

KARIS NEIGHBOUR SCHEME

Annual Report 2022



Karis Neighbour Scheme
c/o Church of the Redeemer
Monument Road,
Birmingham
B16 8UU

Registered Charity Number - 1133510
Registered Company Number - 06595341

INTRODUCTION

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WHO ARE WE?

Karis Neighbour Scheme is a community project working in the Ladywood, Edgbaston and Harborne areas of Birmingham.

We offer friendship and support to those who are isolated or marginalised in these communities 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 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 therefore 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 BeFriends (KBF). This includes visiting people in their homes, occasional groups 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. We can 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 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.
- We offer support with practical tasks such as gardening, decorating and DIY, usually for people we already know through our befriending work.

STAFF TEAM

At the end of December 2022 we had 13 part time staff working across our projects:

Harry Naylor, CEO;

Michaela Brookes, Administrator;

Hannah Eno, Fundraiser;

Bram Scott, Welfare Rights Advisor;

Lorrie Blake, Welfare Rights Advisor;

Ruth Pedzai, Children & Families' Worker;

Liz Brown, Family Outreach Worker;

Helen Bell, Karis BeFriends Project Co-ordinator;

Patti Tan, Karis BeFriends Project Assistant;

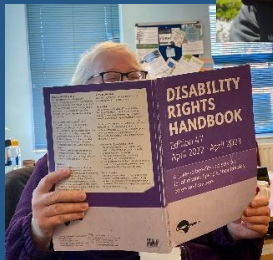
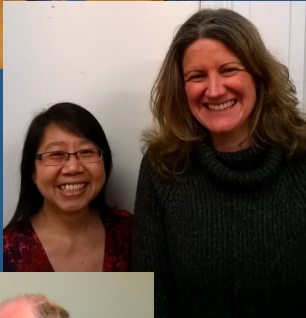
Katharine Harris, KBF Advice Worker;

Helen Watts, Senior Chaplain for Wellbeing;

Elizabeth Baker, Chaplain for Wellbeing;

Dilip Patel, Chaplain for Wellbeing;

In the year we said goodbye to Nettes Derbyshire, Tasha Ramrous and Chris Shurrock, welcoming Lorrie Blake in July and Victoria Yates just falling into January 2023, to their respective roles.



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Gillian Harley-Mason
(acting chair)



Karis Neighbour Scheme has delivered an outstanding service over this past year, and on behalf of the Trustees, I am delighted to commend the charity and its work to you.

It is my great pleasure to wholeheartedly endorse this year's report and to thank each of the staff, the volunteers and the trustees for the work they do in bringing wholeness to individuals and families in our community. Thank you for your interest in the Charity – we would be delighted to hear from you



Under the leadership of the CEO Harry Naylor and the team of 13 staff and many volunteers, KNS has continued to provide caring, compassionate practical support for people in need in the local area. We are a faith based organisation that offers holistic care without prejudice.

2022 has seen significant local, national and global changes which have adversely impacted people and increased their need for support. Despite the easing of COVID restrictions, its legacy, the war in Ukraine and other factors have led to an escalation in the cost of living which has brought real challenge and difficulty to our neighbourhood.

KNS has risen to this challenge and, as the report shows, the different projects have seen a marked rise in demand which they have met with remarkable diligence and commitment. Each of the staff have a deep and admirable dedication to the wellbeing of their clients and go above and beyond in meeting their needs. They have continued to engage with individuals with unconditional kindness and grace and have enthusiastically increased the capacity of the charity to help more people.

The reputation of KNS has grown as Harry has been instrumental in networking and collaborating with other organisations and agencies across the City, including major institutions such as the Birmingham City Council and the NHS alongside numerous other charities and local groups. He is a dedicated champion of the charity, committed to building a more just and resilient neighbourhood as he leads with passion and integrity.

The trustees have met quarterly, and I am grateful for their wise and careful oversight which has upheld the accurate and safe governance of the Charity. There have been challenging financial decisions which have been made with clear adherence to sound risk management and robust future planning, with the care of the staff and the vision of the charity at the heart of each discussion. The enthusiastic work done by the fundraiser and finance coordinator have ensured an ongoing flow of income which has been well managed, and we are so grateful for all the individual and organisational gifts and grants which continue to guarantee the work of journeying with people through challenging times.

I am particularly inspired by the team's vision and determination to go on developing the work of each of the projects and find new and innovative ways to meet local need. Regardless of the challenges, they have hope for the future and confidence in the work they are doing.

GOVERNANCE INFORMATION

Karis Neighbour Scheme
is a **Private Company**
Limited by a guarantee.

- First incorporated 16
May 2008
- Registered Charity
Number: **1133510**,
- Company Number:
06595341
- Improving Quality
certificate date: Dec
2021

Members of :

NCVO,

Advice UK,

ACGP,

RightsNet,

ICO



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. *Amanda retired from the board in April 2022.*

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. *Marc retired from the board in April 2022.*

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.

Alex Elphinston joined the board in April 2022. He has a background in law with over 30 years experience as a solicitor.

Henry Aggrey also joined in April 2022. He is the pastor of River of Life Ministry in Ladywood.



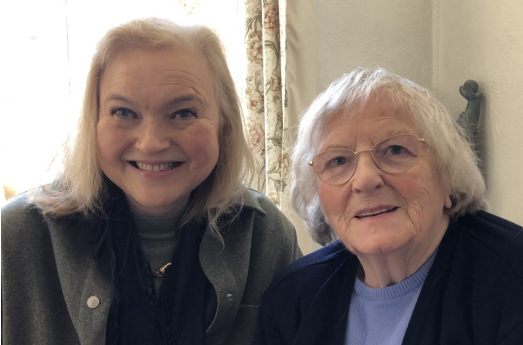
VOLUNTEERS



We rely on a team of 86 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 in. So much of what we do and who we are is a direct result of the ongoing support and initiatives of volunteers who enable our activities in so many different ways!



Whether visiting, trips out, telephone calls, cards sent, gift bags dropped off, providing cakes, coming up with ideas, organising a newsletter or coming along to our events and groups. Volunteers also help in practical ways—providing a lift, fitting a cupboard, collecting a prescription or helping to change light bulbs.

Thank you!

Volunteer Quotes:

'It is a chance for me to get to know different people who I would not normally meet in general life. I enjoy helping folks and connecting with them'. Dave



'At university, I have felt separated from the outside world, stuck in a cycle of studying and exams. In the long summer break, I was able to dedicate more of my time to the needs of others through [volunteering at] KNS. The first time I met [my befriender] she greeted me with the biggest smile and warmest embrace - something I so dearly needed...She has supported me as much as I have her, and the 75 year age gap doesn't seem to stop us having a lovely natter over tea and biscuits'. Imogen

'I enjoy meeting different people-these are older people that I just wouldn't have met otherwise. I like hearing their stories! Volunteering with Karis Befriends is good for me-I've learnt more patience and kindness' Ethan



VOLUNTEER STATISTICS

2022



5 have been active with KNS for 10 years



Youngest 17, oldest 83

65 hours befriending telephone calls



27 did at least 1 session every month

VOLUNTEER CELEBRATION EVENT

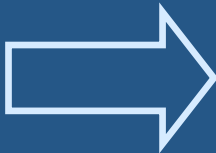
We were thankful to Birmingham Settlement for hosting a celebration for our volunteers at their new site at Edgbaston Reservoir - the Red Shed – in June.

Our team gathered to enjoy a sunny (if blustery) afternoon, including good food – particular thanks to Nick for his tireless work providing a constant supply of freshly baked pizzas, and to Patti and Nai for a delicious selection of baked goods and fruit. We had some obligatory quizzes and a brief thank you video from some of our beneficiaries.

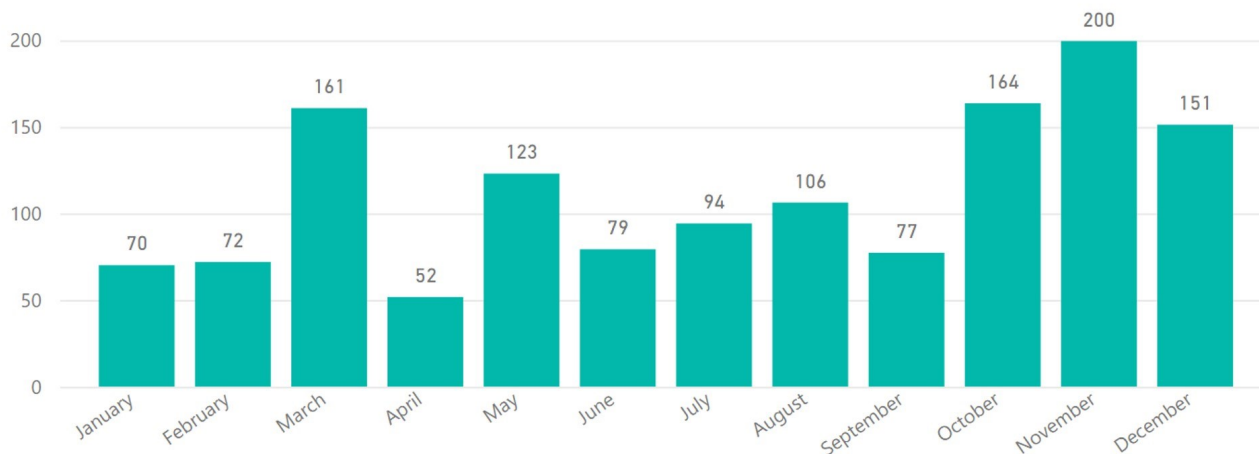
The event was a small token of thanks to our volunteers who do so much for the people Karis supports, but it was also an enjoyable time to bring together volunteers from the many and varied parts of Karis' work to meet and spend some time getting to know each other.



This 82 year old also volunteered at the Commonwealth Games!



Contact hours by volunteers each month in 2022



FUNDRAISING

Hannah Eno



We are truly grateful to all those who support us – volunteers, donors, organisations and other charities. An acknowledgement of all our funders can be found at the end of this document.

Our work is part funded through a mix of contracts and commissioned work by the NHS and the city council, including the Body Mind & Spirit Partnership. In addition, we receive significant support from donations from individuals and charitable giving bodies.

We faced a challenging year, like most charities, as demands on public funds and other sources of income increased following the disruption of Covid. Not surprisingly, there are many more groups competing for funds to help deliver services relating to the after effects of the pandemic. We had informal feedback from quite a few Trusts who said that competition was extremely high, meaning that even excellent applications for good work don't always make it through to receiving funding.

We are very grateful to those who have continued to support us, and to new Trusts who been able to provide funds to us despite this increased competition. We also appreciate the time taken to give feedback when we've been unsuccessful.

In 2022 we had visits from a new corporate donor and one of our long standing Trust supporters – it is always fantastic to be able to meet face to face and talk about the work we do with the people who support us.

We were so pleased to also welcome new volunteers from the business sector who helped with our work this year – it's definitely not just about the money.

The funding we receive is used to support all the projects you can read about in this annual report, either directly with costs like materials, refreshments, trips or baby bank resources, but also (when agreed with the funder) to support staff and core costs without which we could not do our work.

SOURCES OF INCOME

- **Individuals, families and friends;**
- **Trusts and Foundations;**
- **City Council and NHS contracts;**
- **Crowdfunder;**
- **Sponsored activities;**
- **Legacy;**
- **Gifts in kind;**
- **Online fundraising tools;**
- **Text giving;**
- **Craft sales;**

We have 13 staff, 10 of whom are directly involved in managing, planning and delivering the work of the projects, and also manage the volunteers who so kindly give us their time.

At the end of December 22, we had 2 core staff who managed administration, communications and fundraising, with a new staff member starting 1st January specific to finance. This is in addition to our Chief Executive who is responsible for management of the charity, its strategic direction, new projects, relationships with partners and stakeholders and a bit of everything else too! Salaries and core costs are areas that are harder to find funding for and we are exceptionally grateful to those who support us with those costs.

We also want to thank every person who donates to our extremely busy Baby Bank.

Our very responsive audience on Facebook have been stellar in responding to our routine and emergency calls for goods – as well as the myriad people who reach us through other means.

Lots of you also gave to us through our Amazon wishlist and through cash donations – every single penny and donated item gets used and makes a massive difference to the lives we touch.

Thank you.



How you can support us

- Volunteer with us! There are a range of roles available.
Contact admin@karisneighbourscheme.org
- You can donate used goods to our baby bank – we take most items as long as they are in good condition – to check what we accept and arrange a donation, please contact babybank@karisneighbourscheme.org
- You can donate money to us via our CharitySaver or Wonderful donation portals, or by BACS or cheque – see <https://karisneighbourscheme.org/giving/>

FUNDRAISING

2022



33 Funders, of which
28 are charity trusts



£1400 raised
through
Crowdfunder

£10,000 from
individual giving



1 table-top sale,
1 sponsored run!

- If you are a Trustee of a charitable foundation and would be interested in hearing more about our work, please contact Hannah at hannah.eno@karisneighbourscheme.org
- If your business would like to support us, please contact Hannah as above.
- And if you would like to receive our regular E-newsletter please get in touch with Hannah!

CEO REPORT

Harry Naylor



Harry has worked for Karis Neighbour Scheme for over 15 years. He stepped up into the role of Chief Executive in 2021 having served the charity in many roles over the years, most recently in the role of Finance and Operations Manager.

2022 has seen much more of a return to 'normal' following the disruption of COVID-19 the previous two years.

That isn't to say that, like many, we don't still see the lingering or longer-term impacts of the disease – we've continued to see some disruption for our team where people test positive for example – but on the whole we have seen almost all of our activities re-start or pick up again this year.

One area that has particularly flourished towards the end of this year was the re-starting of our in-person ESOL provision. This was a partnership with FaithAction to deliver a new programme called 'Creative English for Health' which has been both fun and impactful for those attending – helping to improve confidence in spoken English, build friendships & connections, and reduce some of the language barriers to accessing health services.

In fact, this year has seen our activity jump to record numbers with 1,489 individuals or families supported (up 21% on our last full pre-COVID year 2019: 1,226). Similarly our number of contacts was nearly 8,000 (7,910, up 19% on 2019: 6,645). While this does reflect that we have both grown our Listening & Guidance team during the pandemic and started the KBF Advice work – offering welfare rights advice provided to older people through home visits – it is also a clear indicator that we continue to be well placed to reach those in our communities who need support.

This is largely thanks to the enthusiasm and dedication shown by our team of staff and volunteers, who have continued to show a commendable faithfulness in their work and towards the people we meet as a charity. As ever, a huge thank you to them for their efforts and for building the generous, compassionate community that surrounds Karis Neighbour Scheme.

There were a few goodbyes this year, notably in the end of our involvement with the Neighbourhood Network Scheme (NNS). We were saddened to lose Nettie Derbyshire, who had done a fantastic job in her role as a Project Support Worker for the Ladywood & North Edgbaston wards, and to step back from our involvement in the project as a whole. However, we will continue to look to build strong connections with both the Ladywood and Edgbaston teams going forward. We also said goodbye to Tasha Ramrous in April and Chris Shurrock in October, welcoming Lorrie Blake in July and Victoria Yates just falling into January 2023, to their respective roles.



Significant events in 2022:

- Our summer volunteer celebration event
- Volunteering at the Commonwealth games held in Birmingham
- Helping to deliver the Household Support Fund (HSF)
- Restarting the in-person ESOL classes
- Meeting with our Community Advisory Group
- Celebrating the Queen's Jubilee across the projects
- 11 new volunteers
- 1,349 volunteer hours
- Saying goodbye and thank you to Tasha, Chris, Nettes and our HSF temporary support
- Welcoming to the team Lorrie Blake



The growing challenge facing many in our communities this year has been the Cost of Living crisis. We've seen this impact our Baby Bank provision most directly, but we were also involved in the delivery of the Household Support Fund grants, working with the lead for Ladywood, Family Action. This saw us help 638 households successfully apply in the Autumn round of funding, releasing approx. £128k in funding. It is worth noting this does not show in our other statistics in this report due to the one-off and distinct nature of this piece of work.

As ever we're looking to work with the wider networks of support in our communities to respond to these challenges, whether that's larger statutory responses like the Household Support Fund or working with other community based groups – of note this year we've been increasingly working with the 'Love Your Neighbour' scheme based at St Luke's in Attwood Green (a Gas Street Church initiative), connecting to those accessing their Food Pantry and working together on the Creative English for Health pilot mentioned above.

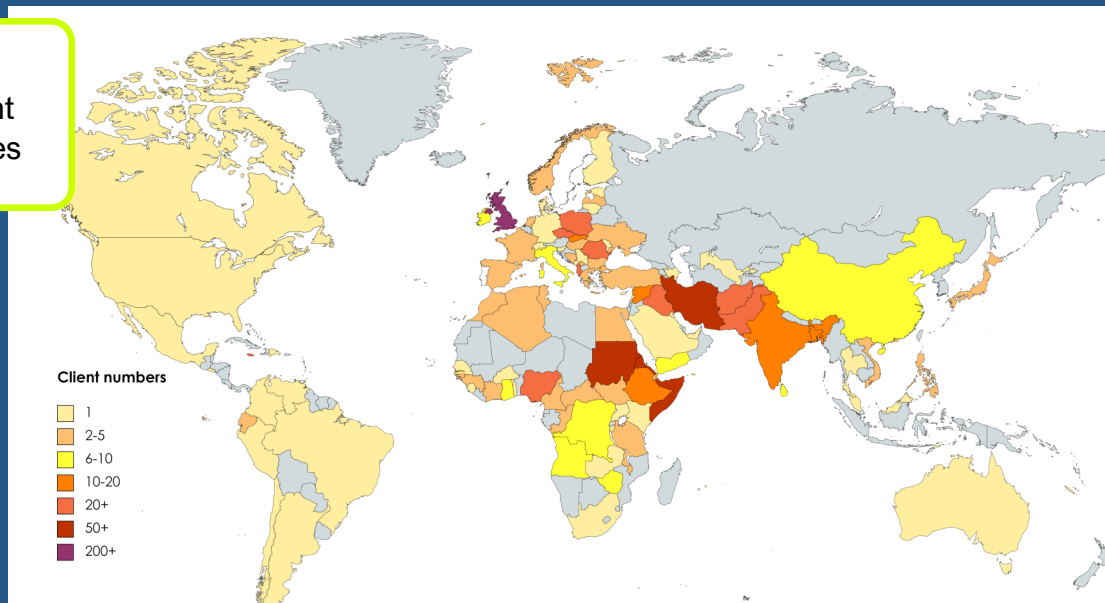
Looking ahead to 2023 we are starting to explore the possibility of setting up a new befriending scheme, alongside our existing work with older adults and younger families, to reach out particularly to men. We meet a number of people through our existing activities who would benefit from this additional support and discussions about the need have seen an enthusiastic response for the idea.

We will also be navigating the coming changes to local NHS governance structures, with a shift away from Clinical Commissioning Groups and towards a new Integrated Care System (ICS). We'll need to engage with this process particularly for our current NHS contracted service, Listening & Guidance. However, the proposals for new 'Integrated Neighbourhood Teams', building closer partnership working between Health, Social Services and the Voluntary sector, may also present new opportunities to strengthen our existing connections in these areas.

Lastly, I encourage you to pay particular attention to the stories dotted throughout this report. It's not always easy to condense the work of our various projects into a few headline figures and these stories give a more well-rounded view of the value and impact of our work on people's lives.

STATISTICS

108
different
countries

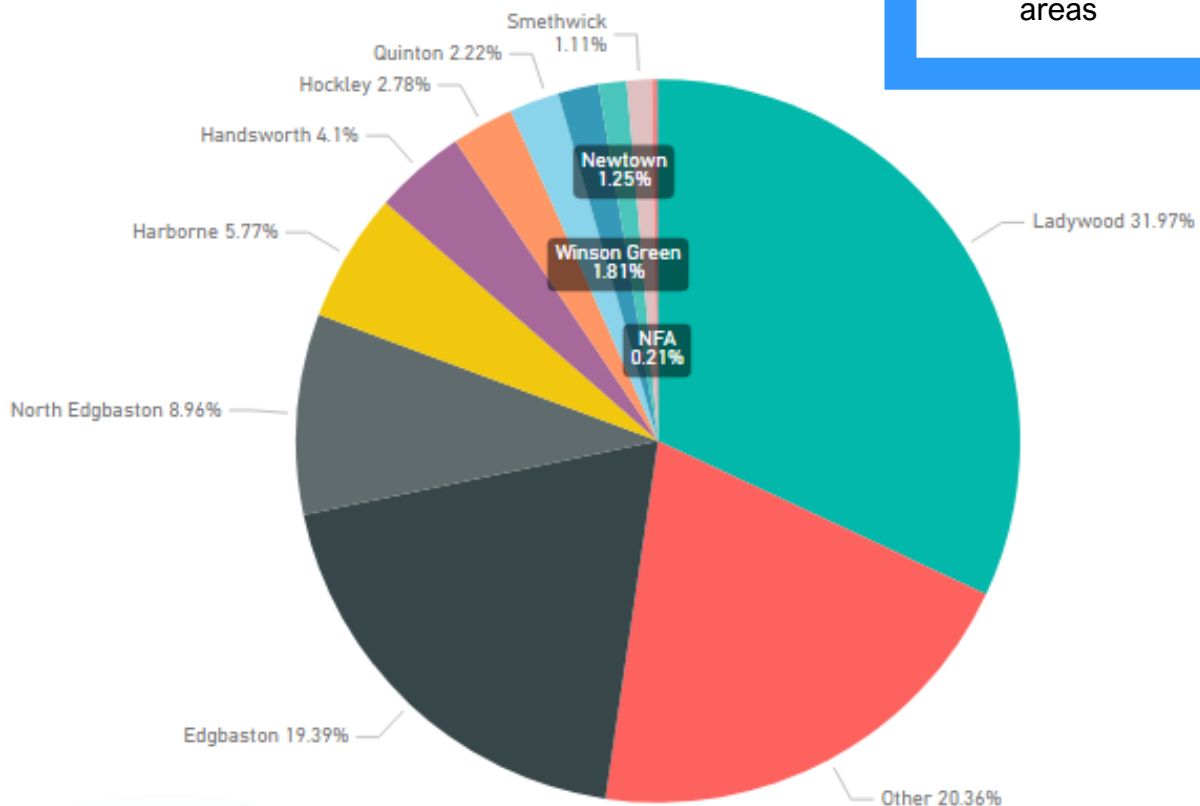


Client distribution by Country of Birth, where provided

Client's split by location in Birmingham



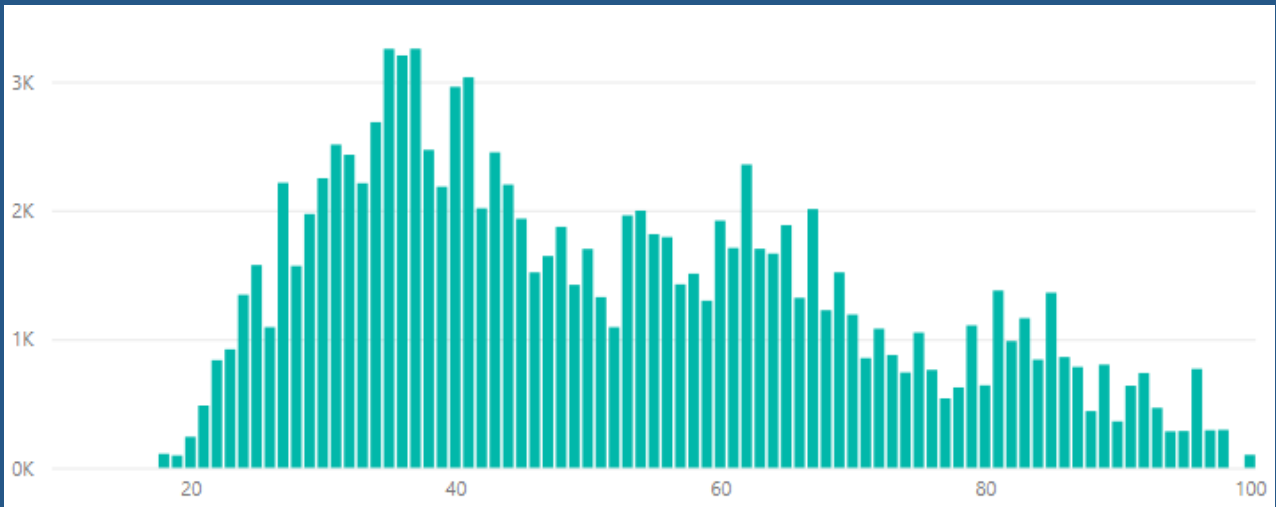
Over 66%
covering our
core delivery
areas



Comparison of client and contact numbers over the past 4 years

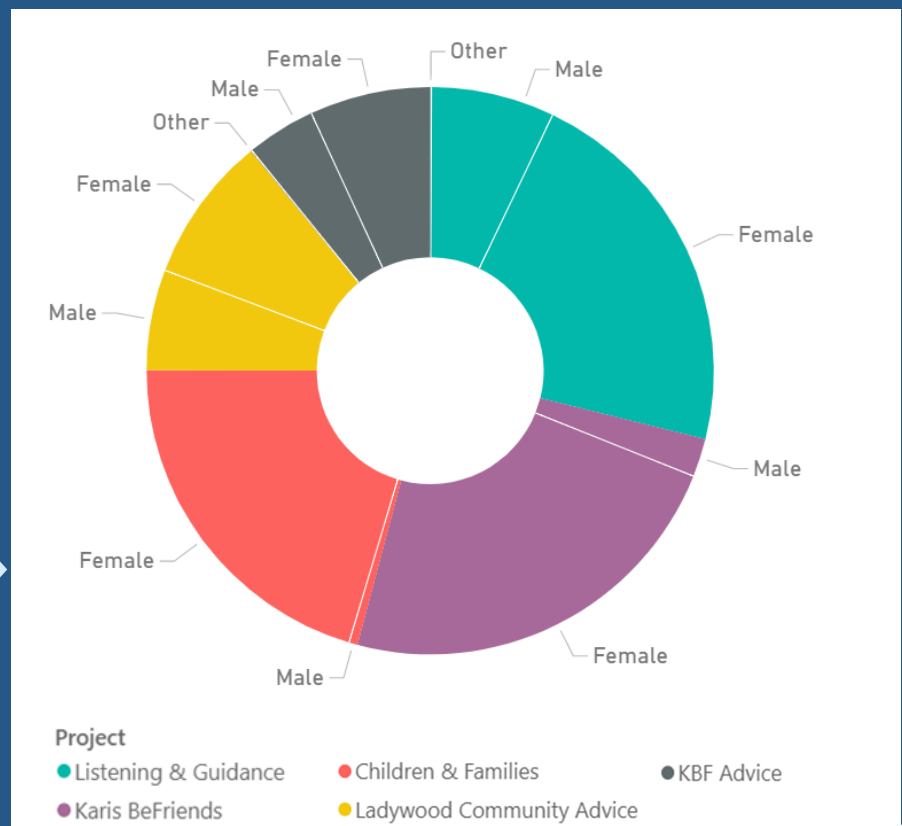


	2019	2020	2021	2022	% change from 21 – 22
Total number of individuals supported	1226	1130	1061	1489	+ 28.7%
Total number of contacts	6645	6559	5927	7910	+ 25%



This graph shows the age range of our clients across all projects

Gender of clients split by project



STORIES

Ann was referred to us just before the pandemic struggling with the loss of her husband and feeling low due to her current housing situation. We connected with her initially prior to and during covid with visits and doorstep visits.

This year we have seen a real difference as she started coming along to Senior Life Group, initially very quiet within the group. However, as she has connected with others she has grown in confidence, particularly as she has realised she can contribute. She now goes round chatting to all the other members, helping to give out the drinks and being quick to volunteer to help with the washing up. She often now participates in the group, sharing her experiences and the knock on effect is that she seems to be going out and about at other times in her week and her mood has lifted.

We have been able to encourage her to have contact with our KBF Advice too, and although her home situation has not necessarily changed as yet, it is apparent that the connections made at the Senior Life Group is really having a positive affect wider in her life.



We have been supporting **Edith**, a lady in her 60s who was struggling to live on a work pension, and was about to become homeless. She was dealing with many health issues and very stressed.

Over several meetings, she was advised to apply for Sheltered Housing, and we helped to contact different agencies so that the benefits she was entitled to could be paid to her.

At just the time when she was having to leave her previous accommodation, she was offered a flat in a local sheltered complex.

Karis has helped with some cooking equipment, crockery and cutlery. There is still some work to do around benefits, but she can now see a way forward, and has expressed how grateful she is for the support she has been given, calling it 'a miracle'.



Ivan and **Joseph** were two gentlemen from Poland who met living on the streets and formed a good friendship. They did not realise until a couple of weeks after that the Inner Circle credit union had closed down— leaving them unable to access their money, so they came to Ladywood Community Advice for assistance. We were able to advocate for them and support them by :

- opening their account with Advance Credit Union,
- registering their account cards,
- changing their address,
- sending emails and making calls to the credit union and Engage card,
- making phone calls to Universal Credit (UC) and updating their UC accounts,
- and referring them to Ladywood Project for practical assistance with emergency food parcels, food voucher and bus fare

...all via the handy tool of Google translate!

This was an extremely difficult time for these clients who were victim to a system that is not designed to be user-friendly to the foreign language speaker, or even to allow room for common sense. They were very grateful for our help, and if we had not been able to assist them, I am not sure what they would have done.



As a Muslim woman with a partner from a different background, **Waheeda** came to us grieving the loss of her mother and handling very difficult family relationships.

The Chaplain asked her at times to look for guidance from her faith to help her evaluate herself and situations. *'Thank-you so much for helping me. It was good to speak to someone of faith. I've found the right person. When it's spiritual, it's beautiful'.*

Fazia got in touch when she was living in a local hotel and struggling to get to appointments, as she was not in receipt of all her benefits and so we started by helping her out with a bus pass.

When she gained asylum status she could bring her children over to the UK. She had not seen her now teenagers, in 5 years. In the intervening time they had been caught up in war, been imprisoned and had to flee their country on foot.

She had very few clothes for them, so we referred her for a clothes parcel, we showed them the local parks, invited them on some trips and introduced them to a local family.

The teenagers had limited English and had missed 5 years of school, so we asked a volunteer to tutor them for a few weeks, we helped with school uniform, applied for free school meals & travel passes. We arranged for a local family to help explain what to expect at school. We even taught them how to tie a tie!

We were thrilled in December to be able to celebrate with them when they were given a flat and helped them furnish it thanks to donations and grants.



CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Ruth Pedzai



Like so many others across the country, 2022 for the Children & Families Project was marked with joy at resuming normal activities with a renewed sense of gratitude for community.

We met Isobel when she asked for toys to occupy her son in the hotel room they shared. Later we helped her with logistics and to move into a new property. During this time, Isobel tragically lost her baby at nearly full-term. We were able to support her at the baby's funeral, organising flowers and care for her son, and later helped her pick up the ashes. Throughout a very difficult year we provided practical and emotional support.

'I never thought people could be so nice with others, not their relatives, not childhood friends, just unknown families who maybe need some support, emotional and material'

BABYBANK

Baby Bank continued to be busy and generously supported through existing and new partners providing surplus baby supplies:

- B30 foodbank
- Oasis Church Birmingham, St John's Harborne and St Michael's
- All Angels who regularly collect and give to us with such generosity
- Zurich (insurance) also sent two teams of volunteers with £500 each for Baby Bank provision - they helped to sort clothes and provided thoughtful packs of essentials and treats for families in need
- We continue to receive donations week to week from kind families who pass on their preloved clothes and equipment.

All of this kindness along with grants and regular giving have allowed us to support **321 families with 408 parcels** this year.



WELCOME TO LADYWOOD DROP IN

The Drop-in continued to be a welcoming place for women to make friends, share life and culture week after week. Thanks to the invaluable and selfless support of volunteers this year we've enjoyed Narooz, The Queen's Jubilee, Easter & Eid.

It was great this summer to get back to trips and outings: **31 families** (68 children) enjoyed a choice of affordable trips with us over the school holidays:

- Picnics in the Botanical Gardens and Sandwell Valley
- Canal boat trips with Roundhouse Birmingham
- Face paints, craft and cake, and a picnic in Roundhouse's events space
- Hatton Country World thanks to the Mothers' Union 'Away From It All' fund.

HOTEL RESIDENT SUPPORT

With funding from Gateway Family Services we were able to continue providing **school uniform** to families living in local hotels, bringing our total up to 40 children helped over the 2021/22 academic year.



480 clients



CHILDREN & FAMILIES

2022



31,000+ nappies,
40 cots, 53 buggies
at 318 baby bank
appointments.



128 home visits

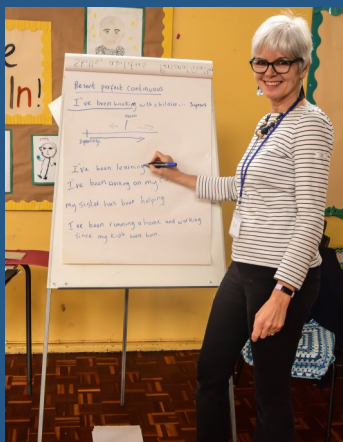
56 ESOL students



807 hours group
befriending



Clients from 51
different countries



We also piloted a project providing '**starter packs**' of crockery and kitchen utensils to families arriving in the hotels with nothing, so they could cook a meal. These were available at reception for staff to give out and were well received.

VISITS

Our one-to-one **befriending** remains the mainstay of our support to families, with most referrals starting with a home visit. This year we've visited 63 clients at home.

For example, we met Amy and her baby son seven years ago at home after a GP referral. We supported her through a relationship breakdown, and it's an absolute joy to see her now regularly volunteering because she's so thankful and has exceptional skills to share. We remain so grateful for all the resources, support & opportunities that enable us to have the privilege of building relationship with such precious people.

'the beauty of our work is its potential for being long term & very faithful. We see relationships deepen over time...it far exceeds an intervention in a crisis but builds trust and eventually, loving community'

LEARNING

At the beginning of the year our **ESOL classes** were still online, with minimal uptake and we lacked volunteers and capacity.

But we were thrilled to be approached by FaithAction in the autumn, with funding and a creative way of teaching basic English for accessing healthcare.

In the space of 4 weeks we trained teachers and started a class with over 40 students registering. By Christmas we had delivered 8 fun-filled lessons with 25 students coming regularly and sharing stories of using their new found confidence, knowledge and vocabulary to book appointments, seek help and even get treatment for neglected conditions.

We ended the year with a great celebration. We are looking forward to partnering with FaithAction in the future to deliver more classes.

We continued our **Life in the UK** classes, completing a year's course and culminating with a tea party in a volunteer's garden. We had six students complete the course.



KARIS BEFRIENDS (KBF)

Helen Bell



Our Karis Befriends project is led by Project Co-ordinator Helen Bell, with Patti Tan as Project Assistant. KBF offers support to older people in Harborne, Edgbaston and Ladywood areas, who are isolated or lonely, encouraging them to connect, participate, contribute and flourish later in life.

'They help those who are vulnerable to get out and we so look forward to going out for a lovely afternoon. The joy of getting out and feeling needed and part of something when we are so used to being at home on our own'



This year, Karis Befriends has supported 149 older people through 1,996 contacts. Throughout this year we have continued to receive referrals from local GP's, health professionals, social workers, social prescribing link workers, community organisations, relatives, friends or older people themselves.

Since the pandemic Karis Befriends has taken a cautious approach to returning to 'in person' activities. It has been great to be able to visit people in their own homes, while continuing with lots of regular befriending phone calls too. We have spent time supporting people to return to going out and accessing activities in their local community, where they have lost confidence or struggled physically to get out.

It has been a challenging time, particularly the last few years, however it is a privilege to go on a journey with older people, seeking to demonstrate their ongoing value they bring to our local communities.

PARTNERSHIPS

KBF is an active partner in the Body, Mind and Spirit Partnership of Church linked organisations across Birmingham supporting those over 50 and receives funding from the City Council's Prevention and Communities fund.

In September, we had our 'Celebration of our 10-year Partnership' with the City Council and all organisations involved. It was great to see how the partnership across Birmingham is working together to help older people live well into older age, helping them to stay connected, contribute and remain active.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

It has been a joy to be able to offer more in person group activities again and to see those returning bringing along friends.



149 clients 

KARIS
BEFRIENDS
2022



93 clients visited
at home



3 Time for Tea events,
42 attended

100 Christmas gift
bags



Average age 77



171 hours
telephone contact

189 people on
birthday card list



Our fortnightly Art Group is enjoying being back together again and being involved in various projects. The ongoing commitment and ideas of those who come has helped this group to continue to flourish.

We are grateful to Oasis Church in Harborne for becoming our new home in May for our Senior Life Group. It has been precious being back together again and seeing 9 new people join us! I love to hear people sharing and singing together, offering support to one another, both through tears and laughter.

'Coming to Senior Life Group is the highlight of my week. I felt isolated before, I enjoy the fact that my life isn't cancelled'

Our Time for Tea events continue at Queen Alexandra College, almost back to our pattern of bi-monthly events. And at the end of the year we had our first Christmas Party in person since 2019!

We are so grateful, for volunteers and participants from Churchcentral, who help to make both the Senior Life Group and Time for Tea continue to be welcoming groups.



We have also enjoyed some smaller coffee mornings and our annual KBF sale has returned, with many items either made, knitted or donated by our participants.

Our social events and get togethers definitely provide an opportunity for those who come to connect, participate and contribute, valuing all the ways people contribute.

SAYING GOODBYE

The team started the year organising the funeral of a lady with no family of her own. She had started coming to our Sunday afternoon 'Time for Tea' back in 2008, getting to know many other participants and volunteers over the years. She spent one Christmas day with a family from Time for Tea and we continued to visit, chat on the phone and journeyed with her right up to the end of her life.

Then towards the end of the year, we were sad to lose one of our much loved volunteers, who had faithfully provided and entertained us through so many quizzes at our 'Time for Tea' events.

They will both be much missed, but it is so good to see the connections made, the ongoing friendship and real community experienced right up until the end of life through Karis Befriends.

Katharine Harris



Katharine Harris has now been in post as the KBF Advice Worker for over a year, and has been building on the existing referral networks so that we are able to reach as many people as possible.

'the stress of not having enough money was affecting my mental health. Karis' help has reduced my stress and made our lives much easier'

'Being able to have a diet suitable for my health needs so I don't have to worry all the time - what Katharine has done for me can not be understated - she is a credit to her profession'

We are now at the end of the third year of our work providing welfare benefits advice out in the community for older adults (50+), funded by the Prevention & Communities grant from Birmingham City Council.

This work is aimed particularly at older adults (50+) living in Ladywood, Edgbaston and Harborne and looks to support those who may have mobility or other issues that make it difficult for them to access our existing advice support or other community based advice services.

In 2022 we helped residents claim an additional £334k of income with support from our advisor.

This has included applications for :

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| - Universal Credit; | - Attendance Allowance; |
| - Pension Credit; | - Housing Benefit; |
| - Personal Independence Payment; | - Council Tax Support; |

As well as thorough benefit checks to make sure that the correct amounts are being paid.

As well as benefit advice and applications, our team has also helped with applications for Disabled Travel passes and Blue Badges, Occupational Therapy assessments, housing issues and Cost of Living Payments.

Over 170 clients have been supported in the past 12 months through this project.

We have also been able to give longer term support when needed, giving time to resolve issues in a way which takes into account the stress many residents are under, and also gives opportunities to empower the person to be part of the





solution.

In feedback 85% of respondents reported a significant improvement in how well they are coping financially after our support.

This feedback highlights the impact of relieving the pressures that come with struggling financially, by making sure people are receiving all the income they are entitled to. This has

60.7% of face to face appointments were carried out in client's own homes—that's 213 hours!



176 clients

**KBF
ADVICE**
2022



209 PIP claims,
81 Pension Credit



222 referrals
received

Average client age
64



£334k helped to
claim in benefits



162 visits at
home

82.8 hours on
telephone



LOCAL LINKS

Our advisor has re-started visits to St Germain's Church once a month to advise people attending the Pay As You Feel café and their Emotional Wellbeing Service.

She also works with one of the local CNSOs to advise people attending the Food Pantry at St Luke's Gas Street on an occasional basis.

These links with valuable partners makes it easier for those in the community to access our help and support.

'I have been able to buy diesel for my car, pay bills, and buy food, including going to a day centre to have an Indian hot meal. This means I can see friends. I have felt so low after my wife passing this has helped me a lot. I [can] travel to appointments myself using this money which is helpful'

'coming and talking to Katharine has give me a big lift - I am not dealing with things alone. It's wonderful what you do'

Bram Scott



Our Ladywood Community Advice project is based out of the Ladywood Health & Community Centre. We have two Welfare Rights Advisors - Bram Scott and Lorrie Blake

Albert is a very independent older gentleman, but was confused by the letters from his energy company. One of our advocacy volunteers was able to sit with him, read through the letters and then speak on his behalf on the phone with the energy company.

Half an hour later and he left understanding his situation better (he was actually in credit not debt!), with a problem to his gas meter booked to be fixed and having had a lovely chat with someone willing to listen.

This last year we have seen a substantial increase in demand for our provisions which reflects the tough circumstances facing the Ladywood residents as a result of the current socio-economic environment.

NEED IN THE COMMUNITY

In recent years, we had observed the profound effect of enforced lockdown, isolation and fear as a result of Covid. As we began to recover another disaster loomed on the horizon; the cost of living crisis.

Headline inflation figures of over 10% are causing issues for everyone, but for those who are already struggling on low incomes and benefits the proportion of their monies spent on essentials such as food and fuel exacerbates the problem. At the time of writing food inflation is over 16%.

NATURE OF PROVISION

Benefits and wages have not kept up and so the provision of welfare benefit and debt advice have rarely been as much of a lifeline as they are today.

There have been no major legislative changes to benefits during the last year so the scope of our work remains similar to that of 2021. The welfare benefit queries we cover can range from assisting with an online claim for Universal Credit to representing clients at Social Security tribunals. We also have our 'regulars' who need ongoing support to keep their claims up to date and liaise with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the council. This can involve long waits for someone to answer the phone.

OUR TEAM

During the course of the year we have had a change of personnel with Tasha Ramous leaving and Lorrie Blake taking her place in the summer. The total number of our advisors' hours stands at 36 a week during which time our duties include giving advice, dealing with our admin, and recruiting and supervising volunteers.



LADYWOOD
COMMUNITY
ADVICE
2022

455 clients 



74 appointments
for advocacy help



346
referrals received

Represented at 7 tribunals
(86% success rate)



£859k helped to
claim in benefits



188 Universal
Credit claim help

43% of clients
from Ladywood



St Germain's Church
Growing Christ-Centred Community

birmingham
settlement
developing communities, changing lives



PARTNERSHIPS

We continue to work closely with **Severn Trent Water**. We refer to one of their colleagues who attends the centre fortnightly to advise and assist with their Big Difference scheme (reduction of water bills) and trust fund. Up to October she made 41 Big Difference claims and 4 applications to the trust fund. Total savings on bills amounted to £12,723 giving an average reduction of £295.89 off peoples' bills.



We also cross refer with **Birmingham Settlement**, whose debt advisor attends weekly. She provides debt advice whilst we deal with income maximisation.

We attend **St Germain's community hub** and **St Luke's community shop** on a bi-monthly basis. These are both very well attended by members of their respective communities, and here we are able to extend our benefits and advocacy services, which operate on a drop-in basis at these locations.

VOLUNTEERS

As well as benefit advice we provide a more generalist service on Wednesdays manned by our small team of **dedicated volunteers**. The majority of residents that come through the door do not have English as a first language and many struggle to communicate directly to service providers.

The volunteers assist with a wide range of issues (eg housing repairs, utility problems, fines, and mobile phone providers). No two days are ever the same for our volunteers. They have to think on their feet and use effective communication skills, to act as advocates for vulnerable and/or disadvantaged members of the community.

Our volunteers are representative of the community, coming from different backgrounds, and as such they are able to utilise their different life experiences to strengthen our advocacy offering; one of our newest volunteers has been able to assist with interpreting for Arabic speakers. Volunteers also benefit from volunteering as it gives them a sense of pride and wellbeing, knowing that they are helping others and giving back to the community. It also offers an office environment working with others as part of a team, which helps their personal development.

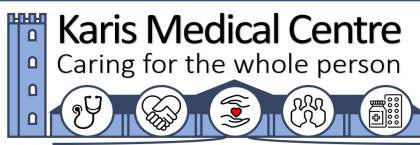
LISTENING & GUIDANCE

Helen Watts



Listening and Guidance had another very busy year in 2022. We're always challenged by the need and have had to operate a waiting list this year, but how wonderful that Listening and Guidance is going from strength to strength!

'The chaplain was amazing. I felt I made some progress in every session, and had strategies to practice. The sessions were much, much more than a "and how does that make you feel" structure, and helped me understand my feelings and behavioural responses in a logical way.'



Our three Chaplains for Wellbeing (Helen, Elizabeth and Dilip) had the privilege of working with over 200 patients, referred by GPs from a number of surgeries in the Edgbaston and Harborne areas.

We have supported people through loss and grief following bereavement, coming to terms with challenging or unexpected life events, navigating change in their lives or circumstances, dealing with past traumas, and many more of the difficult things life can bring.

We've helped people with anxiety and depression to understand their feelings and learn how to manage them more effectively.

We've been alongside people as they've expressed their fears, hopes, joys and sadnesses.

We've provided a listening ear and a safe space for people to work out their plans, make decisions or simply tell their story (sometimes for the first time).

The distinctive feature of our work is that we recognise that caring for the whole person (body, mind and spirit) is at the heart of improving wellbeing. Paying attention to the inner self and the spiritual needs we all have (like the needs for meaning and purpose, hope, love and belonging), helps everyone to lead more integrated, fulfilled lives.

The Chaplains for Wellbeing can also take the opportunity to explore their patients' experience of faith when it's relevant, and to offer prayer. We've been able to offer up to 40 appointments per week this year.

'I always looked forward to the phone calls. [The Chaplain's] skill was to listen - sometimes silence can give you peace to find an answer or time to reflect. I want to thank her for her great inner understanding.'

We're based at Karis Medical Centre, but receive referrals from 7 practices, and offer both face to face and telephone appointments. We see most of our patients fortnightly, and we can offer up to 12 sessions, although not everyone feels the need for this many.



150
referrals

LISTENING &
GUIDANCE
2022



71% of therapy
sessions by phone

1699 contact hours



240 appointments DNA



9.69 increase in
WEMWBS score

Listening support and
anxiety top referral
reasons



This year we have also supported staff in the surgery and worked closely with other services such as in-house counselling and social prescribing. And of course we liaise with other KNS projects to help our patients find the support they need.

In the coming year we will begin offering appointments at University Medical Practice, to improve access to patients from within the area. This is an exciting development that was delayed by the challenges of the pandemic but can now go ahead.

We will also say goodbye to Elizabeth as she retires in the Spring after almost nine years in post. We will be recruiting a new Chaplain for Wellbeing to the team.

Helping someone through a crisis time is invaluable, as this patient says:

'Thank you greatly for EVERYTHING you have done to support me at the lowest part of my life. You and your spirit gave me the lift and courage I needed to keep going. I will be forever grateful for that.'

From a GP:

It's a wonderful service and I know that when I refer my patients, you will look after them so well. It's great to know you're there."

'I am feeling positive about being able to manage further critical life situations.'

'Actually, words aren't enough. Helen has listened, heard me, and guided me every step of the way, nurturing my development of coping strategies and thinking processes. I am so very grateful, and know I have been gifted the opportunity to re-evaluate well-trodden paths of behavioural responses in a new way.'

PRACTICAL WORK

Harry Naylor



Our Practical work is provided on an ad hoc basis to our clients

PRACTICAL WORK 2022



23 deliveries to vulnerable clients



6 helps with DIY

11 Food parcels/
vouchers



5 families helped with house moves



5 emergency shopping help

A long standing strand of our work has been to offer a helping hand with small practical tasks and/or some basic provisions to ease hardship. This often goes alongside our befriending offer – it reflects our desire to be neighbourly to those we are supporting - the kind of practical help you might find in the community through friends and neighbours.

This includes help to pass on donations of furniture or other household items, straightforward DIY such as putting up a curtain rail or shelving, help with a food parcel, or helping with some shopping or a lift. We don't provide this support on an ongoing basis, but usually as a one-off in response to particular need.

Some examples from this year include one occasion where we put out an appeal to our supporters for a family we had been helping who had just moved into a new property. We asked for items to help brighten up the children's bedroom, we had a heartening response and were able to deliver a parcel including furnishing items, new books and lots besides. There were a number of times where we were able to do similar, helping to match up those who have things to donate with those who need them.

We were able to help someone being moved without much notice to move their belongings to the new property, calling on some of our volunteers to help with heavy lifting. This made a stressful situation that bit easier for the expectant mum. This is again representative of a number of times we've helped in this way over the past year.

A volunteer helped someone we see regularly at our office when their bike was damaged following a tumble off it, managing to get it back up and running.

As noted in some of our other project reports we do also provide more formal practical help – such as provision of school uniform or starter packs for those in temporary accommodation like the hotels on the Hagley Road. This has been enabled by some generous donors and/or small grants.

This year, we have provided practical help, in one form or another, 96 times to 60 clients



Peter was due to move house, having waited for a suitable place for a long time. But his physical health issues meant the actual moving was too much. Volunteers came alongside and helped him move his heaviest item—a fridge freezer, from the old house to the new.



Much of this work is underpinned by our small van, allowing us to collect and move larger items.

Alongside this we also refer to other groups who can provide additional help, such as the local foodbank – Birmingham Central Foodbank – the Ladywood Community Project for support with fuel vouchers and their ‘Holiday Hunger’ schemes partnering with the foodbank, and Love Your Neighbour at Gas Street for their Christmas hampers.

This practical provision, while seeming quite small, can make a big difference to those receiving it, helping to alleviate some of the constant pressure, worries and stress that accompany not being able to afford essentials.

Sheila’s social worker told us that her lights in her flat were not working. She was anxious and isolated and did not allow many visitors. Staff and volunteers were able to gently gain her trust and build a relationship. Eventually, a volunteer was allowed in to check the fuse board, change as many light bulbs as he could and make sure the electrics were safe, while staff shared a gift bag and friendly chat.

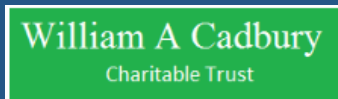
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our supporters are 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 individuals, numerous local churches and the partnership of other organisations and community groups we work alongside.

We give thanks to all the organisations and individuals who have supported us this year.

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THANKS TO:

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KARIS NEIGHBOUR SCHEME

Practical help | Advocacy & advice | Befriending | Emotional support

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