



 gateway  
Family Services CIC

Impact  
Report  
2021/22



# ABOUT THIS REPORT

The reporting period is April 2021 - March 2022, unless otherwise stated. Questions about this report can be directed to Chris Ha, Marketing and Communication Manager, at [c.ha@gatewayfs.org](mailto:c.ha@gatewayfs.org).

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# WELCOME

## Welcome from our CEO

I'm pleased to share Gateway Family Services' (GFS) Impact Report for the year 2021/22 which explores our commitment to creating difference and value for all our clients and stakeholders.

In doing this, we share our performance but it also explains a bit more about how we got there and often we feel this is what sets us apart. It shows we continue to do what we say we will. For us, this report is an essential step in providing our stakeholders with the information they need to hold us accountable.

We are proud of what this report tells you, and I will take this moment to thank the team and our partners for their dedication and considerable efforts. During a time of great challenge we were still able to work together to reach people and provide much needed health and wellbeing support.

This is our first impact report, and while we always have more work to do, we're pleased with our progress and that it shows evidence of our plan to make GFS the kind of place our people are proud to be a part of, our clients trust to support them, and our partners can continue to believe in.

Only by measuring the effectiveness of our activities can we be sure we're making a positive difference and therefore we're reassured to see the numbers but we're more proud of the people that sit behind them – every single one is a client, a family or a community group (asset) that is making changes and reaching their own goals. Looking ahead, we will use these insights to shape our future direction and we will continue to strive to make the greatest difference we can.



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# SPOTLIGHT ON:

## Responding to COVID

We live in a rapidly changing world, but the rate and depth of change triggered by the pandemic for almost two years has been unprecedented.

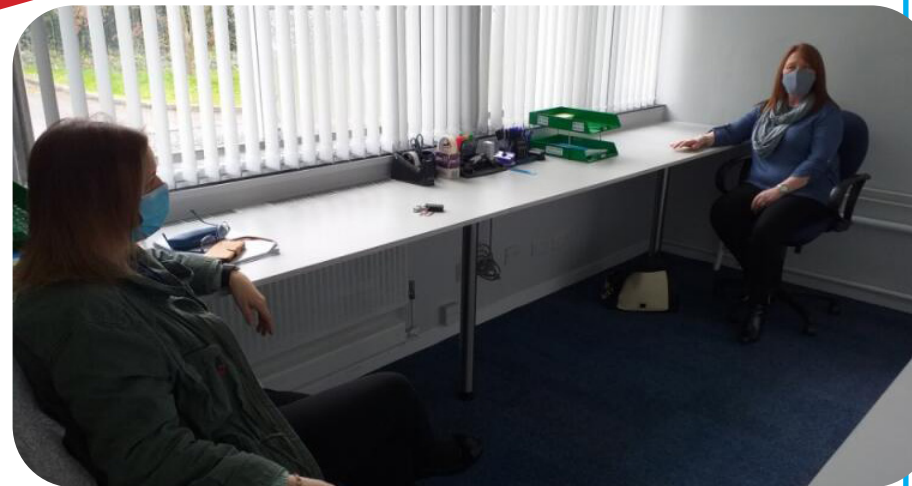
Our diverse experience and longstanding relationships with local organisations and partners meant that we had the ability and skills to respond. In fact, our brand of support and our commitment to “carry on regardless” meant that we became more in demand as needs increased.

We are not an organisation that operates in isolation. We understand the value of working in partnership and drawing on the expertise of others. We also recognise the need to be flexible when people are confronting exceptional circumstances.

What we did between April 2020 and March 2021:

- To mitigate COVID restrictions we delivered courses including an offer of online provision
- Introduced virtual exercise classes
- Continued to build partnerships and strengthen existing relationships with a wide range of other charities and organisations
- Pivoted our services to deliver them through online and blended approaches
- Made advice and support available through our multiple digital channels in the form of articles, blogs and imagery

Zoom exercise class



Socially distanced working

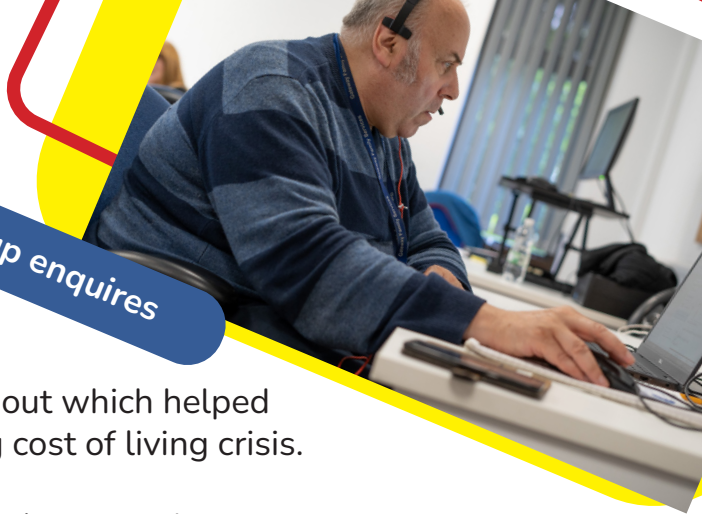
## Household Support Fund

In October 2021 the Government announced the Household Support Fund, a £500m fund for people in England who were likely to suffer food or fuel poverty over the winter.

In Birmingham, the City Council decided to distribute its share of the money directly to households in need. To do this, they chose ten voluntary sector organisations – one in each constituency – to administer the funds. In light of our existing role as Early Help and Neighbourhood Network Lead, Gateway Family Services was chosen to cover the Edgbaston constituency.

So, over Christmas 2021, we prepared and put together the Household Support Fund Admin Team. Then for three months, they took calls from members of the public, most of whom had been referred to the scheme by support workers at other organisations.

Staff picked up enquires



In total, 960 grants were given out which helped recipients to tackle the growing cost of living crisis.

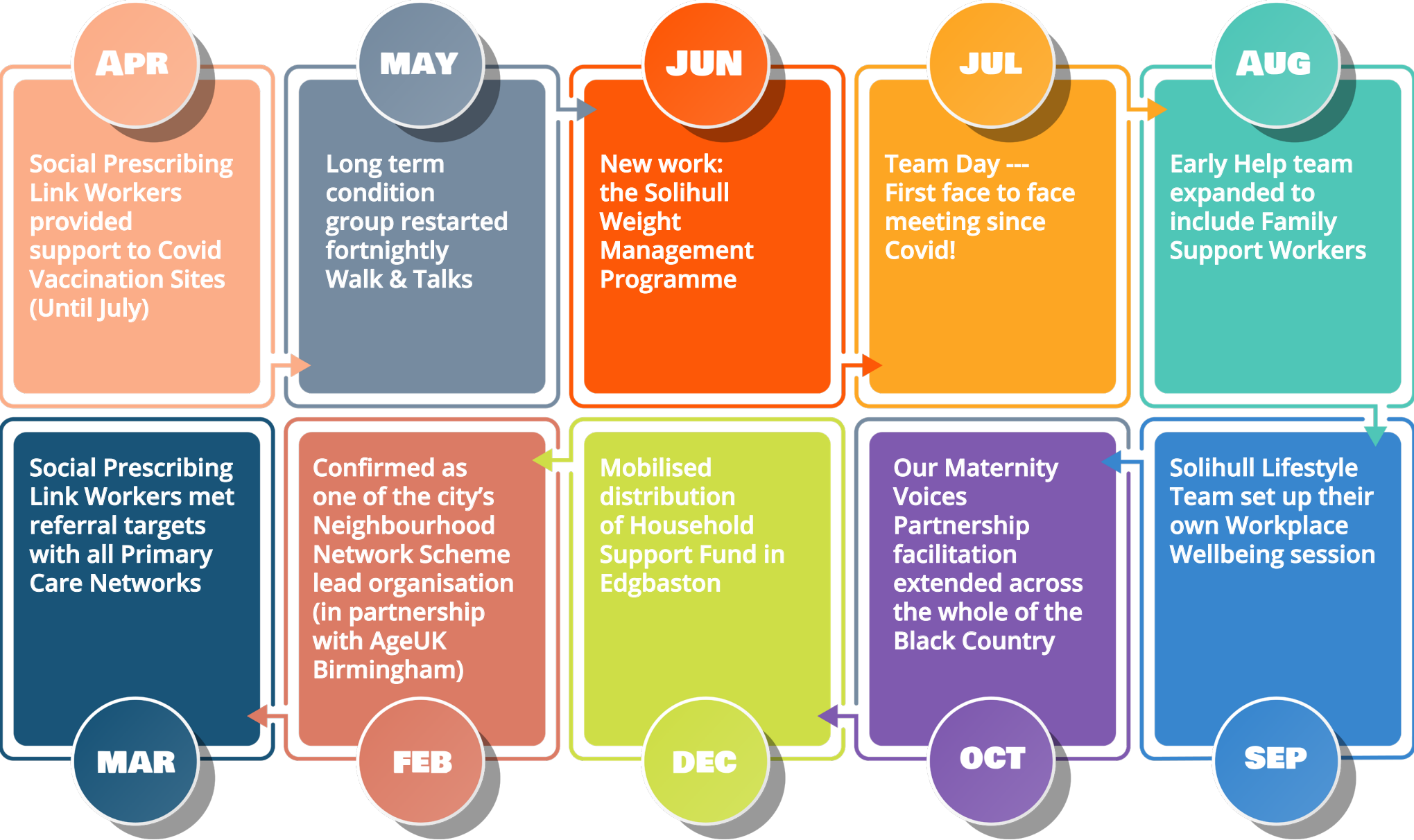
The service also engaged trusted community partners who promoted and referred people to us.



Household Support Fund Admin Team



# Highlight of the Year 21/22



## The Year in Numbers



**40,000+**  
**Hours of service**



**5,332**  
**People supported**



**100+**  
**Partners engaged**



**92%**  
**Clients satisfied with our service**



## Our Services

### Early Help Edgbaston



### Solihull Lifestyle Service



### Maternity Voices Partnerships



### Edgbaston Neighbourhood Network Scheme

### Social Prescribing



The Early Help system was set up by Birmingham Children's Partnership as part of their COVID response. Gateway Family Services coordinates the Early Help response in Edgbaston. Since then, Early Help Edgbaston has directly supported over 340 families, providing them with emergency food and financial support and connecting them to Edgbaston's local services.



277 families were supported by our family support workers.



600 locality and citywide assets were mapped



4,244 hours of support were given to families in the Edgbaston Locality



150 Fuel Bank Foundation vouchers were issued

# Early Help Edgbaston



# Social Prescribing

Number of social prescribing referrals  
Birmingham - 2,621  
Solihull - 1,179

Total hours of Service  
Birmingham - 27,924  
Solihull - 5,174



Number of partners worked with  
Birmingham - 58  
Solihull - 25

Social prescribing refers to the idea of improving people's health and wellbeing by putting them in touch with local networks and services, and increasing their active involvement with their local community. It's also about tackling issues that may be causing stress and anxiety.

The NHS model for social prescribing involves GPs, Primary Care Networks (PCNs) and other primary care providers referring people to a Link Worker.

Link Workers give people time, focusing on what matters to each person, and looking at the bigger picture. They connect people to community groups and statutory services for practical and emotional support.

GFS works with 11 PCNs and nearly 70 individual GP practices in Birmingham and Solihull, making us the largest provider of NHS Social Prescribing Link Workers in the West Midlands.

34 patients went into employment or volunteering following support

A Maternity Voices Partnership (MVP) is a team of people who provide feedback about their local maternity system. The panel includes maternity professionals (like midwives and

doctors) and people with direct personal experience of the service, including women who have been pregnant and given birth, and their family members.

GFS is the facilitator of MVPs for Birmingham, Solihull and this year our role in Sandwell and West Birmingham was expanded to the whole Black Country.

## Maternity Voices Partnerships



Hosted 8 meetings with over 150 attendees

Carried out '15 Steps' visits to all maternity units within Birmingham and Solihull during the COVID pandemic



Connected with over 100 partner organisations including Children's Centres and Community organisations







The Edgbaston Neighbourhood Network is led by Gateway Family Services and Age UK Birmingham, who are working with both commercial and grassroot community groups, facilities and activities (commonly grouped under the term “assets”) along with local agencies to create a network of support in Edgbaston.

Neighbourhood Network Schemes (NNSs) are designed to support older people in Birmingham to connect with individuals, groups, organisations, activities, services and places in their local neighbourhood. They are an integral part of Birmingham City Council's community social work model.

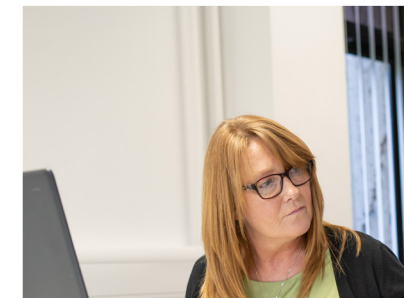


1776 hours worked to develop community assets

46 Locality Assets mapped

120+ pieces of local info shared on social media

# Edgbaston Neighbourhood Network Scheme



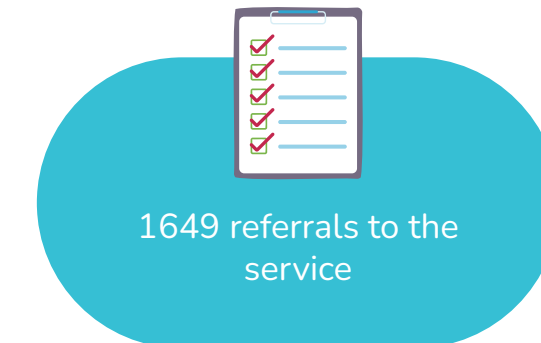
The Solihull Integrated Lifestyle Service, which includes Solihull's Stop Smoking Service, is delivered by Gateway Family Services. In partnership with others, including a number of local community organisations, it offers tailored support for people across Solihull, based on their needs.

After an initial assessment, clients will work with a Community Wellbeing Adviser who will help

them identify the lifestyle changes they can make, and then give them encouragement, motivation and practical help to make those changes.

Clients get a personalised action plan to help them achieve their health and wellbeing goals, appointments made at a time and place to suit them, and lots of information about the local activities and groups available to them.

## Solihull Lifestyle Service





## Client Feedback

Don't just  
take our  
word for it...



“

Gosh, I thought my blood pressure was ok but after your check it's obviously not as good as I thought. Thanks for flagging this with the doctor and pharmacist.

I'm pleased to be getting sent a bp monitor so I can record and feedback to the GP.

Harry\* 70s  
Integrated Lifestyle Service

”

“

You accompanied me from my car on my first outing since lockdown when I felt very anxious about being out among people. You sat with me and eased me into some safe conversations with nice people at the outdoor event.

Lynn  
Beat It Percussion

”

“

Great to talk to you today. I am thoroughly enjoying the zoom exercise classes with Tina - so thank you so much for introducing me to those. I really appreciate your advice and all the information you are sending me.

Anna\*  
Integrated Lifestyle Service

”

“

You listened and didn't interrupt me like people have my whole life. You asked what I wanted rather than what I needed and that was empowering.

Nick\*  
Social Prescribing patient

”

\*Names have been changed



A man and a young boy are shown in profile, looking out over a sunset. The man is on the left, wearing a dark jacket, and the boy is on the right, wearing a dark t-shirt. The background is a warm, orange-hued sky with silhouettes of trees.

## John's Story: Coming Together and Going Home

Costs linked to school are a real day-to-day pressure for many parents from low-income households, Like John\*, a 50-year-old father, who never expected that buying a school uniform would tip a precariously balanced budget firmly into the red.

John's story was supposed to be heart-warming, a family reunion after years apart. He initially came into this country a few years ago from Africa; due to war and hardship, he was provided with support and benefits in a 50+ supported housing scheme. He lived away from his wife and children for a few years until his seven-year-old son was eventually old enough to come over and stay with him.

But things turned sour when John found that his accommodation was for elderly citizens only, and no children were allowed. They were removed from the housing and were placed in temporary accommodation. For the following six months, they struggled with food, clothing, and essential utility costs.

"My son had experienced a lot of war and poverty in Africa. Coming to this country, he hoped for a better future. Still,

instead, he is experiencing a different kind of hardship," John said to Halima, a Family Support Worker from Early Help Edgbaston.

John needed support with the cost of school uniform and a school travel pass. Halima was able to refer him to the Karis neighbourhood uniform scheme, which provides free school uniforms for families with financial struggles. She also signposted John to information for travel assistance and explained to him how he could apply for his son.

Despite receiving benefits, John's money was not enough to sustain them. So Halima helped John complete the Household Support Fund (HSF) application and she also signposted him to local food banks who provided the family with some free meals.

John was relieved when the HSF grant reached his account, giving him that little bit extra during a challenging time. He also qualified for travel assistance and

managed to get a free bus pass for his son. Importantly, his biggest problem was solved, his son received the free school uniform they'd been struggling to afford for a long time.

Halima was delighted to receive the following text: "Good morning, Halima; due to your diligence and kindness, my son went to school this morning in his uniform! We sincerely appreciate you!" And with it was a photo of his son in the uniform.

John's journey is far from over, there will be many new hurdles to jump, but he is finding life easier with the company of his son. Slowly but surely, they will get their life back on track and eventually, they hope his wife and other children will be able to join them so they can rebuild their life together.





## Sally's Story: Coping with bereavement

As Sally\* was leaving the surgery after a routine doctor's appointment, the Practice Manager, who knew Sally well, spotted her and felt that something wasn't quite right. Indeed, when she followed Sally out of the surgery to check how she was, Sally was too upset to talk. So, she suggested a referral to the Social Prescribing Link Worker service.

Armed with the information from the Practice Manager, Link Worker Deborah phoned Sally to tell her about the service and find out how she might be able to help.

Sally told Deborah that her brother, who had Down's Syndrome, and her sister had both died during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, she had become anxious and depressed. She was having trouble sleeping and, because of her fears around COVID-19, had become scared about leaving the house.

Since the death of her siblings, Sally said, she'd closed herself off from the world. Her finances were in a mess and she'd gone into arrears with her rent. Now, she sat indoors by herself, frightened her landlord would evict her at any moment.

Deborah listened and consoled Sally over her loss and current situation. She suggested

some services that might offer some immediate help, and Sally agreed, saying she would like to be referred to bereavement counselling and befriending.

They chatted about the money issues that Sally was finding overwhelming, and Deborah suggested that she could support her to break them down into more

manageable chunks. Sally was keen on this idea, and they agreed to meet face-to-face at the surgery, so that they could make a plan together and begin putting it into action.

A few days later, at the surgery, Deborah made some calls on Sally's behalf to establish what she owed and when. Once they'd done this, Sally felt a lot better, saying she would feel more able to speak to Citizens Advice for money management advice in the future.

At Sally's request, Deborah also mediated between her and an advisor from her housing association, and they devised a payment plan that they and Sally were happy with. The advisor assured Deborah that they had no plans to evict Sally, but said they would like to speak to her about moving to a smaller property as her current home was under-occupied.

When Deborah called Sally a couple of weeks later to check in, she sounded much brighter. She said she now had people to talk to, and had already been in contact with her housing association and Citizens Advice. She told Deborah she felt more in control of her finances, and had decided to look at a property her housing association was offering her.

With Sally taking steps forward, Deborah now felt confident about stepping back. Thanks to her good relationship with Practice staff, she knows Sally will be re-referred if she needs extra support in the future.





## Our People

“I have worked as a social prescribing link worker for almost a year with Gateway Family Services.

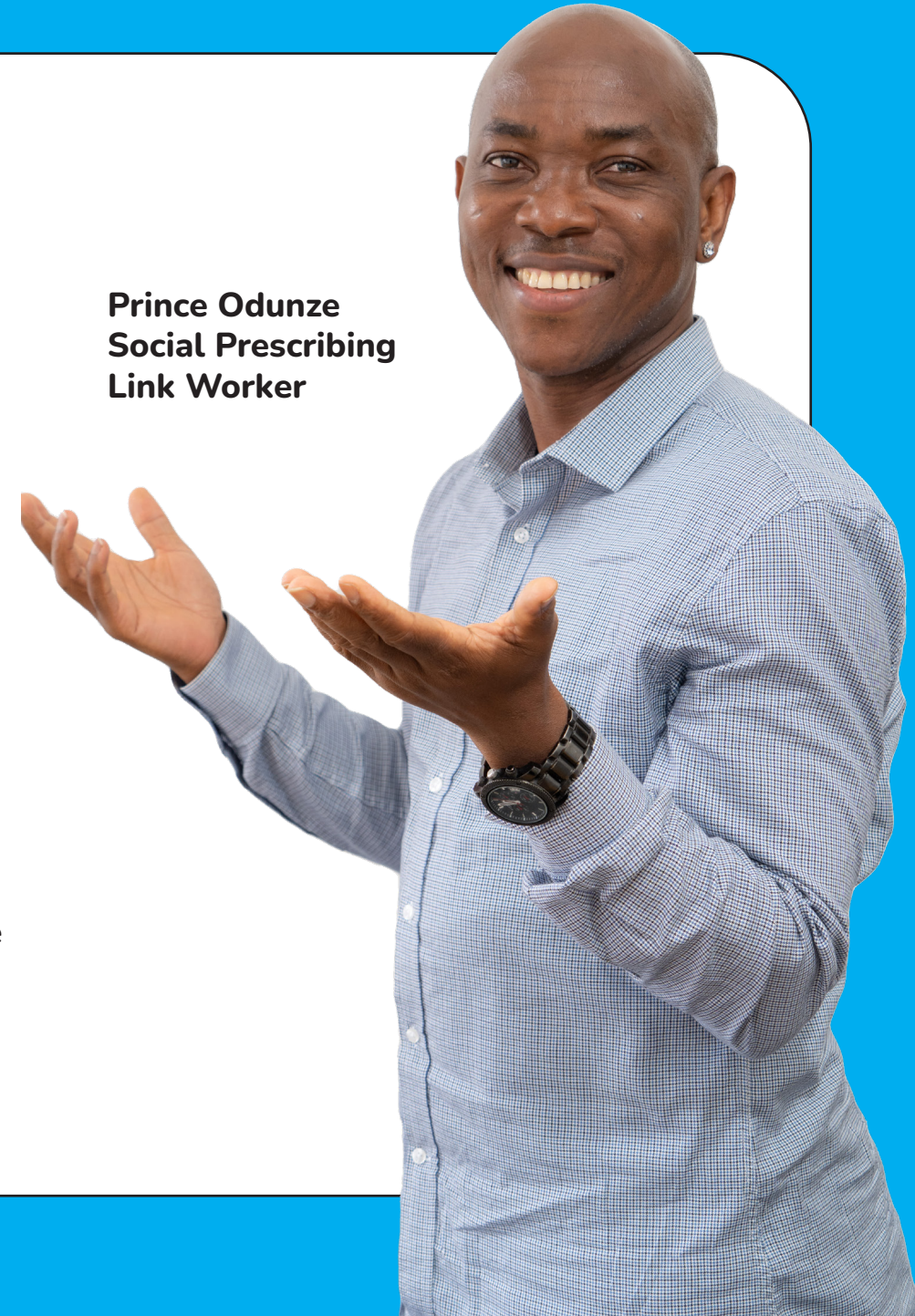
“The social prescribing element Gateway offers make me feel at home: to have people to support people who are facing social challenges and not medical challenges. I can work with them to help.

“After the interview, I felt there was no other place I wanted to be; the vibes here were friendly, which supported me to try something new in my life and come out of my comfort zone.

“This job gives me satisfaction. When I support people I don’t tell them what to do, I help them figure this out by giving them options and information for them to make a decision. We don’t decide for them, but we walk the journey together. It’s like holding their hand and taking steps that grow their confidence. I also find that often what I do feels small or simple to me but frequently it’s these things that mean the most to the individual. It can mean the whole world to them to feel considered or even just listened to. The job is mightily rewarding.

“That’s not to say the role isn’t at times challenging. This is a whole new area of work but it helps that Gateway Family Services is well known in the area, especially among stakeholders and that it’s done things like this before. It would be much more challenging to achieve this if I didn’t have the whole organisation behind me.”

**Prince Odunze**  
**Social Prescribing**  
**Link Worker**



## Our Partners

### Woolly Mammoth: a project being supported by Edgbaston Neighbourhood Network Scheme

Suze, the director of Woolly Mammoth Stitch Works CIC says.

“You have been a dream to work with!

“Your passion for people, for communities and for making a difference is clearly evident and it feels like you genuinely want to see positive change for older citizens. We have appreciated all the help and support you gave us as an organisation in finding the best place to work in the constituency - Quinton - and soon were introducing us to many of the people we needed to meet and see. We have loved having you on this journey with us. You’ve taken the time to get to know people on our project and made some important intros - firstly to Alison Thompson from The Patchwork Meadow - who became a project partner - and second to the wonderful library staff who host the activity and will continue to offer the space to do so.

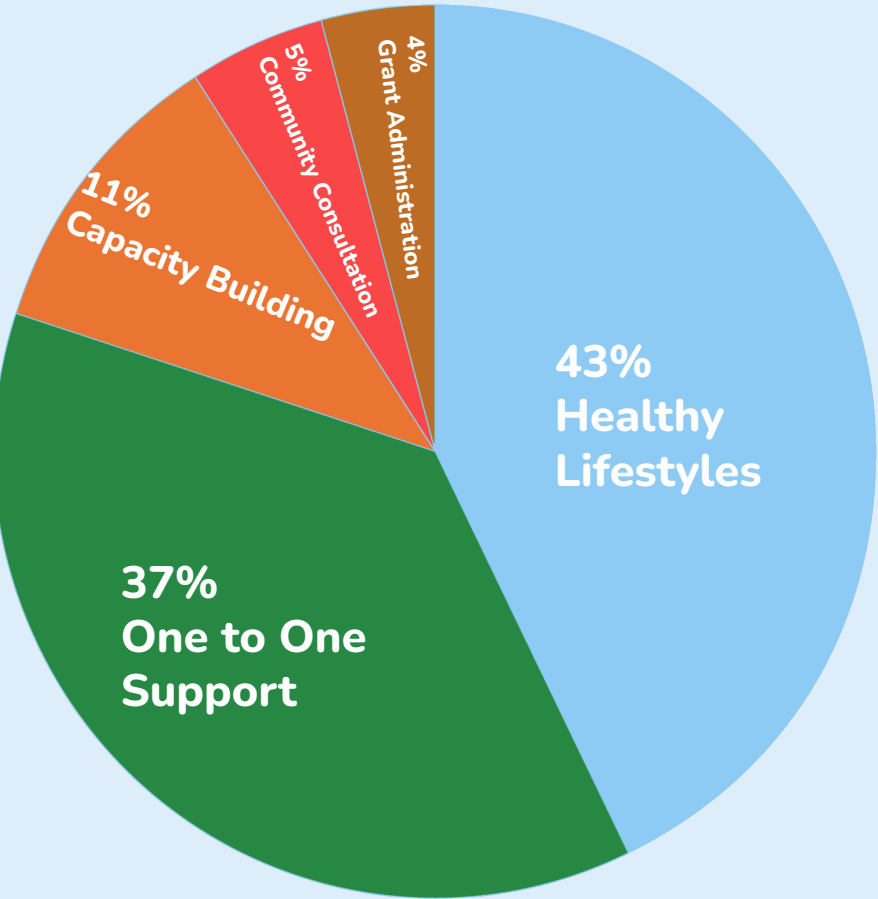
“Whilst Woolly Mammoth are leaving two friendly and confident stitch groups, your offer to keep in the loop with these and act as a group liaison is great because we know there will be extra support for them as they continue to meet and craft together.”



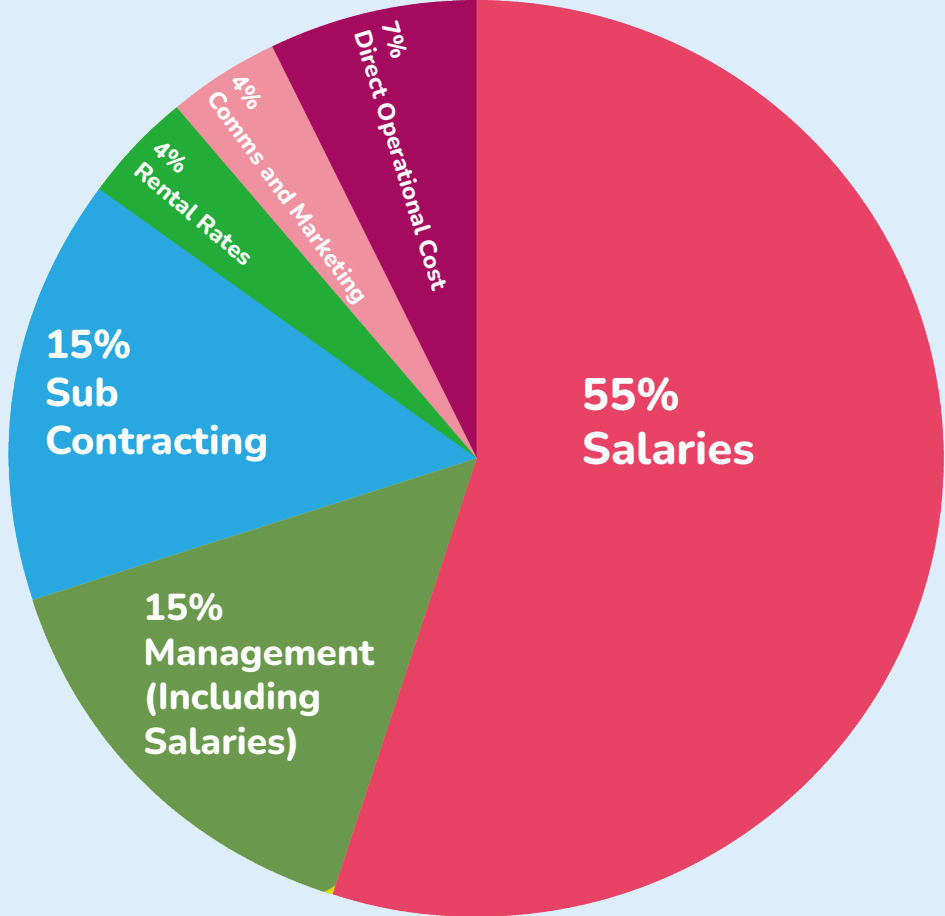


# Finance: How we spend

## Spend by type of work



## General expenditure



# Thank you

Gateway’s impact this year has only been possible because of the hard work and support of many people and organisations. Thank you to our staff, board, volunteers, friends, partners and commissioners. We could not have done this without you.

We are truly grateful for all of your support.



## Contact us

If you are interested in finding out more about Gateway, please get in touch:

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