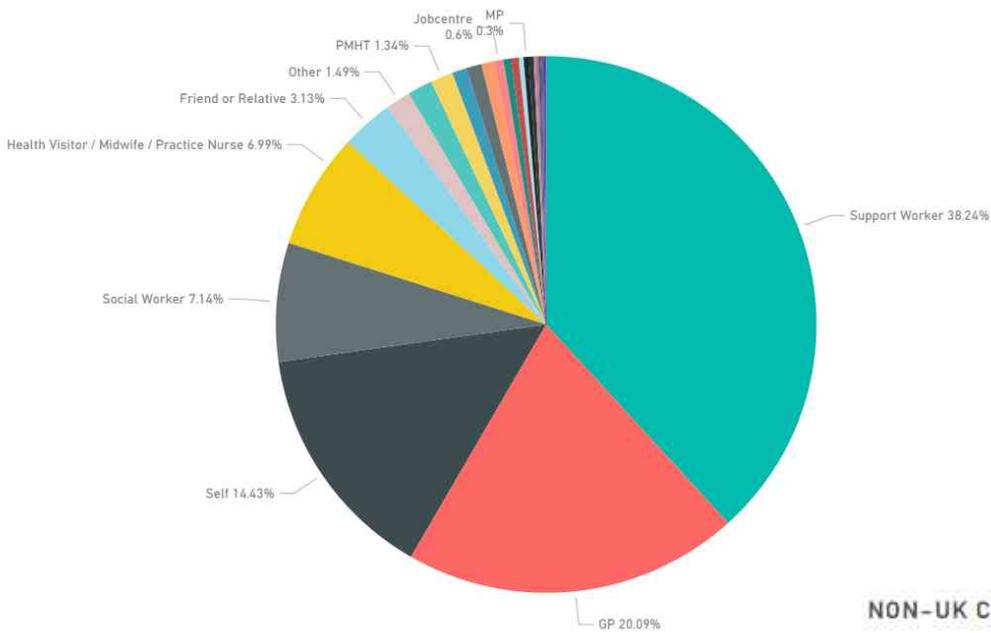
Demographics

	Individuals (%)	Contacts (%)
<i>By Gender</i>		
Male	25	17
Female	75	83
<i>By Age</i>		
16-24	9	3
25-34	26	13
35-44	26	15
45-54	12	12
55-64	10	10
65+	15	46
<i>By Ethnicity</i>		
White (British)	27	45
White (Irish)	1	4
White (Other)	9	7
Mixed (Wh. & Carib.)	2	1
Asian (Indian)	4	2
Asian (Pakistani)	9	6
Asian (Bangladeshi)	2	1
Asian (Other)	8	7
Black (Caribbean)	9	8
Black (African)	21	13
Chinese	1	<1
Other	7	6

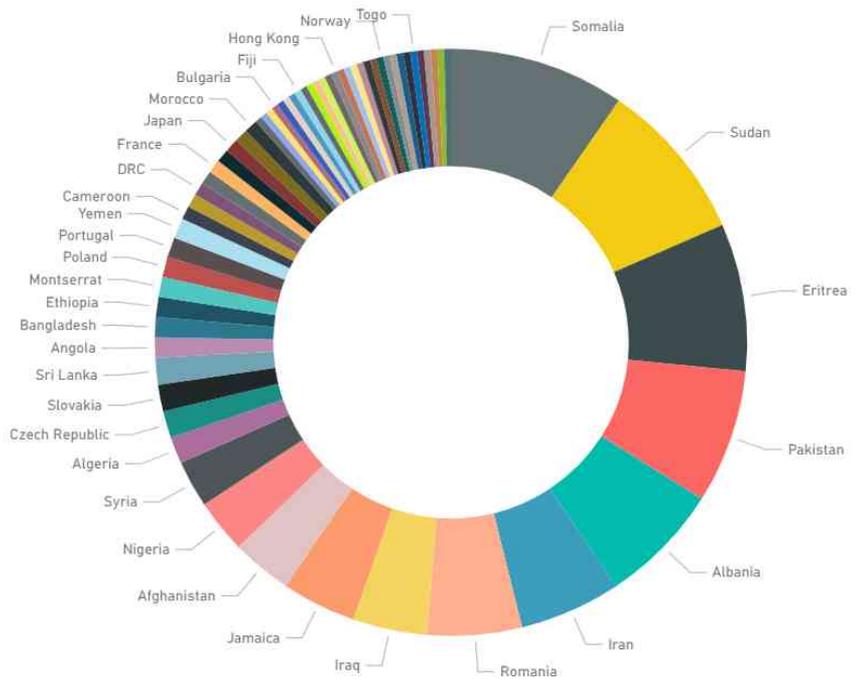
AREA PROFILE BY CONTACTS



SOURCES OF REFERRAL



NON-UK COUNTRY OF BIRTH BY CLIENT



ADVOCACY & ADVICE

IN 2020...

283

received support with welfare rights advice

INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES



NEW REFERRALS

187

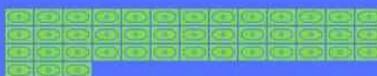


reaching people who needed our help during COVID-19

£424,000

IN INCOME

gained for the families and individuals we supported



SUCCESS RATE

100%



with tribunal hearings, the majority of which were for disability related benefits

TYPES OF ISSUE HELPED WITH

Universal Credit - PIP - Income Support - Attendance Allowance - ESA - Pension Credit - Foodbank Referrals - Council Tax - Utility Debt - Discretionary Housing Payments

Advocacy and Advice

From January to mid-March Ladywood Community Advice was able to offer advice on a wide range of issues both through our appointment system and our Wednesday drop-in sessions, running as usual with our Welfare Rights Advisor supported by volunteer advocates. Volunteers dealt with a lot of different issues, from helping people understand and respond to letters to reporting repairs and accessing support via grants. We were also able to host a colleague from Severn Trent once a fortnight, who was able to assist with water debt and access to their Big Difference Scheme.

However, with the lockdown in late March we also saw the closure of the Ladywood Health & Community Centre which restricted the support we were able to provide through the service. Our Welfare Rights Advisor, Bram Scott, and Welfare Rights Assistant, Sam Clarke, continued to deliver support remotely via telephone appointments, however the challenges of working in this way and the lack of access to the regular drop-in meant the service saw a reduction in hours.

Running a remote service was difficult, with the added challenge of speaking to clients for whom English is not a first language over the phone – this being the very reason many people have accessed our service previously, valuing us being able to look at letters and discuss issues face to face. There were challenges in dealing with DWP and the paperwork involved, all of which contributed to an increase in time spent on each issue.

We also sadly said goodbye to Sam in July, although for the best of reasons, in that she moved on to a debt advice role with another organisation, building on the experience she gained with us and in other roles over recent years.

This has meant that overall the number of people supported by the service is down from 2019, with 261 individuals and families' supported over the last 12 months. While this represents a drop in numbers supported, largely due to the lack of drop-in provision (down more than 50% on 2019), we have been able to see the same level of impact for those we have supported.

We were able to help households access £423,000 of income that they would not have otherwise received and supported households to deal with £24,000 worth of debts. This represents an average additional income per household supported of £1620 (2019, £1679).

The main issue dealt with in 2020 continued to be Universal Credit with many clients needing assistance to make their online claims. We regularly had to request mandatory reconsiderations of decisions, especially around habitual residence. We also encourage clients to contact us when their payments have been approved to check that their entitlements have been calculated correctly. Since April tribunals have been held remotely so our Welfare Rights Advisor has been unable to represent in person. This change has also caused a backlog of cases and an increase in the number of adjournments. At the end of the year we had 4 cases that had been adjourned and a further 6 awaiting a hearing date. 11 cases had been heard and resolved, all of which have been found in favour of the client. 10 of these cases were in respect of disability related benefits.



Sadly the Ladywood Job Club also stopped running with the closure of the Ladywood Health & Community Centre, and although Suited for Success were able to re-start seeing people at their premises later in the year we haven't been able to return to our weekly drop-in sessions. This meant we had 29 attendees in the early part of the year with 39 attendances.

CHILDREN & FAMILIES

IN 2020...

543 FAMILIES

supported by the project in the past 12 months



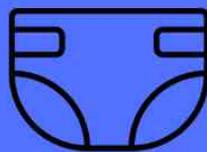
HOURS OF ESOL **574**



provided, moving to zoom during COVID-19

36,079 NAPPIES

provided in Baby Bank parcels



FAMILIES **419**



received 522 baby bank parcels

1343 HOURS OF BEFRIENDING SUPPORT

enabled by 367 volunteer hours - a further 281 volunteer hours supporting Baby Bank

Children and Families

Our work with local families continues to provide much needed support through the 'Welcome to Ladywood' drop-in, ESOL classes, befriending and Baby Bank Central. Ruth Fuller is our Children & Families Project Co-ordinator & Liz Brown is the Project Assistant.

2020 for Children & Families, as for the rest of the nation, was a year of challenge, sadness and enormous creativity, adaptability, tenacity and generosity. It's with a lot of gratitude that we review this year.

Baby Bank is our project where we give out parcels of donated clothes and equipment to referred families in need. In late March we brought forward all our appointments for April, packing 30 into three days, we then sent our volunteers home and closed to donations, we then concentrated on essential referrals. We soon ran out of donations but thanks to emergency Covid grants were able to buy things we needed and have them delivered. When restrictions lifted in the summer, we made the Baby Bank 'Covid Secure', reopening to donations (but now quarantining them), and inviting a limited number of volunteers back. We gave out over 517 parcels, a 100% increase on 2019.

The massive increase in referrals was manageable because other areas of the Children & Families work were quieter due to the pandemic. Part of the increase has been due to an influx of homeless families placed in local hotels. We delivered Baby Bank parcels to these families, as well as food, clothes & practical equipment to ease the strain of shared kitchen facilities. We also orientated these women to the area and helped them register at the GP and provided befriending support over the phone.

Other changes include taking our referral forms online, saying goodbye our long-term, founding volunteer Sebrina, and welcoming Hannah, seamlessly taking over managing our social media.

The year started quietly at ESOL but we were excited because a number of former students had volunteered to help with the class. It was lovely to see these clients enjoying 'giving back'. We had planned to put on some training for them in March but of course our plans were halted. We closed slightly before lockdown and then, along with the rest of the planet, discovered 'Zoom'. The willingness and flexibility of our teachers was so impressive, as they invested in laptops and cameras to make online lessons work. Only a handful of students have made it online as the necessary equipment and internet is prohibitive and for most they have young children at home. However for those that have made it, they are making wonderful progress. In total we've taught 32 students 240 times (compared to 53 students 424 times in 2019).

The loss, this year, of our weekly 'Welcome to Ladywood Drop-in' has probably been the hardest to bear as the relationships we forge over coffee, celebrations and craft are very precious to us. We did 'Drop-in online' with songs, quizzes and drawing but found this had limited appeal to our regulars. When weather and restrictions allowed, we stopped in favour of one to one walks, picnics and meet ups, until the November lockdown. Instead we delivered 60 treat bags complete with reusable masks and cake to our regulars and enjoyed doorstep chats. We then delivered gifts and had an online party at Christmas. We've remembered birthdays and phoned as much as possible but are so keen to re-establish this community group as soon as possible.

We've continued to be available to clients for advocacy & practical issues such as registering for school places, getting grants & school uniform, and shopping for those isolating. We've worked closely with other groups & charities to care for the most vulnerable and look forward to keeping these relationships post pandemic.

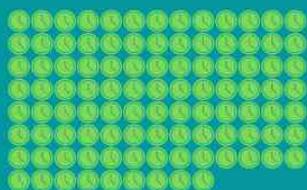
We look forward to a brighter 2021, where we can regroup and process the year just gone. We trust that we will emerge more grateful for one another and our freedoms and plan to thoroughly enjoy both.

KARIS BEFRIENDS

IN 2020...

1188 HOURS

of befriending with 129 older adults



FOOD DELIVERIES

100

per month during the early stages of COVID-19



275 GIFT BAGS

delivered, as well as regular quizzes and newsletters sent out



VOLUNTEER HOURS

919

enabling our activities over the past 12 months



1478 TELEPHONE CONTACTS

keeping in touch with people we were befriending while other kinds of contact have been more difficult

Karis BeFriends

Our Karis BeFriends project is led by the Project Co-ordinator Helen Bell, and 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.

Karis Befriends has supported 129 older people through 2904 overall contacts in 2020. Throughout this year we have continued to receive referrals from local GP's, health professionals, social workers, community organisations, relatives, friends or older people themselves.

Obviously this year has had many challenges for many people, within the Karis Befriends Project we have had to use different ways of supporting and encouraging older people to stay connected. We have sought to journey alongside them safely within the changing restrictions and circumstances. At times this has meant being flexible and responding to practical essential assistance, while still remaining focused on our befriending and connecting approach with people. For some the loss of independence and company has been hard, while for others coping with the loss of loved ones and friends in isolation has been challenging.

We started the year focusing as usual on visiting people in their homes, accompanying and connecting them into their local community and organising regular social events, like our weekly Senior Life Group, bimonthly 'Time for Tea' and Art Group. However, as the pandemic began to develop in March we stopped all social events/groups and our visiting into people's homes. It was apparent that many of those we supported were anxious about the developing situation – several were concerned how they were going to get shopping/ prescriptions and cope without being able to see other people. Therefore, we sought to make contact by phone to check people's network of support for essential items. This enabled us to identify those who were likely to need practical assistance, more information or increased befriending by telephone.

Initially the scope of need and number of new enquiries for support was daunting. However, we were amazed at the offers of help, volunteers who came forward, partnership working and the funding provision! We are so grateful to the Harborne Waitrose branch and their staff team who showed such willingness to partner with us, coordinating at least 25 weekly food bags during April to August, as well as adding thoughtful items that brought such a personal touch. We are thankful to several local Churches who worked with us to develop a plan, coordinate volunteers, purchase and deliver food bags or personal shopping and telephone clients regularly. We had an additional 40 volunteers help specifically with this, as well as children writing letters/ cards to send and add into the food bags. During this time, we supported 50 older people with regular shopping/ food bags or prescription deliveries.

Throughout the year we have continued to focus on befriending: connecting with people through telephone calls, letters/post cards, regular quizzes, birthday cards, socially distanced door step conversations, taking birthday or condolence flowers, or just a catch up chat through a window. As restrictions began to ease in the Summer, we had volunteers making face masks – we sent out over 150 reusable face masks to older people we support.

We have also enabled and helped some to connect online, whether through email, WhatsApp or by Zoom. In the Autumn, we held two virtual 'Time for Tea' events, gathering 25 people each time (volunteers & older people), including a 94 year old with her granddaughter. Instead of the usual Time for Tea bag of goodies, we delivered gift bags and cake boxes to all who attended, as well as to those we support who are not online. In all we delivered 151 gift bags, with a quiz, cake, calendar, Christmas cards made by children, as well as other treats and information. We also delivered 7 Christmas Hampers to older people, kindly donated by Vineyard Church.

Towards the end of the year we ran a 6 week 'Well Being Course' over zoom, covering areas such as wellbeing audit, examining our physical, mental, emotional, relational and spiritual health.

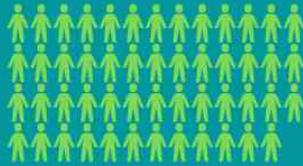
It has felt like a busy year for Karis Befriends, we have been so grateful for the support of the KNS team and volunteers and the ongoing support of the Body, Mind and Spirit Partnership.

KBF ADVICE

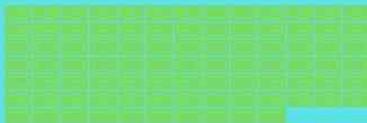
IN 2020...

111 INDIVIDUALS

supported with advice by our
adviser



IN INCOME £176,000



gained for the people we
supported

HOME VISITS

continuing to offer face to face
support to those who need it
through doorstep visits



IN GRANT SUPPORT £7,795



for particular needs such as
household goods

REFERRALS MADE FROM

Social Work teams, Community Network Support
Officers, GPs, Social Prescribing Link Workers, and via
the Wellbeing Team at St Germain's Church

KBF Advice

With funding secured from the Prevention & Communities grants provided by Birmingham City Council we have developed a new role providing welfare benefits advice out in the community and within clients homes.

Daniel Bains has been working with us since January 2020 to establish support for the residents of Ladywood, Edgbaston and Harborne aged 50 and over, particularly with mobility issues making it difficult to leave their homes. Many of these clients struggle to access support offered within advice centres and have benefited greatly from having Daniel come out to visit and begin assisting them through their finances.

Over the past the year a total of £176,000 additional income has been claimed for residents through working with our advisor. We have assisted the clients throughout the benefit process from applying for Universal Credit, to managing pension claims and applying for Attendance Allowance.

Applying for Attendance Allowance especially has allowed clients with care needs to find a source of income to pay towards care costs allowing them to remain as independent as possible and within their homes. Daniel has been able to support nearly 100 residents working through a catalogue of issues above and beyond welfare benefits including housing applications, blue badge applications and occupational therapy assessments. Through working with individuals over a lengthy period, Daniel has managed to build strong relationships with clients and worked through many of their presenting issues which have come to light as the casework has progressed.

Some of the feedback received from clients about the service provided can be seen below:

“Financially before I was really struggling didn’t know what to do where to go, now I’m very happy and you help me. I’m speechless honestly I can’t put the words. Can use the money to fix my son’s bedroom and cupboard for the kitchen. Want to fix my home and pay someone to help as I am disabled. Need to get a mattress for myself as backs hurting.”

“Made a tremendous difference, real support they can always call, consistent, not had support like this in a while”

“Very Jubilant, and has changed my life- less stress with bills- thank you very much for your help last year”

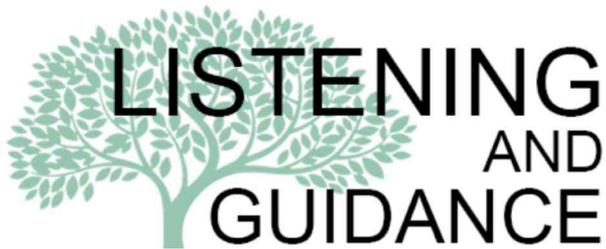
“If it weren’t for you I don’t think (I) would be here, thank you mate, I had no-one else to speak to”

As touched on in these quotes, we find the impact of resolving welfare issues has often been of benefit to a person’s emotional and physical wellbeing.

During the COVID-19 outbreak we have adapted our service to support the needs of the community. This has included providing a telephone service with safe doorstep visits (which have been valued contact as well as delivering the advice service), and in accepting referrals more broadly to be able to better respond to needs.



We also began working to build connections with local food distribution initiatives in order to create a new referral pathway. Those accessing foodbanks are highly likely to be in difficult financial circumstances and requiring benefit support. We have started to see clients on a fortnightly basis at St Germain’s Church and continued supporting these clients in the community as needed.



Overview

Listening and Guidance transferred to telephone work with all patients in March because of the Covid-19 pandemic, but continued to grow and develop throughout the year.

Staff Team

Helen Watts and Elizabeth Baker continued to be the Chaplains for Wellbeing. Both work part-time. Elizabeth was employed for 13 hours per week, and Helen for 18 in 2020.

Service Delivery

We received 139 new referrals during this period, in addition to continuing to work with some existing patients. Because of the pandemic, we noticed an increase in referrals due to anxiety and social isolation. Bereavements were also a significant part of our work, including supporting people who had lost loved ones to Covid and who had been affected by the restrictions on funerals during lockdowns. Some patients needed help adjusting to the pandemic conditions, for example around fears of catching Covid, not being able to see family and friends, work and finance, loss of confidence, fears for safety as lockdowns ended, etc. In other ways, referrals were similar to in previous years, with the Chaplains offering support in building resilience, finding hope, nurturing faith and so on.

Outcomes

We have seen an average improvement in WEMWBS scores of 10.5 points. Use of the PROM feedback tool was largely suspended because of telephone working. We continued to receive anecdotal feedback from patients about the service being highly valued and effective, and a much-appreciated resource for people who were not able to access other support networks due to lockdown.

2020 had an average of 111 contacts each month, with Listening Support and Bereavement being the most common reasons for referral.

Working from Home

Helen and Elizabeth began working from home in the week commencing 23rd March 2020 and things remained that way for the rest of the year. KNS provided portable, lockable cases for storing patient information, new smart phones with headsets, and for both, an office chair to reduce back pain.

We were connected to Karis Medical Centre via their remote working system. This meant we had access to EMIS and were able to continue to receive referrals in the usual ways from GPs, book appointments and enter comments in patients' notes. We also continued to have access to the KNS database.

We had a weekly telephone call and continued to meet in regular supervision sessions via Zoom. We were in regular contact with Maddy throughout the period too. Elizabeth and Helen also maintained contact with Kate Kennedy, the counsellor at KMC. This was partly to facilitate cross-referring, but also for the benefit of mutual support while working remotely.

Supervision, Training and Continuing Professional Development

Helen and Elizabeth receive regular clinical supervision. In March we changed our supervisor and now work with Alison Paris. Regular line management supervision is provided by the CEO of KNS as well as annual appraisals.

The Chaplains completed a range of training in 2020 relevant to their roles, either in person or online. This included a Wellbeing seminar via Zoom for KNS staff during lockdown.

Both Chaplains completed re-accreditation with the Association of Chaplains in General Practice and both attended the annual conference of the College of Health Care Chaplains in October (online).

Commissioning

L&G continued to be part-funded by BSOL commissioning group. We revised our literature to better explain our service. The challenges of securing this funding are ongoing, as the place of third sector organisations within the wider mental health provision continues to be a focus of debate! Maddy represented L&G at Third Sector Forum meetings and Living Well Consortium.

Wider Influence and Involvement

- Delivered Active Listening training to 3 cohorts of Social Prescribing Link Workers for Gateway.
- Commissioned to assist with the development of GP Chaplaincy in Dudley. This included providing induction training to the first team of Chaplains, and helping with interviewing for two further groups of Chaplains there. L&G now has a contract to provide clinical supervision to the Dudley Chaplains.
- Commissioned by a GP Practice in Crawley to assist in shortlisting and interviewing for Chaplains.
- Liaising with a retired GP in Sparkhill and with the Lincolnshire Methodist Chaplaincy Service to offer guidance on setting up a service and on supervision.
- Represented primary care chaplaincy as an observer on the Organising and Professional Committee of the CHCC.
- Developed a training programme with ACPGP for new chaplains.

Challenges

The main challenge of 2020 was adjusting to working from home. However, we feel the Chaplains rose to the challenge, and are pleased with how the service continued to be provided in support of patients during the pandemic.

The scarcity of resources for signposting was occasionally challenging, as many services were not offering their usual support. This meant that some patients relied more on their L&G appointments.

'Moments of Grace'

There were lots of these! There was a lot of grace in the telephone working. Patients responded extremely well to this, and we found in many cases that it enabled deeper disclosure more quickly. This is perhaps because of the relative anonymity of telephone work. The Chaplains were able to pray with patients and to share scriptures when appropriate.



Assets mapped by NNS Ladywood Ward

Neighbourhood Network Scheme

Jeanette Derbyshire joined our team in July as the NNS Support Worker for the Ladywood Ward. We are working in partnership with Birmingham Settlement (lead), Nechells POD, and Soho First CDT to deliver the Neighbourhood Network Scheme in the Ladywood constituency, building closer links between the community and social work teams in the city.

The Neighbourhood Network Scheme was set up to support groups (community assets) working with the over 50's, providing access to funding, training and networking. The scheme then connects social workers and GP social prescribing link workers to enable them to guide citizens to groups that can best support them.

Over the past 12 months this has adapted to map and support all groups helping local people deal with the Covid crisis, whilst still keeping a special eye on our elders' support.

While many groups have not been able to re-open since the first lockdown, since April 15 new assets have been identified. We are currently supporting 39 active groups with a total of 68 on our mailing list.

A number of our groups have supported people with food and emergency provisions. After the first lockdown we also saw more focus on mental and physical wellbeing.

Many groups adapted quickly making services accessible via zoom, or WhatsApp, putting activities on you-tube or by posting resources out. A couple of dance and singing groups looked at making CD's to include those without internet access. In the time between lockdowns there were also socially distanced walks, runs, bike rides and refreshments.

We have held zoom networking meetings, enabling many group leaders in the area to meet up and get to know each other. I have also attended the zoom Neighbourhood Forums for North Edgbaston Councillors.

Many groups remain closed, unable to open due to the vulnerability of members or premises being unavailable. However most of these keep in touch with members by phone. A couple of the groups providing therapeutic support have now been able to open socially distanced face to face activities alongside their online offer.

From our many good news stories:-

- NNS funding supported a wonderful food hub at St Germain's Church, providing food parcels and cooked meals for over 350 households a week.
- During the first lockdown Eat Make Play channelled 10 tonnes of potatoes that would otherwise be thrown away into the emergency food supply. Since then they have supported people to sew, grow, sing together and borrow much needed everyday items on a click and collect basis from their base at Ladywood's new Sharehack on St Vincent St West.
- Civic Square (formerly Impact Hub) set up The Floating Front Room. This much appreciated take away café/barge was moored on the new Icknield Port Loop development, providing many socially distanced activities as well as children's lunch packs during the school holidays.
- A new sewing project from Woolly Mammoth, giving people the opportunity to stitch together whilst apart – linking up by facebook and zoom, has "sold out" within a couple of weeks of opening.
- Midland sailing club will be able to open its doors to more elders with funding for 2 more boats and specific elders courses now allocated.

The whole year, while being very different from anything we could have expected, has shown the resourcefulness and community spirit within the Ladywood and North Edgbaston Wards. We have been thrilled to see so many local groups join with us and step up their support through this time.



Practical Work

The COVID-19 outbreak presented a big challenge to the delivery of practical support in the way we have in previous years, particularly the 'neighbourly' help we provide with small jobs in the home – like assembling a wardrobe or helping to pass on a donated sofa. However, we did see a big increase in the amount of practical help offered through our befriending work, with a big focus on helping with food deliveries during the first period of lockdown.

This included a lot of food deliveries to older people through our Karis BeFriends project, which from April to June saw on average more than 100 food deliveries a month. This was a huge effort, well supported by our existing volunteers and a number of local churches, along with support from Waitrose, Harborne where staff generously put together the food bags ready for collection and delivery.

We also supported a joint initiative from a number of local organisations called Ladywood Helpers, this was another provision to help especially vulnerable people with food deliveries during the first lockdown. This was a fantastic community initiative co-ordinated by staff and volunteers from a number of local projects, with space kindly provided by the Ladywood Leisure Centre to receive donations from Morrisons, Edgbaston where food was sorted and distributed.

Our staff and volunteers were involved with some of the sorting and supported with deliveries, particularly over the summer where the Helpers co-ordinated the usual 'Holiday Hunger' scheme, supported by Birmingham Central Foodbank. We were also able to pass on a donation of 100 Easter Eggs from B30 Foodbank, which we collected at the same time as a surplus of nappies to support our Baby Bank.

Another element of support provided by the Ladywood Helpers was support with fuel costs, an initiative of the Ladywood Project, our staff were also particularly involved in distributing this support, both in making referrals for individuals and families we know and helping to get support to people referred by other organisations.

These activities have also allowed us to continue to make use of our small van to support with deliveries - where it has been less used over the past year for other purposes, such as helping people with moves, passing on donations of furniture, and being used by other groups to support their activities and community events.

While the high level of demand for this support eased along with restrictions, and as people adjusted to the challenges of lockdowns, there was still some ongoing need throughout the remainder of the year for those who were very vulnerable or who were experiencing difficult circumstances such as those having to move to emergency accommodation due to homelessness. This is an area we are increasingly addressing within our Children & Families' work and are grateful for the Early Help networks across Edgbaston and Ladywood which have provided funding to meet some of these emerging needs.

It has been a privilege to be part of these joint efforts to respond to practical needs over the past year and a testament to the networks of support that our projects are part of and have built over a number of years, as well as the incredible response within our local communities to the impact of COVID-19 so far.

Our hope is to gradually return to more of our usual practical support as and when we are able, though we recognise the shift in needs due to COVID-19 are likely to persist well into 2021 and beyond. However, that need for 'neighbourly' help also persists. We will continue to work through our projects and our wider partnerships to respond to practical needs as we become aware of them.



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, ASIRT, Birmingham Carer's Hub, Birmingham Central Baptist Church, Birmingham Central Foodbank, Birmingham City Church, Birmingham City Council, Birmingham Mother's Union, Birmingham Settlement, Blue Coat School, Body Mind & Spirit Partnership, Central Ladywood Neighbourhood Forum, Christ Church Summerfield, Church Alive, Church of the Redeemer Edgbaston, churchcentral, Circul8 Credit Union, Companions for Hope, Eat Make Play, Gateway Family Services, Glasspool Charity Trust, Harborne Medical Practice, Hope Projects, Jericho Foundation, Karis Medical Centre, Kenrick Community Care Centre, Ladywood Children's Centre, Ladywood District Office, Ladywood Health & Community Centre, Ladywood Helpers, Ladywood Methodist Church, Ladywood Community Project, Ladywood Leisure Centre, Living Well Group, Lordswood House Medical Practice, Narthex, National Grid, NCVO, New Roots Housing, Newman Trust Homes, Oasis Church, Onneley Centre AgeUK, Oratory RC Primary School, Outreach Shop, RE:Future Collective, The Real Junk Food Project Birmingham, The Real Junk Food Project Central, Ring & Ride West Midlands, The Roundhouse, Severn Trent Trust Fund, Shencare Community Transport, Shiloh Computers, 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 CofE Academy, Suited for Success, Thrive Together Birmingham, and Waitrose Harborne.

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