



KARIS NEIGHBOUR SCHEME

Practical help | Advocacy & advice | Befriending | Emotional support

Annual Report 2015 - 2016



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

Registered Charity: 1133510



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REPORT AND INTRODUCTION FROM THE TRUSTEES

As chairperson of Karis Neighbour Scheme, I am honoured to introduce you to this, our annual report. Whether you are reading this report from a position of personal interest or as someone who is considering supporting Karis Neighbour Scheme financially or practically, I commend this report to you and thank you for your interest. I have watched the development of Karis Neighbour Scheme for nearly 20 years, and have been privileged to see at close hand the uniqueness of the work and its impact.

In previous annual reports I have written about the way Karis Neighbour Scheme facilitates connections and helps people to move from brokenness towards wholeness. These features continue to characterise Karis Neighbour Scheme, and are often in such contrast to the context in which Karis Neighbour Scheme operates.

Karis Neighbour Scheme remains highly committed to its locality and the individual people, families and communities with whom it connects. This may mean walking alongside people for many months or years, and offering to care for a range of needs. This unusual care and commitment has been commented on by the combined local government and healthcare officials who had asked Karis Neighbour Scheme to describe the work done amongst the elderly and young families which provides ‘early help’ and reduces risk.

The context in which Karis Neighbour Scheme operates is in an environment of financial austerity, with budgetary cuts in local government third sector funding and reducing resources for health and social care. It is also working in a cultural context in which radical individualism, with its pursuit of personal fulfilment and redefinition of values, predominates. The consequences of this often harm to the most vulnerable.

The staff and volunteers who work in Karis Neighbour Scheme are exposed on a daily basis to this harm, the pain and brokenness in peoples’ lives, and are inevitably impacted by it. However, Karis Neighbour Scheme is strengthened by its connections with churches and its faith-based values which bring to light another culture. This is a culture which includes a commitment to community; where concern for the other is highly valued; where the vulnerable and the outsider are embraced; a culture where past failure is not allowed to determine the future and where forgiveness and grace (Greek word: Karis) bring freedom to change. This culture of ‘grace/karis’ enables there to be a ‘better story’ than the one offered by radical individualism.

This report will illustrate something of this better story and shows how Karis Neighbour Scheme has flourished over the last year as it has continued to bridge the gaps between statutory services and faith communities, between needs and resources and so bring change to individuals and communities. Karis Neighbour Scheme offers a model of working which could be applied in any community and offers hope in a climate of increasing austerity and social disintegration.

On behalf of the volunteers, staff and trustees of Karis Neighbour Scheme, may I thank you for your interest and support. May I also and extend an offer to discuss with us how Karis Neighbour Scheme might be able to facilitate change in your community and demonstrate a better story.

Ross Bryson
Chair of Trustees

REPORT FROM CEO

It is once again a privilege and a joy to be able to look back on the last year and to review and celebrate all that has been achieved. Finances and cash flow are a priority for a small charity. As a Board of Trustees it is our priority to review and closely monitor projected income, so that we know whether to plan for a decrease or expansion in a project. We are always delighted when our plans for cutting back a project can be put to one side as another generous funder enables the good work to continue. This year we have been able to maintain the increase in the KBF staff hours and to commit to develop the role of the Community Regeneration Worker towards further strategic community engagement and development work. Furthermore, our recent appointment of an Administrator is also a wonderful development which we believe will support the growth and improve the effectiveness of all projects across our organisation. Without the support and donations of generous individuals, grant making trusts, local organisations and churches Karis Neighbour Scheme would not be able to continue to be the steady, faithful presence that it is to so many in the local area. The vision and energy of our staff and volunteers, without whose dedication our charity could not operate, also needs to be celebrated. As the many stories in this Annual Report show, staff and volunteers are committed to offering a high quality, person-centred service, which demands high levels of flexibility, patience and compassion on their part. Our work with those who need 'Acute Support' has increased this year, and this often draws staff in to supporting and navigating a web of complex needs and services. Increased complex referrals are due to improved networking with GPs, effective 'social prescribing' and joint working with Mental Health and Wellbeing Hubs. Under these circumstances it has been important for us to increase training and supervision for our team, and to review and monitor processes for assessing the needs of those referred to us.

Some mistakenly call us a 'neighbourhood' scheme, (and it has been wonderful to see how our Community Regeneration Work has benefitted people's aspirations and hopes for the area). However, it is the idea of a 'good neighbour' that is at the heart of Karis Neighbour Scheme. What it means to be or to have a 'good neighbour' involves such things as: reciprocity, trust, shared resources, community links and shared information about services, or perhaps someone to turn to in times of need. A good neighbour isn't just interested in one aspect of your life, but can respond to the messy reality of what it means to be human. Karis Neighbour Scheme endeavours to model this holistic care – is it help with fixing up a garden? Reading a bill? Going shopping? Understanding a letter? Making a challenging phonecall? Having someone listen to you? Remembering your birthday? Offering a shoulder to cry on? Noticing when someone is ill? Moral support during a time of illness? Help getting a room ready for a new baby? The sense of getting alongside people and journeying with them is key to all of our projects.

Most public services are set up to deal with one area of life and can find supporting in a holistic way incompatible with their siloed organisational structures. For us at Karis Neighbour Scheme it is key that we maintain holistic working that offers people time and dignity and respects the messy interweaving of human needs. Volunteers and participants respond warmly to this approach and see the unique gift that it brings. Our Karis Befriends Scheme has been leading the way in developing and encouraging older participants to be at the heart of a meaningful network of care for one another.

Sometimes the reciprocity and self-help approach is what is needed, but for others who are really struggling, 'hand-holding' is what they really want, like the mother who was accompanied by our Children and Families worker while her baby had major heart surgery. We've also increased the 'professional side of some of services because this expert opinion is what is needed, For example our Money Advisor who is providing more tribunal level support and our Chaplains for Wellbeing who are offering our NHS funded 'Listening and Guidance' service. We aim for all of our services to inter-refer and to connect up so that, if needed, people can follow a pathway between our different projects in the way that is most helpful to them. Whether they are 'patients', 'clients', 'volunteers', 'participants' or 'residents' each individual's human dignity and gifts is respected and nurtured whatever their involvement is with Karis.

We look forward to another year of development and learning as we deliver our projects in an ever-changing environment, keeping people at the centre and seeing lives transformed by neighbourly grace.



ADMINISTRATION

Meg Kob took over the Project Administrator role towards the end of the year and is now working across Karis Neighbour Scheme and WholeCare, supporting the development of administration in particular around the Listening & Guidance project but also helping to provide co-ordinator for our growing team across both divisions.

As I've only just come in the role of Administrator/Team Organiser at the beginning of November 2016 there is not a whole to write about for the few weeks I've been with Karis Neighbour Scheme.

In these early days with KNS there has been a significant element of orientation and getting to grips with the various projects serving out of the Parker Street office. I've also had an opportunity to attend a meeting with the Chaplains for Wellbeing and their advisor/supervisor Fiona Collins. The future months will reveal how I can best serve the Chaplains, probably most helpfully in the area of database management and remote administrative support.

My remit is to support the Karis project leaders/managers in whatever way they need, particularly in the area of administration and organisation. I've also become aware of the need to either maintain or improve current systems or set up new systems to help the flow of office management. This will most likely be an ongoing task within the office.

We are also hoping to see a development of the Chaplaincy ministry, as funds allow. The ongoing ministries at KNS, meeting persons with various challenges and needs, continues to fill the days with opportunities to support and bring encouragement to the Ladywood and Edgbaston community and beyond.

I look forward to supporting Becky and the team as best I can in the coming year.

FUNDRAISING

With WholeCare receiving significant funding from Birmingham South Central and Sandwell West Birmingham CCGs we treat this contracted service as a distinct division within the charity. The service received £81,839 in new payments this year and carried forward £47,173 from the previous financial year. This accounts for the majority of our surplus for the year.

In terms of Karis Neighbour Scheme and our other projects, we have had a successful year in terms of fundraising. Our expenditure on these projects rose to £138,919, up from the previous year.

Our thanks to all the funders and donors who have supported our work, a full list of acknowledgements is at the back of this annual report. Grant funding continues to be the biggest proportion of our funding, we received a total of £117,685 in grants over the past 12 months, up on the previous year by around 40%.

Individual giving and donations are also a significant proportion of our income, and this year included £32,158 of regular giving and donations as well as gift aid of £4,482. This saw giving and donations increase slightly on the previous year, while gift aid dropped slightly. This represents around 20% of our income for Karis Neighbour Scheme (excluding Wholecare KNS).

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

Other fundraising efforts have raised a little over £1,000 including donations raised by staff at the Big Lottery to support Baby Bank and £341 raised through a monthly board game meet up held at our space at The Square.

INTRODUCING KARIS NEIGHBOUR SCHEME

Who Are We?

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

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

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

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

Who Do We Help?



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

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

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

What Do We Do?

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

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

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

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

We are also working alongside other groups and local residents in the area, working together to respond to local needs, encouraging and supporting activities and projects which respond to unmet needs and help reduce isolation.

Our Team...

Trustees

We currently have a board of five trustees. **Dr Ross Bryson** is a GP at the Karis Medical Centre, he has been at the practice for over 20 years and has been a trustee since Karis was set up in 1999, he is currently the Chair of Trustees. **Mrs Rebecca Cuthbert** has worked for several charities and public sector initiatives. Her previous experience covers family support, community development, project management and cross-sector partnership working. **Mr Marc Kusicka** is a Chartered Accountant based in Birmingham currently working for the University of Birmingham. Previously, Marc completed his qualifications and worked at Deloitte LLP. **Mrs Kathryn Miles** has a background in Public Health and has worked at the University of Birmingham for over 15 years, holding several senior roles. Currently she is working with academics to deliver health and social care leadership programmes. **Mr Steve Watts** is an elder at Church Alive, a local church in Ladywood, and has been involved in the area for around 20 years, having previously worked as a secondary school teacher, he is also involved in a number of other community groups in the area.

Staff

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

Volunteers

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

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

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



Supporters

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

A SNAPSHOT OF THE YEAR



822 contacts providing practical help,
supporting 351 individuals and families

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

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

117 lifts provided or times we
accompanied people to appointments



Over 80 volunteers involved in our projects
throughout the year

We've also had volunteers from New Roots,
HSBC and students on placement from
Birmingham University



639 people supported with advocacy &
advice

Around 1500 enquiries dealt with through
the Ladywood Community Advice project

Over £275,000 in debts dealt with





More than **400** local families supported in various ways over the year

had contact with **211** children

provided activities for **55** families with more than **100** children during school holidays

112 adults and **131** children came to the Welcome to Ladywood drop-in

88 adults and **61** children came to our English classes

218 home visits to **77** families



81 older people visited in their own homes

59 people came to regular Sunday Afternoon tea parties

21 older people came to a regular Tuesday morning group

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

more than **50** new referrals every month

5982 contacts supporting **1078** people over the course of the year



THE STORIES...

This year we've helped 1078 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.

Joan is 87, she had lost her husband shortly before she was introduced to us. Joan met another lady in her hairdressers who told her about the difference going along to our weekly Senior Life Group made to her after losing her husband and struggling with being so lonely after having the company of her husband for so many years. Joan contacted us after being given our details and we invited her to join the group as it was very local to her. Initially she was a bit uncertain, only coming every other week, but quickly grew in confidence, helping with serving teas and enjoying spending time with the others at the group. She has since moved her hair dressing appointment to allow her to come every week and has come to other social events including Time for Tea and our Christmas party.

Emily was referred to us by her GP after a relationship breakdown which left her in debt and very isolated. We helped Emily and her baby to access local playgroups, supporting her to make a homeless application and supporting her with food & baby parcels when her benefits stopped. Her year had been so hard that in the summer we applied for funding to give her a holiday at the beach which came as a welcome relief. She continues to wait for her own place and has a constant battle with anxiety but she really appreciates knowing that we are there for her and she's not facing these challenges on her own.

Sharon is an older lady who lives on her own, she hadn't been able to sort out a lot of things in her lean to since her husband had died and was struggling to get at the things she needed for her garden, which was important to her and something she still took a lot of pleasure from. We were able to help clear out the lean to, take away a van load of rubbish to the tip, and organise what was left so the things Sharon needed were easy to get to.

Sue & Sally were invited to join one of our volunteers on Christmas day after they'd gotten to know each other through Time for Tea and the Senior Life Group. Our volunteersaid "*We knew that they would probably be spending Christmas Day on their own and we felt we could include them in ours. It was such fun to hear about their past Christmas Days and see their faces light up when thinking of these memories.*" Sue has since been through a difficult time, her health has been deteriorating. We have been able to support her through this time, both emotionally and practically, accompanying her to hospital appointments, visiting her when she was admitted to hospital on several occasions and helping her come to terms with deciding to give up driving. She has struggled with the need for more support but wanting to remain as independent as possible and to feel in control. We have known Sue for many years and the relationship we have built up over that time has meant we've been able to come alongside her as she faces these difficulties, which is especially important as she has no family of her own.

Phillip and his sister had been known to us for a number of years, we would see them from time to time when they needed help with small problems. Towards the end of last year we had heard from Phillip that his sister had had to be taken into care and that he was not very well. We went to see him in hospital and discovered that he had had a very late stage diagnosis of cancer.

We helped take him home when he was discharged and over the following few months we helped in various ways as Phillip's health deteriorated, often this was as simple as going to help apply his top up for his electricity meter which was located at floor level and he couldn't bend down to put the token in. When Phillip sadly passed away several staff and volunteers who had known him attended his funeral to support his sister as they had no other family.

We met **Clara** when she was living in a hostel with her new-born baby. She had no kitchen facilities, was depressed and had very little income. We provided her with a Baby Bank parcel of essential baby equipment, food parcels, and help with bus fare when she had appointments, as well as visiting her regularly. She came on trips and outings which she found a real encouragement and were able to bless her by approaching a local church and asking them to make meals for Clara, which we delivered so she could eat properly. In the space of three months she was moved three times at short notice, we helped her move her things each time, until she finally was given more secure accommodation with proper facilities.

Hazel is a 90 year old who lives in Harborne. She remains active and independent, however struggles when going to activities and meeting others due to very poor hearing and a need to lip read. She started coming to the Senior Life Group after she met another lady from the group who encouraged her to come. She recently said *"I go to the group every Tuesday and have been going for about a year now. The warmth is delightful and the help is fantastic. I love it and am very grateful!"*

Adam is an older gentleman who has severely limiting disabilities, having lost both his legs and use of one of his arms, he is also partially sighted. He was living in an unsuitable flat, up several flights of stairs, which was in a very poor state and was referred to us as he was being evicted by the landlord and was moving to accommodation in our area. We helped Adam move his things out of the old flat and into the new flat and helped with a number of issues after he moved in, helping him change the settings on his laptop so he could see, assisting him to liaise with his landlord about sending letters in large print and accompanying him out to the pharmacist to collect his prescriptions.

Salve was referred to the Baby Bank. She had been violently trafficked to the UK and having won her trafficking case was now seeking asylum in the UK. After visiting her for a few months, she asked if our Children & Families worker, Ruth, could accompany her to her immigration hearing. We went with her as she was anxious about the hearing and needed some moral support. Later that month Salve received the news that she could stay in the UK. Ruth helped her prepare for the rocky transition from asylum support to claiming benefits and obtaining housing.

We helped her to pack up her belongings and took her to the council Customer Service Centre to make a homeless application, sitting with her during an anxious wait until she was granted hostel accommodation and some emergency vouchers. We were able to help Salve to settle in and get some food while she waited for more permanent accommodation. When she received the keys we helped her move her things into her new home where she is now feeling a lot more settled.

...AND THE STATISTICS

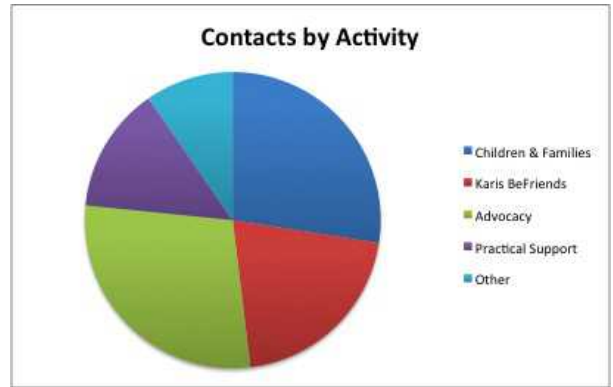
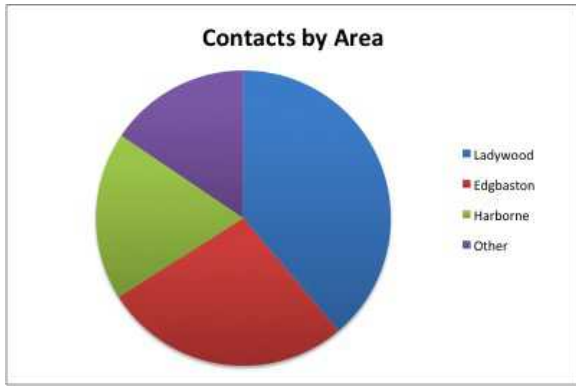
We collect a range of information about the people we've been supporting and our contact with them over the course of the year. In presenting this information we've tried to pick out the headline facts and figures that will be most informative, relevant and useful.

The following statistics cover the period from 1st December 2015 to 31st November 2016 (unless otherwise stated):

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Total no. of individuals supported:	798	766	879	1078
Total no. of contacts:	4653	5310	4853	5982
Average contacts per month:	388	443	404	499
“ “ “ week:	93	106	93	115
“ “ “ day:	19	21	19	23

Demographics

	Individuals (%)	Contacts (%)
<i>By Gender</i>		
Male	32	19
Female	68	81
<i>By Age</i>		
16-24	6	5
25-34	19	21
35-44	19	16
45-54	16	9
55-64	11	7
65+	14	37
Undisclosed	14	5
<i>By Ethnicity</i>		
White (British)	23	35
White (Irish)	2	4
White (Other)	15	11
Mixed (Wh. & Carib.)	1	<1
Asian (Indian)	2	3
Asian (Pakistani)	3	4
Asian (Bangladeshi)	1	1
Asian (Other)	2	4
Black (Caribbean)	9	6
Black (African)	24	19
Chinese	2	2
Other	6	7
Undisclosed	10	3

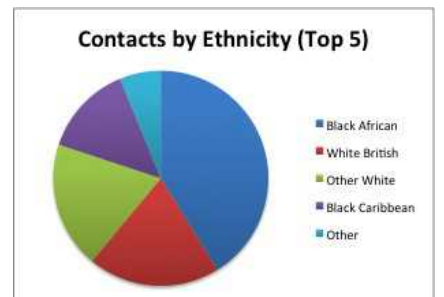
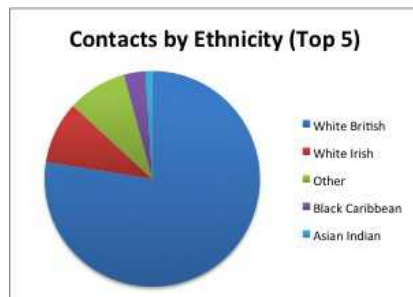
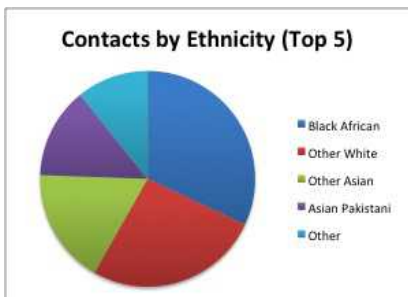
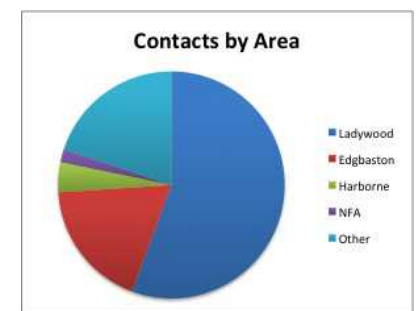
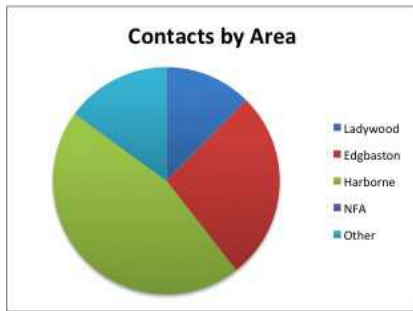
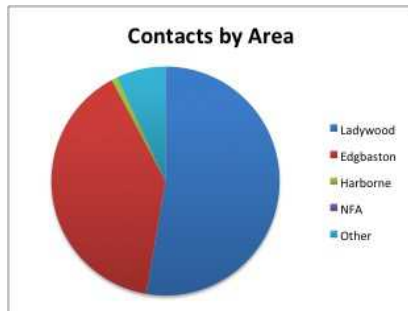
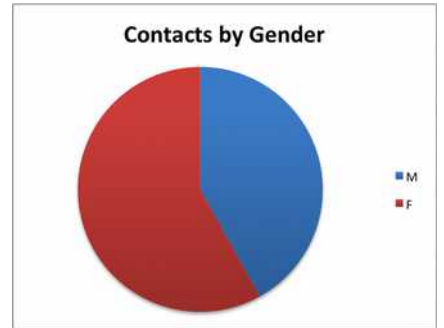
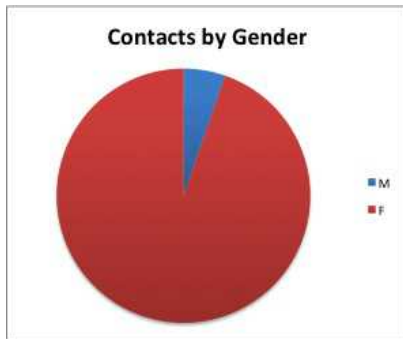


Breakdown by activity

Children & Families

Karis BeFriends

Advocacy





ADVOCACY

The Ladywood Community Advice project has been a significant part of our advocacy & advice work over the past year. This joint project between ourselves and the Ladywood Project has been running for two and a half years.

This work began out of a growing need for advice around benefits with significant changes that took place around 2014. We now employ a Money Advisor, Bram Scott, who is based at the Ladywood Health & Community Centre. We are now into our third year delivering this project and continue to see high levels of need.

This year we saw 545 people through the Ladywood Community Advice sessions (up 14% on 14-15, 477) and had a similar number of contacts, 1348 (14-15, 1371). This indicates there is still a large amount of need, given the number of people accessing the service, however, we would seem to be at capacity in terms of number of contacts.

Since starting a little under three years ago the project has helped people with 4854 issues, enabling people to access £2.6 million in income as well as £47,000 in grants and other financial support, and has supported people to deal with £654,000 of debts.

One of the challenges the past year has been an increase in the number of cases that have needed representation at Tribunal level, this is more time intensive in terms of the support provided by our Money Advisor, and therefore puts pressure on our ability to reach and support more individuals. The increase in Tribunals has been due to an increase in benefits rules being applied wrongly, which has a significant impact on the people affected, and we have a good success rate at challenging those decisions.

As well as providing appointments, the Ladywood Community Advice service also runs a weekly advice drop-in, enabling people to access advice quickly if needed. We continue to have an extra Money Advisor at the drop-in on a sessional basis to help respond to the high levels of demand. Alongside money advice the sessions also offer more general advice and advocacy, provided through staff at partner organisations and volunteers. The kind of help provided includes filling in forms, requesting repairs, help to make phone calls, or explaining letters.

A high proportion of the people we see through Ladywood Community Advice have English as a second language, with the largest groups accessing the service being Black Africans and Eastern Europeans. Having English as a second language can make everyday things more complicated, and navigating the formalities of benefits or housing is particularly challenging. We're able to take the time to talk face to face and help speak on their behalf where making themselves understood on the phone can be difficult or someone needs help understanding exactly what a letter they've received means.

We have just started to run 'Get Online' sessions in the Digital Den to extend the provision available at the advice sessions. As a lot of forms and resources are now accessed online and we see a lot of people who lack confidence accessing these resources. We have just begun providing a drop-in session that runs alongside the existing advice drop-in, in the neighbouring computer suite, where people can get help to get online and develop their confidence using online resources and forms.

The project also continues to signpost people to other help and support, including accessing other specialist advice where necessary, such as housing advice, and practical help like referrals to a foodbank, accessing crisis fuel grants from the Ladywood Project, and a bill payments scheme offered by Birmingham Inner Circle Credit Union.

Our weekly drop-in session on a Monday morning at Karis Medical Centre also continues, this is primarily a way for patients to be easily referred to us and to easily access the support we offer across all of our projects, but it is also a first point of call for general advocacy and signposting to other services where we are not best placed to help with a particular issue.

Advocacy is also provided through our other projects and activities, such as through befriending visits, and people still access phones and/or the printer and photocopier at our office in order to deal with issues themselves. Taking into account this wider support we have supported a total of 639 individuals and families over the past year (up 18% on 14-15, 541) through 1705 contacts (up 4% on 14-15, 1647).

We are continuing to explore the possibility of a job club and held a successful pilot with Jericho job clubs just before the summer, the response to this short run of sessions indicated there is a need for support with CVs, job searching and making applications and we continue to look for opportunities to start a regular job club at the Ladywood Community Centre.



CHILDREN & FAMILIES

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

It's been a full year for the Children & Families project; We've had 2139 contacts with 407 families, welcomed nine new volunteers and said good bye to two. We remain indebted to the kindness and commitment of our volunteers, who give generously of their time and themselves and in so doing inspire us the staff on to 'love and good deeds'. It remains an honour and privilege to work with such a compassionate team. Here's what we got up to this year:

Visits: Spending time with people remains an integral part of the work. This year our team had 200 one-on-one sessions, most often home visiting but also enjoying coffee out or taking a walk round the Botanical Gardens (thanks to a pass funded by the fundraising efforts of the Staff team at Big). These trips to the Botanic were a great treat; the sub-tropical and tropical houses often held a treasured plant from 'back home' and clients could share memories and expertise from their former life. Visits this year have included sitting with a lady while her baby had a major heart operation, accompanying clients to immigration court and the home office, celebrating births & birthdays, helping clients settle into new homes and putting together complicated flat pack furniture!

Our relationship with the local 'Mother & child hostels' tenanted by asylum seekers, has grown over the year, with Ruth & Emma visiting at least one hostel every week. These visits are an opportunity to spend time listening, encouraging and helping with any practical issues. On a glorious summer day we took nine of these ladies and their 13 children to a large house & garden and enjoyed a bouncy castle, huge dinner together and lazing around in the sunshine. One lady said *'We'll remember this for the rest of our lives'*

Welcome to Ladywood Drop-in is a weekly group for local people to make friends and relax. Thanks to the kindness of Ladywood Methodist Church we've called their hall our home for over 13 years. Our faithful volunteers continue to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere, built on tea & kindness and this year we've welcomed 112 people. We always provide a craft activity as we find these cross any language barrier and help new comers to relax. This year we've made apple crumble sushi, broaches, cards, painted glass and celebrated the Queen's Birthday & Eid. Aware that numbers were lower than normal and that all the good stuff in life happens while sharing food, we decide to regularly provide a simple meal at the group, which has been well received. We continue the group during the school holidays when we organise games, parties and sports. Together we and have enjoyed trips to the cinema, Ikon gallery, Hatton park and Treasure Island and find that these trips are a rare opportunity for our clients.

English for Speakers of Other Languages Class is our weekly two hour class staffed by incredible volunteers who this year have taught 88 students this past year, from over 20 nations. Our crèche volunteers have cared for 61 children while their parents learnt English. The childcare we provide is essential for many of the students who otherwise wouldn't be able to study. ESOL remains a cheerful and welcoming place for students who are newly arrived or only have a basic grasp on English. We seek to bridge the gap between just starting out and going to college and hope to give students the skills and confidence to seek more formal education once their circumstance allow.

Baby Bank Central, now in its third year, continues to provide baby clothes & equipment to families in need after a referral from a support agency. Thanks to the generosity of public support we have expanded our scope and now receive referrals city wide and have, this year, given away 116 parcels and 345 packs of nappies. Many of the clients are in desperate need, often having no recourse to public funds, on low incomes or having fled domestic abuse. We were delighted to receive funding from The Norton Foundation and our partners Birmingham City Church with which we were able to increase the hours Ruth gives to the project.

Practical Support often consists of helping people access the baby bank or food bank or moving furniture. However occasionally the Children & Families team do don their overalls and do a spot of DIY; over the summer a family were referred to us by their social worker. A football themed bedroom would go a long way to helping the eldest son after a tumultuous season in his life. Helped by two volunteers and a client who was keen to *'give something back'* we produced a stylish transformation!



COMMUNITY REGENERATION

Our community regeneration project came to an end in March, following over seven years of supporting local residents with a dedicated Community Regeneration role. While the formal work may have ended in March, we continue to have a focus on working closely with our communities and have seen the initiatives we've helped support over a number of years continue to develop.

Our Community Regeneration project has focused on working with local people to build stronger communities, building on assets that exist within the community and enabling people to take action and address the things they think are important about where they live.

In the last few months of the project our focus was on ensuring that the initiatives that we'd been helping to develop were able to continue without further involvement from us. The main focus was on the Ladywood Community Development Trust (CDT), which emerged out of a group of residents groups who had previously worked together on the Ladywood Ward Community First panel to distribute £50,000 in small grants to local projects. We also carried out an evaluation of the work over the past three years to assess what impact our regeneration work has had.

The evaluation highlighted some of the key impacts of the work including:

- Greater awareness of existing groups and activities
- Greater connectedness between community groups, improving access and participation
- Individuals recognising that they had skills that could make a valuable contribution to the community
- Increased sense of hope and aspiration for the local community
- People realising that they could make a difference together

Residents interviewed for the evaluation said:

"To be honest, when I moved to Ladywood I was quite prejudiced, I thought I don't want to live here long... but through the community work I've seen that yes people might have a lot of problems but they actually want to take part in things, so I've started to see things in a positive light... You can notice the positive changes in the area."

"I think where I've lived here for twenty of thirty years, I'd never participated before – I used to drive to work, come back from work, come home and shut the door. I kept myself to myself. But now I'm much more open, still got problems, not perfect, but by reaching out..."

"...it really changed the way they saw things. I think they realized: we have resources, and we have the ability to this, that it can be achieved... And also what you can achieve with limited resources... to see all these projects that were doing really interesting work and having quite a big impact, with very limited funding, I think just kind of opened people's eyes to what could be done."

Others stressed the importance of the long term nature of the work contrasted with times people *"have been dropped in, flying in..."* The report concluded: *"On the whole the individuals and groups engaged with reported being better connected with one another and more confident in their aims and ability to achieve these: this should afford them greater resilience and is an important legacy of the relational and facilitative approach taken by the Community Regeneration Project."*

Since the end of the project we have been glad to see the CDT has built on some of its early successes, including helping to bring together a number of groups ranging from resident run community groups to larger organisations such as the Ikon gallery and Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, to jointly promote summer holiday activities in Ladywood. Supporting the Ladywood Community Fun Day, which is a fantastic community celebration now in its 9th year. They also held their AGM as a 'Celebrating Ladywood' event in the autumn, helping connect local groups from different neighbourhoods who hadn't met before, promoting a positive image of the area and raising awareness of the large number of groups and activities locally.

We continue to have good links with The Real Junk Food Project Birmingham, who have become well established at the Ladywood Health & Community Centre, they run a café in the centre on the same day we have our Community Advice drop-in and this is a really useful connection for us to be able to help people we're supporting make, given the way The Real Junk Food Project's 'Pay As You Feel' ethos encourages people to value their time and skills as a way of paying for their food. We have helped people into volunteering in the project, helping to run the café. Lastly, we continued to support the project by providing space for storage and for sorting lots of the food being intercepted to prevent it going to waste.



KARIS BEFRIENDS

Helen Bell is our Project Co-ordinator for the Karis BeFriends project, Patti Tan has worked alongside her as a Project Assistant for the past year. 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 offers befriending, practical help and advocacy to older people, mainly through visiting them in their own homes and accompanying them out in their local community, as well as organising regular social events. Helping older people to continue to flourish and connect with others, knowing a sense of community, rather than feeling isolated or lonely. We give emotional and practical support to assist with difficulties in the later stages of their lives.

This year we supported 214 older people through 2499 contacts, mainly through visits in their own homes, as well as telephone befriending, advocacy at home, accompanying out for appointments, trips out and regular groups or social events. For some of those we support they may no longer be able to get out, have no family of their own nearby, we regularly visit, sit and chat over a cup of tea. As one lady expressed, our visits give her “something to look forward to!” Where continuing to get out can be a struggle, due to physical limitations, lack of confidence or anxiety, we encourage them to continue and accompanying them can be really beneficial. A highlight for one lady this year was being taken out to celebrate her 90th birthday over a coffee and cake! Those we support are referred by GPs, other health professionals, social workers, relatives, or older people themselves telling others about what we do!

Throughout the year we held various social events, for example coffee afternoons, our Christmas Party, opportunity to go to ‘Arts and Craft’ Group, trips out to a Garden Centre, attending a Carol Service. We hold a weekly ‘Senior Life Group’ at the Kenrick Community Care Centre, and a bimonthly Sunday afternoon ‘Time for Tea’ event at the Onneley Centre in Harborne, in partnership and with volunteers from a local Church, Churchcentral. Where we enjoy entertainment, quizzes, afternoon teas, and meals together, we’ve celebrated Easter, Christmas and the Queen’s 90th birthday! Often in these groups, there is opportunity to discuss and support one another, around areas like how to stay safe and well, where to go for help, how others have found help, what sustains us, facing and coping with difficulties, how can we continue to flourish, contribute and know joy, often conversations can come up around end of life issues, how to prepare emotionally and practically, regrets, dealing with our own loss and loss of others.

A participant who regularly comes to the Senior Life Group expressed the difference it made “I enjoy coming to be part of the fun, laughter and friendship that is always there. I think that we can all learn from each other”. Another says “It is the highlight of my week!”. At ‘Time for Tea’ participants expressed “You will always find a friendly atmosphere there, everyone is very welcoming”...” I enjoy meeting others and listening to them in conversation. It is good to hear different points of view about things.”

We have also been involved in the Ageing Better in Birmingham Project throughout this year. Two of the older people we support (85 and 89 yrs old) have been involved in the Age of Experience group, which has been helping to shape and engage older people in the Ageing Better Project within Birmingham. It has been great to see them grow in confidence, realise they have a part to play and ideas to contribute. “...I have met such nice people and have made new friends. Also it has given me more confidence and made me less aware of my aches and pains”. The highlight for them was the opportunity with others to be invited to number 10 Downing Street to enjoy Christmas dinner with David Cameron and others, see some of the stars from ‘Strictly come dancing’, enjoy first class travel by train, one of our ladies was not deterred by needing a wheelchair, she expressed “the day was better than a two week holiday!”

These two participants helped plan, shape and facilitate an Ageing Better Mini Hub through the KBF Project this year. With their involvement we held 4 events around encouraging older people to continue to connect and flourish later in life, working with Anna, a professional Storyteller, telling us stories, encouraging us we have a story to tell and the benefits of telling our story to others. After gathering their stories, Anna made them into short plays, then working with Harborne Primary School, the older participants, spent time answering the children’s questions about growing up and living through the war in Birmingham, and then there was an afternoon performance of the plays of the older people’s stories by the children to their parents and the older people, a very memorable afternoon!

There have been many highlights this year, we have continued to benefit from being an active partner within the Body, Mind & Spirit Partnership, as well as working with Churches, other groups and businesses’ in the local community, the positive impact of having so many volunteers involved, and of course hearing the difference the project makes to individual lives. For example “Without you, I would be at home all day” and “I can’t imagine what my mum would have done without the service or how we would have managed without it either, as it kept my mum independent, it was the only thing that she engaged in that was ‘her own’- the one thing she kept going out”.



PRACTICAL WORK

A key part of our work as Karis Neighbour Scheme is to provide practical assistance to people in need, whether due to financial hardship, illness, or because someone is lacking the support of friends or family that many of us rely on. A great deal of this provision happens alongside our befriending work or through connections made through other areas of support such as advocacy & advice.

We support people in lots of ‘neighbourly’ ways, helping with small jobs around the home from fitting a key safe to painting a room, help moving, passing on donations of furniture, or help clearing out a room if it’s become too cluttered.

We’re able to be responsive to needs and can help with very small things right up to organising groups of volunteers to help with bigger jobs like clearing a garden.

We’re also able to help at very short notice, having had instances where people have been moved to or from temporary accommodation at very short notice. Early this year one young mother we know who was staying in a hostel, was forced to move across town with no notice when the social worker supporting her overlooked extending her stay meaning her room was re-allocated, we were able to help take all of the things out of her room in the morning, load them in our van, and then hold on several hours until she had been told where she would be that evening before dropping her things off to the new hostel. That is just one example of the kind of situation we’ve helped with repeatedly this year, other instances have included evictions, leaving National Asylum Support Service accommodation following Leave to Remain and people without secure accommodation having to leave because of falling out with people they’re staying with.

The other way we help practically is through provision of more acute support, such as referrals to Birmingham Central Foodbank, help applying for grants and other financial assistance, and provision for new families who are facing hardship through the Baby Bank (a joint initiative with Birmingham City Church), providing baby equipment such as pushchairs, cots and Moses baskets, as well as essentials like nappies and formula. The Baby Bank in particular this year has grown a great deal and operates on a similar model to Foodbanks, working with referral agencies across the city.

This year we helped 351 individuals and families (up 71% on 14-15, 205) and had 822 contacts (up 79% on 14-15, 822). A lot of this increase is through both Baby Bank (214 individuals, 421 contacts) and through an increase in providing lifts and accompanying people to appointments (41 individuals, 117 contacts), which is a big area of support for older people being befriending through Karis BeFriends.

We also had a big increase in the number of people we’re supporting who we would assess as acute cases, where they have access three or more types of support or we have had four or more instances of providing practical help, this year increasing to around 13% of those we’ve provided practical help to.

Provision of food parcels remained similar to last year, 105 people had help with food in a crisis and a total of 200 parcels were either given out or a referral made to Birmingham Central Foodbank.

Other examples of the kinds of help we’ve given this year include:

Clearing and tidying a garden for an older gentleman who had had a fall because of the long grass, following a referral from his GP.

Helping move furniture around in the home and take away some old items ready for the delivery of a new bed for an older lady living on her own, the delivery had been held up because she hadn’t been able to do it herself and didn’t have anyone who could help.

Sorting and taking away rubbish from an older lady’s lean to, she had a lot of things left from before her husband had passed away and needed to clear space to make the space useable again.

Helping a family paint their child’s bedroom after they were moved to a new flat and found it was in a poor state, a group of volunteers helped give the room a fresh coat of paint and spruced the room up to make it a lot more livable.

We continue to see a high level of need for practical help, underlining the fact that this provision is not readily available elsewhere in the community.

INTRODUCING WHOLECARE

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

We are currently working with Birmingham South Central and Sandwell & West Birmingham CCGs to deliver the Listening & Guidance service through GP surgeries in the Edgbaston & Harborne areas of Birmingham and across Sandwell.

The part of the project commissioned by Birmingham South Central originally sat within the Edgbaston Wellbeing Hub (EWH) but has recently been re-commissioned to continue beyond the end of that pilot.

LISTENING & GUIDANCE



The Service

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

The NHS Context

The service has been innovatively commissioned by two NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups across Birmingham and Sandwell (BSC and SWB). Spiritual care is an explicit component of whole person clinical care encouraged by modernisation strategies with the National Health Service. However, although spiritual care services are well established in hospice and hospital settings and are increasingly developed in mental health services, they are still very limited within General Practice, and our Listening and Guidance Service is the only example of NHS commissioned Chaplaincy in General Practice in England. We are currently commissioned to deliver 60 hours of care across the Sandwell and Birmingham area, so the service is still small, it is our vision to develop the availability of the service more widely so that it can impact many more patients.

Patient Outcomes

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

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

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

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

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

Always listening and not judging.

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

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

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

In addition to patient feedback we also take a 'wellbeing score' (WEMWBS) at the beginning and part way through the course of sessions. These scores corroborate the strong evidence from the patient feedback and show an average improvement of 7.5/8 points for patient wellbeing.

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

Partnership Working

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

Staff Team

This year we have seen changes in staffing. Our previous Team Leader left the service in March 2016 and we have recruited 2 new Chaplains for Wellbeing. Rather than recruit a new Team Leader we have invested in a flat team structure, consolidating staff across both Sandwell and Edgbaston sites into one team using more regular team meetings (with the CEO and Chaplains Supervisor), joint training opportunities and group supervision sessions. This new approach seems to be working well for the staff and has also had the added benefit of knitting the KNS and L&G staff more closely together which improves the collective learning and awareness across the whole of our organisation.

Future hopes and plans

We have been appealing to both CCGs that our service would be able to operate more efficiently and effectively if it were scaled up in size and if contracts were longer than a year. In addition to reaching more patients and keeping waiting times down, this would also enable us to offer staff contracts that were longer-term and longer hours, helping us to attract and retain staff. We also have plans to deliver our service from additional GP sites extending the access of our service and raising the profile of our provision amongst more GPs. In addition to local plans we are doing what we can to raise the profile of GP Chaplaincy nationally and we have invested time in speaking to other interested parties about our service. For example, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, Spirituality Special Interest Group and Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, have both invited us this year to share the story of our Listening and Guidance Service.

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



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