

Growing Impact: Sustaining Excellence Expanding Reach

**2023/2024
Impact Report**



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	gateway Family Services CIC
	2023/2024 Impact Report

Foreword

Welcome to Gateway Family Services Impact Report for 2023 to 2024, a year which saw a year of highs and lows, which they often are(!!) and included us turning 18, a huge milestone for a Community Interest Company such as us, as well as us moving offices after over 13 years in our previous space.

We're so pleased with our new home though as it's much more accessible and welcoming, in the heart of the community on Harborne High Street so we welcome you to come along for a visit if you're in the area or want to learn more about what we do!

We've also seen some new services within the organisation including 2 further services delivered in partnership in North Solihull as well as an expansion to our Early Help Service, now supporting families inboth Northfield and Edgbaston. New services equal new staff and I'm delighted that our workforce has increased to over 50 for the first time in a number of years. You can read all about our new services as well as our more established ones in the report and I

hope you enjoy learning more about all of these.

We've really tried to focus the report on impact this year and what that really means. So, whilst you'll see plenty of numbers in the report, as in previous years, and they're obviously important, what we really wanted to focus on is what our services, the support provided by our staff and the relationships we've built, mean. To us, to our partners, to those who access our services and to our communities.

What they mean to me, on seeing them all in one place, the amazing feedback from partner organisations, the feeling of pride and happiness our staff feel when they've helped someone through a difficult time, the way in which what we do changes families and individuals lives, is a huge sense of pride and thankfulness.

I'm thankful that I'm now in my second year as Chief Executive, doing a job I love and working with such an inspriring team of people. I'm thankful that we have such a supportive Board, including our new Chair, Liz, who I'm really excited to be working with in a new way in the coming year and I'm thankful that, whilst I know there is always more work to do and more support to be given, we are going some way to improving lives and communities and, well, making an impact!!



Joanne Harper
Chief Executive

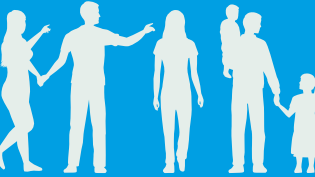
Our Year in Numbers

61%

Average Overall Happiness Level*

15000+

Clients were successfully supported in the year*



Female 66%

Male 34%



Client's Gender



Weight

management is our most common support requested

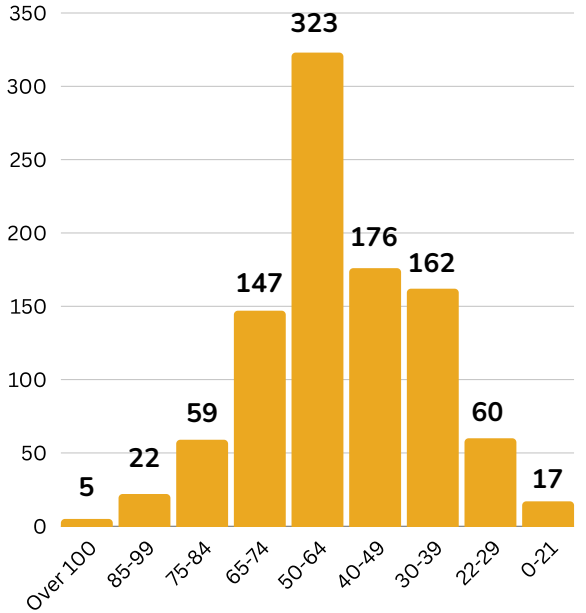


4.21%

Average engagement rate on social media including Facebook, X, Instagram and LinkedIn

Age Group

5 clients were over 100!



Gateway Family Services have delivered over

38000

hours of support to families and clients in need over the past year.

STAFF



Expanded our staff team from 49 to 56 members over the year.



48%

clients were unemployed*

*These figures are based on calculations using data from our impact assessment app, which directly solicits feedback from our clients.

Major Impact Highlight

Launch of New Services

We successfully launched several new services, including Carers@Heart, Active Travel Social Prescribing, and Health and Wellbeing Coaches. Each service focuses on different client needs, significantly enhancing our community's overall wellbeing.

One-Page Strategic Plan

As we look ahead, we are excited to introduce our One-Page Strategic Plan, which outlines our vision and strategic priorities for the coming year. This concise document serves as a roadmap for our organisation, guiding our efforts to enhance our services and strengthen our impact within the community. Take a look on the plan [here](#).

Administration of Household Support Fund

We really appreciate our continued work with BVSC and Birmingham City Council, in administering the Household Support Fund in Edgbaston. Throughout this process, we have successfully led and coordinated our trusted partners to ensure the smooth delivery of these vital funds. Our collaborative efforts have enabled us to provide much-needed support to households in need, reinforcing our commitment to making a positive impact in the community.

Office Relocation

In late 2023, we moved from our previous office in the Chamber of Commerce to our new office in Harborne. We feel our needs and those of our partners and service users will be much better met there. We'd love for you to visit us there!

Service Expansion

Despite city wide concern early in the year over funding for the Early Help service across Birmingham, we are pleased to announce the expansion of our Early Help service into Northfield, all made possible through the unwavering support of the community, partner organisations, and our dedicated team. This expansion will allow us to sustain and continue our impactful work in Edgbaston whilst extending our reach to better serve the needs of families in Northfield.

Award Recognition

Our very own Black Country Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership was honoured with a SRO (Senior Responsible Officer) Special Achievement Award in January. This award recognises our commitment to keeping service user voices at the heart of decision-making in neonatal and maternity services and our willingness to engage with NHS professionals to enable service improvement.





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What People Said

We believe our work is best understood through the voices of those who experience it firsthand. Whether it's a service user sharing their journey, a staff member reflecting on their role, or a partner talking about our collaborative efforts, each perspective tells a unique story of connection and impact. Through their words, we capture the essence of what our services mean to the people who matter most.



Janet H.

Behaviour Change Adviser , SLS service



“

Working with my client has been an absolute pleasure. They have displayed a remarkable positivity towards their lifestyle journey, attentively considering both the pros and cons presented. Moreover, they have earnestly embraced all the guidelines provided, demonstrating a genuine commitment to their well-being. It's truly inspiring to witness their dedication and receptiveness, making collaborative even more rewarding.



Dr Pratiksha Patel

GP, St Clements Surgery



“

I briefly met Saeima(Social Prescriber) and found her super excited to help out and eager to chat with the mental health patients for a quick check-in and social chats, which will free up GP time. I also witnessed Saeima, in the early days, approaching the reception herself to explain all the support she can offer. All staff seem very comfortable approaching her.



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CORE SERVICES



NEW SERVICES



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and More!



Anne*

Household Support Fund Applicant



“

Oh my goodness Ben, the grant has gone into my account today! Thank-you so much for sorting that for me, it will make such a difference to me and take some of the pressure off.

Please thank whoever organises these grants and please tell them how very much appreciated this is!



Holly Haden

Specialist Midwife Bereavement and Rainbow Service



“

It has been a real benefit for our teams and our families to work collaboratively with the MNVP. It has enabled our bereaved families to have their voices heard in a relaxed setting and where there is not the fear of saying something that may upset a family who have not experienced this. I hope that we can continue this important work.



Ann*

Client , SLS service



“

'I joined a 12-week weight management programme and my course leader Glenn was amazing. She really helped me understand portion control. I lost 5% of my body weight and I also got access to 1-1 sessions after the course to continue my weight loss journey. I felt so supported and I loved the group support.



Oyoka*

Client, Social Prescribing Service



“

You've helped a lot. I feel relaxed and positive that something will come out of this, for the debt and finance support. You helped, gave assistance and advice. When I woke up I was feeling down but now I'm feeling positive.

» Early Help Edgbaston & Northfield



Gateway Family Services has emerged as a source of support of Birmingham’s vulnerable families, despite recent budget cuts threatening the continuity of our Early Help service. With support from the community, partner organisations, and our dedicated team, we are expanding our reach into Northfield while sustaining our work in Edgbaston.

The Early Help service, which supports over 15,000 families annually, faced uncertainty due to budget cuts from Birmingham City Council. These financial strains jeopardised our ability to provide vital services aimed at preventing crisis, including debt support, school placements, emergency food provision, and mental health assistance.

Gateway Family Services remains committed to providing ‘Right Help at the Right Time’. Our Early Help team continues to offer invaluable support in collaboration with Birmingham partners, diligently seeking alternative funding to sustain and enhance our services.

Thanks to our community’s resilience and our staff’s tireless efforts, we are excited to announce

the expansion of our services into Northfield. Since July, Gateway Family Services has served as the Voluntary Sector Lead for Early Help in both Edgbaston and Northfield.

We thank the Northfield Community Partnership for their invaluable support in this transition, ensuring continuity of care for families in need.

As part of this expansion, the Gateway Early Help Team has welcomed five new members, allowing us to provide a wider range of support. We are also collaborating with new Early Help partners, including Birmingham Children’s Trust Team and Family Hubs.

Impact in numbers



Families our family support workers have worked with

180



Families Supported in Fuel Crisis

464



Families Supported in Food Crisis

31

» Early Help Edgbaston & Northfield



About Early Help?

The Early Help service exemplifies collaboration among professionals, families, and communities to build resilience. Gateway Family Services is proud to lead this initiative in Edgbaston and Northfield, ensuring families have access to essential support. Families will have access to:

- Debt Management
- Early Years Support
- Parenting Advice
- Housing Support
- Employment Support
- SEND Support
- Community Development

Follow:  

The Impact: From Struggle to Strength: The Edwards Family’s Journey

The Edwards Family in Edgbaston were referred to Early Help by St Margaret’s School. Mary Edwards faced significant challenges in managing her two daughters—Hanna and Emily. Emily was refusing to attend school, and Mary required help with applications due to her dyslexia. Hanna, who is non-verbal and autistic, needed specialist schooling, as the mainstream school could not accommodate her needs.

Mira Rashid, one of the Early Help Family Support Workers was allocated to the family. During an initial home visit, Mary highlighted her urgent need for practical support, including a tumble dryer, beds, a laptop, and financial assistance from the Household Support Fund (HSF). Mira provided emotional support and practical solutions, discovering that Hanna’s Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) was incomplete, hindering her access to specialist education. Mira arranged a meeting with the school for an early review to find a suitable school for Hanna. Mira secured vital financial support through the HSF for a new tumble dryer, beds, and a laptop,

Challenges

Due to local authority budget cuts, brought about by the issuing of a Section 114 notice by Birmingham City Council, the future of Early Help as a service was in some doubt in the early part of the year, which proved challenging both for staff delivering the service and those families who rely on it’s vital support. We’re pleased that funding has been secured for the service, allowing us to continue and indeed, expand delivery of this much needed service

essential for Emily’s schoolwork and Mary’s online classes. She also referred the family to several organisations for additional resources.

Significant progress was made: the family’s emotional and financial burdens eased with improved bedding and additional funds. Emily can now complete her homework, and Mary feels more capable of managing her responsibilities. The process to transfer Hanna to a more suitable school is underway, fostering hope for her educational future. Mary expressed immense gratitude, noting the intervention alleviated much of her stress. With Hanna’s upcoming enrolment in a supportive school, the family is moving toward a more stable and hopeful future

Future Goals

As we move forward, we remain committed to enhancing the lives of children and families, working closely with our partners and keeping the community informed about our developments. Our focus is on providing practical support to manage complex issues and strengthen community ties.



The Edgbaston Neighbourhood Network Scheme (ENNS) has played a pivotal role in fostering social interaction, wellbeing, and community pride through a variety of initiatives. There's much to highlight and the following provides a snapshot of some of the wonderful initiatives we've supported with one of these being the Indian Ladies Lunch Club, a social initiative funded by Edgbaston NNS. It provides essential support and social interaction for isolated older women in the community, helping them form new friendships and connections.

Another successful venture is the Barrow House Wreath-Making Workshop, funded by a microgrant. This creative session brought together residents from diverse backgrounds living in a retirement housing complex. The workshop fostered social connections among participants while encouraging a sense of community pride and people connected with one another who living on the same complex had not met before creating something much bigger wreathes.

In collaboration with Places Leisure, Edgbaston NNS is working to establish health and wellbeing activities at Harborne Pool and Fitness Centre. This initiative aims

to address prevalent health conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure whilst offering a Warm Welcome creating a friendly and supportive environment.

These are a snapshot of the many diverse projects ENNS is working with, reflecting our ongoing commitment to building a healthier, more connected, and empowered community.

Impact in numbers		
	Microgrants Awarded	31 grants under £500 each
	Small Grants Awarded	14 grants over £5000 each
	Assets Mapped	57 community assets were identified
	Community Engagement Events	1,000+ individuals engaged
Community Events		
	Indian Ladies Lunch Club	Membership grew to over 40 women
	Great Big Green Week Impact	Over 1,000 people reached, 65 sqm of meadow planted



About ENNS? 

In partnership with Age UK Birmingham, Gateway Family Services continues to deliver the Edgbaston Neighbourhood Network Scheme (NNS), working tirelessly to combat loneliness and isolation among adults aged 18 to 49 with additional needs and those aged 50 and above. The scheme collaborates with local groups, facilities, and agencies by creating a supportive network in Edgbaston, connecting residents to community opportunities that enhance their wellbeing and independence.

Follow:   

The Impact: How One Woman's Passion for Connection Sparked a Community

Mrs D, an 82-year-old former Secondary School teacher from North Edgbaston, experienced a significant decline in her physical and mental health, leading to increased isolation and a loss of confidence. A fall at home resulted in multiple hospital admissions and a referral to Adult Social Care and Social Prescribing, who then reached out to Edgbaston NNS. Despite her visual impairment, Mrs. D was passionate about playing Bridge and wanted to set up a group in her area to meet new people and engage her mind.

Through the ENNS, Mrs. D was connected with the Indian Ladies Lunch Club, a group that had received funding from the scheme. Private transport was arranged, and Mrs. D could attend the club's inaugural luncheon. She shared, "Meeting these other women from my community has lifted me in more ways than I expected. I feel like a new woman and less alone. We meet outside of the set socials and speak regularly in between, supporting one another and sharing stories and experiences as well as strategies for managing our ailing health!"

Challenges

ENNS faced challenges in managing growing demand and engaging hard-to-reach populations. Popular initiatives like the Indian Ladies Lunch Club required more frequent meetings to accommodate participants. Additionally, finding suitable venues and resources for community events was a recurring issue. The team overcame these obstacles by partnering with local organisations and securing extra resources, ensuring the success of the scheme's initiatives.

The lunch club, initially expected to attract around 20 members, has proven so popular that attendance has exceeded 40 women over 60. Due to the high demand, the monthly luncheon has increased its frequency to twice a month, providing vital social interaction and support to the community. Edgbaston NNS is proud to have supported this initiative, which has become a lifeline for many women in the community.

Mrs. D's experience reflects the profound impact of the Edgbaston NNS. She says, "It has been a lifeline to me since my husband died. My family do not live nearby. I never used to speak to anyone for days, sometimes weeks on end. Now someone calls me, or I call them most days, and when my body allows, we meet at each other's houses for delicious food and company."

Future Goals

We remain committed to supporting those who live in the Edgbaston constituency to lead healthy, happy and independent lives within their own homes and community, recognising that there is disparity across areas and wards in Birmingham where some have more activities for citizens to participate in than others. With continued investment from Birmingham City Council through ENNS will enable us to support the development of new and existing assets and to work with those that already exist to be sustainable.



» Maternity & Neonatal Voices Partnership



The Birmingham and Solihull Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership (BSOL MNVP) aims to amplify the voices of women, birthing people, and families within Birmingham and Solihull. By engaging with service users and collaborating with maternity

care providers, the MNVP strives to ensure that the experiences and feedback of service users shape the development of local maternity and neonatal care. The objective is to support the implementation of the Better Births initiative and long-term maternity and neonatal system goals, prioritising personalised, safer, and more inclusive care for all.

In the past year, BSOL MNVP has implemented several initiatives to improve engagement with service users and enhance care provision. This includes regular MNVP meetings, community listening sessions, and trust visits, where service users' feedback was collected and shared with care providers. The partnership also focused on developing key projects such as promoting personalised care support plans, co-producing information for service users, and contributing to the integration of neonatal services into the MNVP. In addition, BSOL MNVP worked on various workstreams like infant feeding, mental health, and pelvic health while contributing to

Impact in numbers

Total MNVP meetings held

8

UHB & BWC Project Meetings

60

Active Service User Members

46

Total Stories Shared

146

national requirements such as the Clinical Competency Framework and safety actions.

Testimonial

Service users have expressed their appreciation for the MNVP's involvement in improving care experiences. One service user shared her relief after feedback she had provided at a previous MNVP meeting led to visible improvements in care provision. Another remarked on the positive experience of participating in MNVP events and having her voice heard, which had a significant impact on her sense of inclusion in maternity care. Trust staff also noted that the MNVP's involvement led to positive changes in service delivery, ensuring that user feedback was acted upon and integrated into ongoing care improvements.

Future Goals

Looking ahead, BSOL MNVP plans to amplify service user voices in maternity and neonatal decision-making, focusing on community outreach, expanding mental health and perinatal workstreams, and enhancing neonatal service engagement. The partnership will adopt a more integrated approach, ensuring diverse service users are effectively heard and represented across the system.



» Maternity & Neonatal Voices Partnership



The Black Country Maternity & Neonatal Voices Partnership (MNVP) is a collaboration between service users, healthcare professionals, and local communities, aimed at improving maternity and neonatal care across the region. By integrating neonatal care into

the MNVP, the partnership has driven positive changes based on direct patient feedback and co-production efforts with service users. The focus is on listening to families, enhancing maternity and neonatal services, and working closely with local NHS Trusts to address priorities highlighted in patient surveys and regulatory reports such as CQC and MBRRACE.

In 2023-24, the MNVP Black Country implemented several key initiatives to enhance engagement and improve services. Neonatal services were incorporated into the partnership, reflecting the broader shift towards a comprehensive approach to maternity and neonatal care. The partnership successfully conducted multiple "15 Steps" events, which evaluated maternity facilities through the eyes of service users, and engaged in various listening events across the Black Country, with a particular focus on seldom-heard groups. The MNVP also represented service users at key governance meetings, ensuring that feedback was incorporated into

Impact in numbers

Share your story

40 submissions

Percentage of Service Users who are Mothers

75%

Events hosted

19

Trust-level decision-making.

Testimonial

A service user at a bereavement support event shared, "These meetings would be helpful to many who've experienced child bereavement. They should be advertised and open to the public."

Reflecting on her experiences, the MNVP Lead said, "Engaging with a diverse community and hearing service users' stories has been invaluable. These narratives have co-created new resources that truly meet the needs of women and families."

Future Goals

Looking ahead, the MNVP Black Country aims to strengthen service user voices in decision-making by increasing neonatal engagement, expanding antenatal education programmes, and continuing its work on bereavement support and birth trauma. The partnership will prioritise better representation of seldom-heard voices, particularly from minority and underserved communities, in feedback mechanisms.



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- » Early Help Edgbaston & Northfield
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- » **Maternity & Neonatal Voices Partnership**
- » Social Prescribing
- » Solihull Lifestyle Service

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» Social Prescribing



Throughout the year, our Social Prescribing service has actively engaged in various initiatives designed to support patients and foster community connections. A significant milestone was organising the Social Prescribing Wellbeing Day, specifically for Social

Prescribers.

Our team has also participated in several community events, including the Mental Health Wellbeing Open Afternoon, Parkfield Carers Event, and the Mayoral Visit at Three Trees Community Centre. These events provided opportunities to engage with the community, promote wellbeing, and boost our visibility.

Additionally, our partnerships with local businesses and organisations such as Age Concern, Carers Trust, and Midland Mencap have strengthened our ability to provide comprehensive support to those in need. These collaborations have been crucial in expanding the services we offer.

Our service has grown further through new partnerships with the Community Development Team, Think Active, and Solihull Age UK, improving health outcomes for our

patients. Patient evaluations show high satisfaction, with 9 out of 10 recommending the service.

Notably, patients reported increased engagement in community activities, better access to benefits, and improved mental wellbeing. This success highlights the positive impact our service continues to have on the community.

Impact in numbers



Number of clients supported by Prescribers

6,426



Number of clients served

7,723



Percentage of users recommend our service

90%



Percentage of users who rate their experience as positive

88%



» Social Prescribing



About Social Prescribing?

Social Prescribers help patients by connecting them to organisations for further support around patient's social needs such as food bank access, signposting to benefit services, connecting patients to community groups, and befriending services to name a few. The Social Prescribing Services' sixteen Prescribers support ten Primacy Care Networks and around seventy GP Surgeries.

Follow:



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The Impact: Empowering a Patient to Overcome Barriers

While working at the Bosworth surgery in North Solihull, Social Prescribing Link Worker (SPLW) Laura met Peter, a patient dealing with financial hardship, rheumatoid arthritis, and depression. His worsening arthritis increased his pain and prevented him from enjoying hobbies like archery and walking his dog, negatively affecting his mental health.

Peter also faced challenges at work, where his employer didn't support hospital appointments or make reasonable adjustments. Financial strain mounted as he couldn't work overtime and had been denied Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Though he'd struggled with past thoughts of not coping, he found his medication helpful.

Laura provided support in multiple areas, referring Peter to the Disability Resource Centre for help with employment, benefits, and PIP advice, and recommending ACAS for further guidance. She also connected him to Reimagine's male support group, which Peter felt ready to join after avoiding help for years.

To support his physical health, Laura introduced Peter to Solihull on the Move, Think Active, and the Doc Spot scheme, which offers exercise options for those with health challenges. She also signposted him to the Health and Wellbeing coach and the Mental Health Hub, which he considered for self-referral.

By the end of their sessions, Peter was more open and confident in managing his mental health, engaging with the Disability Resource Centre and preparing for appointments. Laura's support helped him break down internalised stigmas and take steps toward better mental and physical health. As he continued with Reimagine and other services, Laura hoped he would keep building on his progress.

Challenges

A key challenge for Social Prescribing was helping patients with housing issues, outside our expertise. In response, Gateway created a housing information pack with local organisation contacts, Birmingham and Solihull Council Housing details, and resources for homeless charities. It also informs patients about the UK's housing crisis, offering essential tools to address their housing needs. Patients with crucial information about the ongoing housing crisis in the UK, ensuring they have the necessary tools to navigate their housing challenges.

Future Goals

We plan to expand our services in the coming months. We will host open days in South West Birmingham and GOSK to boost community engagement. North Solihull Link Workers will restart the Kingshurst Art Group and introduce a new Drop-in Session at Family Hubs, providing creative and supportive environments. These initiatives reflect our commitment to improving community wellbeing



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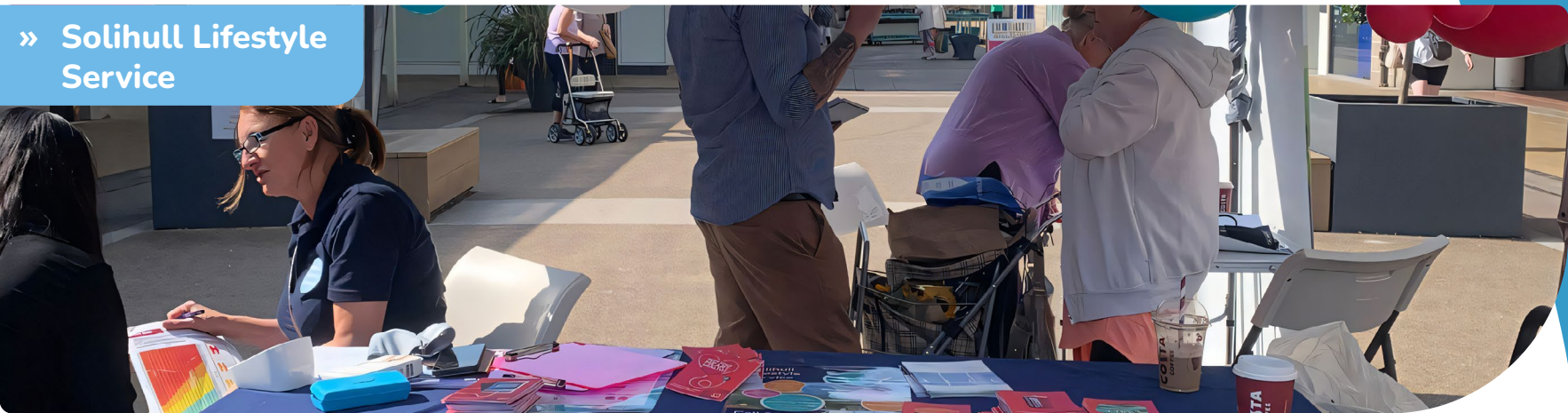
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» Solihull Lifestyle Service



Solihull Lifestyle Service

The Solihull Lifestyle Service (SLS) offers a variety of programmes aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of participants. These include smoking cessation, weight management, active travel, brief interventions, and lifestyle checks. The service collaborates with local partners to deliver these programmes in accessible community settings, ensuring that support is available where it is most needed. Key initiatives include workshops, information sessions, Cooking on a budget and community outreach events designed to promote healthy living and engage residents in their own health journeys. SLS deliver a comprehensive weekly programme across the Borough that also includes chair-based exercise, diabetes prevention support and community lifestyle education initiatives.

Impact in numbers



Total number of referrals

2,351



Total number of individuals enrolled in each programme

1,859



Stop smoking programme referrals

517



Weight management programme referrals

710



Lifestyle Checks

316



Percentage of participants who successfully quit smoking

45% at 4 weeks
21% at 12 weeks



Percentage of participants who rated their experience as positive

92%

» Solihull Lifestyle Service



About SLS?

Gateway Family Services manages the Solihull Lifestyle Service, including the Stop Smoking Service, to improve health and wellbeing in Solihull. Working with local organisations, the service offers personalised support based on individual needs. After an initial assessment, clients receive guidance from Community Wellbeing and Behaviour Change Advisors, who provide motivation and practical help to empower them to make healthy lifestyle changes.

Follow:   

The Impact: From Small Steps to Big Changes

In July 2024, Lorraine* and her mother, Lily* faced a turning point when invited by the Solihull Lifestyle Service (SLS) Triage to join a 12-week Weight Management Course. This opportunity, offered by the Solihull Lifestyle Service, promised not only weight loss but also a path to improved wellness—an opportunity both women embraced.

The sessions, held at The Onward Club in Chelmsley Wood, were led by advisor Glenn Rodgers, who combined professional insight with personal care. The programme included face-to-face interactions and educational handouts to guide healthier lifestyle choices.

Over the weeks, Lorraine and Lily experienced tangible improvements. Lily, who had high blood pressure, saw significant progress. Regular monitoring by Glenn reduced her need for doctor visits and complemented her dietary changes and medication, leading to lower blood pressure.

Both women noticed health benefits: Lily's blood

pressure improved, and Lorraine used the course materials to enhance her own health and support her work. As Lead Worker for Birmingham Mind's Mental Health Service, Lorraine shared her newfound knowledge with her team to better assist clients managing mental health medication side effects.

The programme had a lasting impact. Lorraine and Lily lost weight, improved their diets, and gained a deeper understanding of healthy living. Lorraine was so impressed that she inquired about her brother with type 2 diabetes joining the next course.

Despite challenges, the results were clear. With better health and a stronger bond, Lorraine and Lily highly recommend the Solihull Lifestyle Service. The lessons from the programme continue to guide them towards a healthier, more fulfilling life.

*Lorraine name has changed

Challenges

As the service shifted from addressing post-pandemic loneliness to offering more weight management courses, challenges arose, particularly in finding suitable venues and booking clients onto courses. The coordinator collaborated with local partners to use existing community venues for easier access. The team also boosted administrative support to improve client engagement and streamline the booking process, ensuring more people could benefit from the services.

Future Goals

As we enter our 6th year of delivering, we aim to deepen engagement with vulnerable clients and continue supporting partners in spreading key health messages across Solihull. We will introduce quarterly weight management sessions, branded to encourage participation: Motivational Mondays, Tone up and Talk Tuesdays, Wellbeing Wednesdays, and Feel Fitter Fridays. Our goal is to enhance community wellbeing and make a lasting impact on Solihull's residents.



Carers@Heart focuses on prevention and early intervention, recognising that these are the most effective ways to address health problems. By identifying concerns early through our Lifestyle Checks, we can provide the necessary support to enable carers to make lasting lifestyle changes, ultimately improving their overall quality of life. The programme seeks to increase accessibility to health screenings and connect carers with essential health services, reinforcing our commitment to their health and wellbeing.

Carers@Heart implemented several key initiatives to ensure the success of its mission. Introducing Lifestyle Checks was the programme’s cornerstone, allowing carers to receive on-the-spot health assessments. The checks were offered at multiple accessible locations, including Selly Oak, Touchbase Pears, Harborne office, Edgbaston Archery and Tennis Club, Forward Carers Events, and Hazelwell Hub in Kings Heath. The programme also extended outreach through community events and information sessions to engage carers who might not have otherwise sought out these services—a key strategy to overcome challenges in engagement involved taking the checks directly to existing carer groups.

Impact in numbers

	Total number of Carers Engaged	274
	Total number of carers who received Lifestyle Checks	97
Number of carers referred to additional health services or specialists.		
	Unregistered carers referred and registered with the carers hub	29
	Referred for food or fuel vouchers	9
	Supported with health and wellbeing, diet, and nutrition	53
Number of carers reporting lifestyle changes three months post-check		
	Improved diet	32
	Improved mental wellbeing	44



About Carer@Heart?

Carers@Heart, launched in November 2023, offers unpaid carers mini Lifestyle Checks to identify health risks and promote healthier living. Recognising the time and energy carers dedicate to their roles, this initiative encourages them to prioritise their own wellbeing. Funded by Birmingham Forward Carers, the goal is to support sustainable, long-term health improvements.

Follow: 

The Impact: Overcoming Isolation: The Journey from Reluctance to Support

Selina, a single mother of three, was struggling with the immense demands of managing her household, caring for her severely autistic child, and dealing with the isolation from not having family support nearby. Her emotional strain became evident during a health check at Moor Green Lane, where she met Colette Cadby, a Health & Wellbeing Advisor.

In their initial meeting, Selina was tearful as she shared her difficulties with Colette. She revealed that the father of her children was absent, her extended family lived abroad, and financial problems added to her stress. With her other children unable to offer much support and her autistic son’s reluctance to leave the house, Selina was hesitant to engage with community services.

Despite these challenges, Colette provided invaluable support. She offered emotional reassurance and gave Selina information about various services, including the Carers Hub for an assessment and benefit check, and HSF for

a financial grant. Colette understood Selina’s hesitation and reassured her that she could reach out whenever she was ready.

Selina’s reluctance to seek external help was deeply rooted in her family dynamics and feelings of frustration with her children’s lack of support. However, through her discussions with Colette, she found a safe space to express her worries. This dialogue offered her a sense of relief and a clearer perspective on her situation.

Colette’s intervention was crucial, providing not only practical referrals but also the emotional support Selina needed. Although she was not ready to engage fully with all the suggested services, Colette ensured that the option for future assistance remained open. She emphasized that Selina could always return if she wished to explore additional resources or needed someone to talk to.

Challenges

The primary challenge was encouraging carers to attend their scheduled check-ups, as many found it difficult to find time to visit in person. To address this, we implemented a solution that involved taking the service to them. By reaching out to existing carer groups and delivering the checks directly at their locations, we made the process more convenient and accessible for carers.

Future Goals

Carers@Heart aims to expand its reach and accessibility in the coming months. Our future goals include attending more carer groups across Birmingham and establishing partnerships with GP surgeries to deliver Lifestyle Checks directly in medical settings. By doing so, we hope to reach an even larger number of carers, providing them with the tools and resources they need to lead healthier lives.



The Active Travel Social Prescribing Project in North Solihull is an entirely new programme, launched in January 2024, with the mission of promoting walking, cycling, and wheeling as preferred modes of transportation.

This pioneering initiative is funded by

Transport for West Midlands in partnership with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and ThinkActive. The programme is designed to create a more active, healthy, and sustainable community through innovative communication strategies, community engagement activities, infrastructure improvements, and behaviour change initiatives. As a fresh and dynamic project, it aims to introduce and embed active travel habits among residents in North Solihull, setting a foundation for long-term lifestyle changes.

The project has implemented several key initiatives to increase participation in active travel. Notably, the ‘Try it and See’ Walking and Cycling groups have allowed individuals to engage in physical activity while meeting new people. Additionally, the project has established referral pathways between North Solihull Primary Care Network (PCN) and Gateway to facilitate

patient referrals to active travel programmes. Community engagement has been a core component, with efforts focused on supporting the local Active Travel agenda.

Impact in numbers



Number of people supported to attend the ‘Try it and See’ sessions

92



Number of people referred to North Solihull Walking and Cycling Groups

315



Number of people engaged locally to support the Active Travel agenda

152



About ATSP?

The ATSP promotes active travel, such as walking and cycling, to reduce health inequalities and encourage healthier lifestyles. By partnering with the transport and healthcare sectors, we support individuals improve their physical and mental health. GPs and healthcare professionals can refer patients to non-clinical support, integrating walking and cycling into social prescribing activities to enhance overall wellbeing.

The Impact: A Journey of Renewal

Active travel, such as walking and cycling, is widely recognised for its benefits to physical health and mental well-being. Incorporating regular exercise, like joining a walking group, not only improves fitness but can also lead to stronger social connections. This is particularly true for Mr. W from Kingshurst, whose story illustrates how active travel transformed his life.

After the loss of his wife, Mr. W turned to walking as both a coping mechanism and a way to manage his musculoskeletal condition. While walking alone provided some relief, he mostly stuck to local routes, walking to the shops and back. Despite his love for walking, Mr. W had not joined any formal walking groups, leaving him isolated from potential social connections.

That changed when he met Scott Baldwin, the Active Travel Navigator, at a local church group. Scott saw an opportunity to introduce Mr. W to the Active Travel Project and invited him to participate in the upcoming Try It & See event. Mr. W, eager to

connect with others and share his love for walking, accepted the invitation.

At the event, Mr. W found himself among a community of novice walkers, all encouraged by Scott to explore new walking opportunities. For the first time since his wife’s passing, Mr. W felt a renewed sense of belonging. Inspired by the camaraderie and shared passion for walking, he expressed interest in joining a local walking group, which Scott wholeheartedly supported.

Through the Active Travel Project, Mr. W not only rekindled his love for walking but also forged meaningful social connections. The companionship and support of his fellow walkers gave him strength, hope, and a renewed sense of purpose. More than just a participant, Mr. W has now become an advocate for active travel in North Solihull. He champions walking routes to those who have never accessed them before and encourages residents to engage in physical activity for their health.

Challenges

The project is community-based, and accessing local provision will always present a challenge due to supply and demand issues. The Navigator must forge strong relationships across multiple organisations to promote the service whilst ensuring client needs are met.

Managing complex partner relationships and ensuring joint goals are met is a continued challenge for this service. This brings opportunities for diversification and growth for the organisation and workforce.

Future Goals

Securing the future of the project and the project team will be a priority goal. Meeting KPI’S, presenting findings and providing meaningful experiences and support to North Solihull residents will be the key focus in the coming year. Navigating the expansion of the service to maximise reach and impact



The Health & Wellbeing Coaching service is designed to provide personalised support to individuals seeking to improve their health and manage physical, mental health, and long-term conditions. Launched within the North Solihull Primary Care Network (PCN) on January 2024, this service offers one-on-one coaching sessions to help individuals set and achieve health-related goals. Health Coaches are trained in behaviour change techniques and work with clients over up to six sessions, focusing on areas such as improving sleep, coping with stress, and making lifestyle changes recommended for their health conditions. The primary objective of this service is to enhance self-management, increase motivation, and foster positive health outcomes through tailored coaching.

Health & Wellbeing Coaches work closely with individuals to develop personalised health plans, addressing both physical and mental health needs. They apply models of behaviour change and positive psychology to help clients navigate challenges and set achievable goals. Coaches also work in collaboration with Social Prescribers and other healthcare teams within the PCN, particularly focusing on patients presenting with low-level mental health issues.

The coaching process often begins with building psychological safety and confidence, enabling clients to engage fully with the support offered and to eventually set their own health and wellbeing goals.

Impact in numbers

	Number of patients referred	307
	Percentage of programme uptake	88%
	Percentage of completion rate	76%
	Percentage of of referrals signposted to additional support services	79%



About Coaches?

Health and Wellbeing Coaches are trained in behaviour change techniques, they work with both physical and mental health. They can help you to manage everyday mental health issues like stress, worries, feeling down or being overwhelmed. They offer encouragement and support, in achieving your goals.

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The Impact: Breaking Free from the Grip of Anxiety

Charlotte Johnstone, a Health & Wellbeing Coach was referred a patient by Castle Practice Reception, the patient, sought assistance for escalating anxiety, which had begun to encroach on her daily life. Charlotte's journey with this patient reflects a narrative of understanding, empowerment, and significant progress.

The patient's initial struggles with anxiety were not obvious to them; however, they had intensified with the onset of perimenopause, reducing her ability to manage daily tasks and interactions. Anxiety had woven its way into various aspects of her life, manifesting in physical symptoms and constant worries about her son's safety. Distressed by the seemingly relentless grip of anxiety, the patient voiced fears of losing control and scepticism about the possibility of improvement.

Charlotte embarked on a structured approach to aid the patient in reclaiming agency over her mental state. Through three sessions, she explained the interplay of psychological and physical factors in anxiety, fostering the patient's comprehension and

control. Tailoring interventions to the patient's unique experience, Charlotte introduced breathing exercises, mindfulness practices, and journaling to highlight patterns and underlying fears.

The progress achieved during their collaboration was profound. Armed with a newfound understanding and coping mechanisms, the patient began to navigate previously daunting situations with resilience. She conquered her fear of driving on the motorway and attending social events, attributing her success to the practised techniques. Remarkably, physical symptoms that had plagued her for years dissipated, granting her a sense of liberation and normalcy.

Looking forward, Charlotte envisions a future where the patient continues to thrive, equipped with the tools to manage her anxiety autonomously. Though the journey is ongoing, Charlotte celebrates the remarkable strides made thus far, recognising the transformative power of tailored support and compassionate guidance.

Challenges

One of the service's biggest challenges is meeting the high demand. Low mental health needs consistently rank high among PCN referrals, and delivering a quality Health and Wellbeing Coach service while handling such a high volume of referrals is always going to be challenging.

Ensuring that the team is well-equipped to deliver the service and has robust processes in place to manage demand is crucial for successful delivery.

Future Goals

As the Health & Wellbeing Coaching service continues to develop, future goals include expanding the reach of the programme to serve more individuals, enhancing data collection to measure the impact of coaching, and further integrating coaching services with other health and wellbeing initiatives within the North Solihull PCN. Regular reviews of the service will ensure it remains aligned with the needs of the community and the objectives outlined in the service agreement.

» Household Support Fund



Since its inception in 2021, the Household Support Fund (HSF) has helped thousands of Birmingham residents who were at risk of food or fuel poverty. As such, the fund has been relaunched repeatedly, from its initial round to the current fifth round, continuing to provide vital support to those in need.

Over the years, HSF has undergone several changes, including the introduction of an enquiry form and the option for applicants to start the process online. These enhancements were designed to widen access and ensure that the funds are distributed as effectively as possible.

The City Council has entrusted GFS with administering the funds for the Edgbaston constituency, where we have successfully led and coordinated our trusted partners to ensure the smooth delivery of the fund. Significant updates include the addition of a new team of Administrators, who joined Gateway in 2023. This team plays a pivotal role in supporting Birmingham residents, managing enquiries from a diverse range of individuals with varying backgrounds, languages, and needs. Beyond processing applications, they provide valuable information on additional services, such as the Benefits Calculator, mental health resources, and other Gateway support. The team also engages in community

outreach, offering face-to-face assistance, which many clients find more personal and reassuring.

Impact in numbers (HSF Round 4)*



Sucessful Applications

1,169



Total Sum of Grants Awarded

Over £ 100k

*These figures reflect the period from July to October 2023 and include all applications submitted through both GFS and our partner, covering the entire Edgbaston constituency.

» Household Support Fund



About HSF?

The Household Support Fund (HSF) is a crucial initiative provided by the Department for Work and Pensions, aimed at supporting households in need with essentials such as food, energy, and essential goods, including water. Administered by the Local Authority, this fixed fund is designed to reach those who are struggling the most.

Gateway Family Services was chosen by the City Council to administer the funds that cover the Edgbaston constituency.

Follow: 

The Impact:
Sharing from the Admin Team

The Household Support Fund (HSF) team has gathered numerous testimonials that highlight the profound impact of their work and the fulfilment they experience in their roles.

Jay, one of the Administrators, shared a moving story about a client facing multiple challenges, including serious health issues, a recent relationship breakdown, and a daughter who had run away several times. Jay not only assisted her with the HSF application but also provided emotional support. Days later, the client called back to express her deep gratitude, saying the financial aid and Jay's support had given her hope during a dark period. This feedback reaffirmed Jay's commitment to his role.

Similarly, Ben, another team member, shared an experience from a community engagement event at St Germain's Café. He had spent time with a client who was struggling to navigate the process of applying for the HSF. Ben patiently walked the client through each step, ensuring they understood

the process and felt supported. The client later sent an email to Ben, thanking him for his kindness and thoroughness. The email detailed how the fund had helped them purchase essential items they desperately needed, and how Ben's personal touch had made the experience less daunting. This kind of feedback is what makes the work rewarding for Ben, who values the opportunity to connect with people face-to-face, breaking down barriers and providing a sense of personal connection that goes beyond a simple phone conversation.

Charlotte, another team member, reflected on how gratifying it is to receive feedback from clients who express relief and gratitude after receiving support. Despite the challenges of the job, particularly when dealing with difficult cases or eligibility frustrations, Charlotte emphasised that the positive impact they make on people's lives makes it all worthwhile.

Challenges

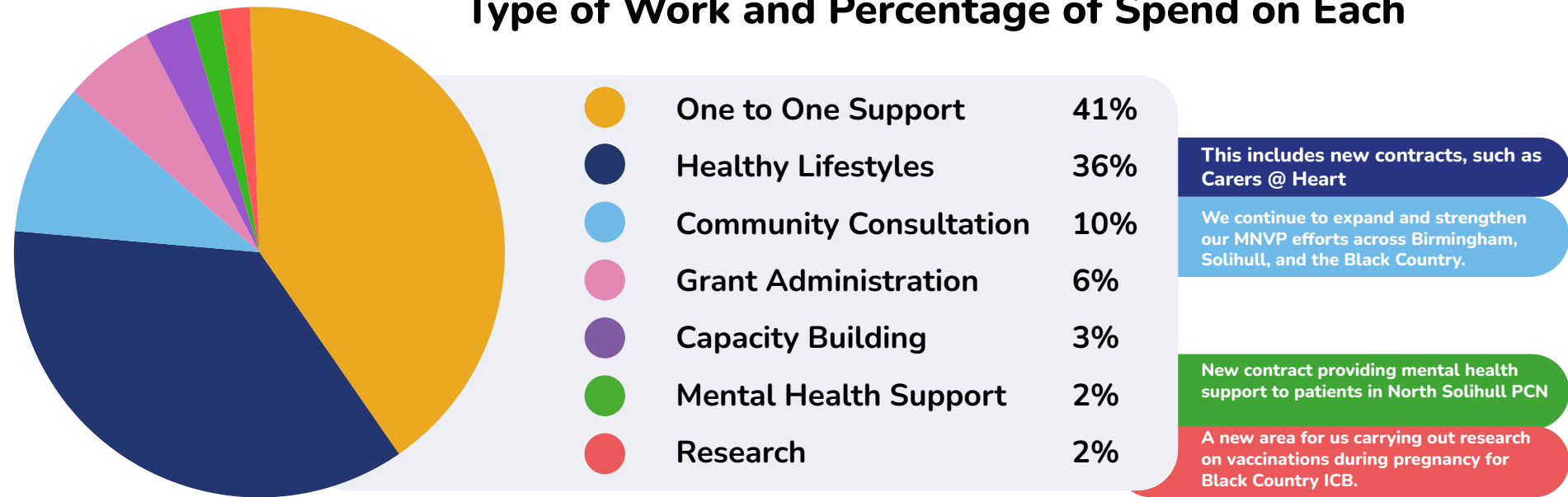
The team anticipated difficulties due to the nature of the role, particularly dealing with clients who have complex social issues. While most interactions are positive, there are challenges, such as managing the frustrations of clients who struggle with the eligibility criteria or dealing with persistent callers. Despite these challenges, the team remains committed to providing compassionate and effective support.

Future Goals

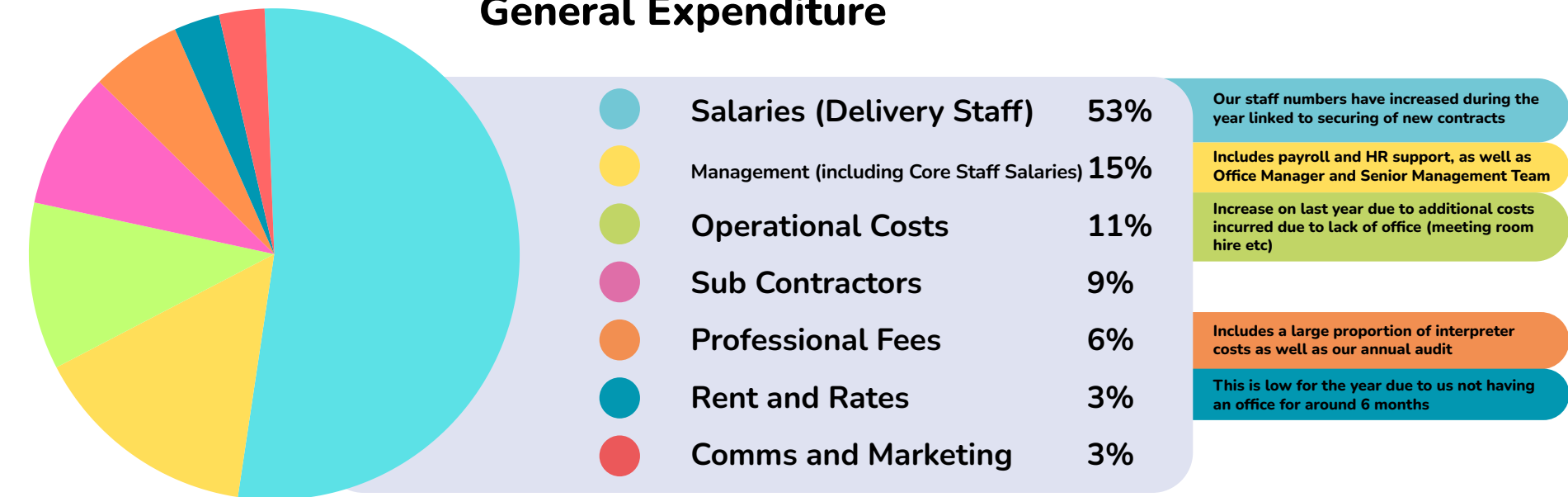
As round 6 of the HSF continues from Autumn 2024, the Gateway administration team will persist in providing crucial support to those in need, ensuring that the fund reaches as many eligible households as possible. The team aims to continue improving their processes and expanding their community engagement efforts to better serve Birmingham residents.

Finance

Type of Work and Percentage of Spend on Each



General Expenditure



Governance & Leadership

Our Board is comprised of nine Non-Executive Directors who are responsible for ensuring we achieve our strategic objectives, while safeguarding both our financial and operational wellbeing. They do this by overseeing our processes, including financial procedures, and holding our Senior Management Team to account in a supportive manner.

As a Community Interest Company, one of our main responsibilities is to ensure that we exist to benefit the community, rather than shareholders. A key duty of the Board is to ensure that the contracts we enter into fulfil this obligation by providing community benefit. In addition, the Board plays an active role in supporting the use of any reserves to help us meet our key objectives, as detailed in our Business Strategy.

Our Board is diverse, bringing a wide range of skills and expertise to support the Senior Management Team and the organisation as a whole. This strengthens our access to resources and specialist knowledge. The Board meets every two months, ensuring regular communication and input between the Board and management.

We encourage you to read more about our Board and the changes ahead within the team. After many years of service as Chair, Paul Hanna has decided to step down. We are immensely grateful to Paul for his unwavering support in this role, and we are pleased that he will continue to serve as a Board Member. Paul is succeeded as Chair by Liz Crutchley who joined the Board over 12 months ago and is thrilled to step into this new role. We are excited to work with Liz in her new capacity.



Paul Hanna(former-Chair)

Having been a Board Member of Gateway Family Services CIC since 2008 and Chair since 2017, I have seen first-hand how Gateway has impacted positively on our local communities across Birmingham and Solihull. In 2024, I stepped down as Chair and handed over the reins to Liz Crutchley. I am very excited to see how Gateway grows and develops its support for local people to improve their health and wellbeing over the coming years and I wish Liz every success.



Liz Crutchley(New Chair)

Having been on the Board for just over 12 months, I am thrilled to take on the role of Chair for Gateway Family Services CIC and work alongside such a passionate and dedicated team. I'm excited about the opportunity to contribute to our mission of supporting families and communities in achieving better health and well-being. Together, we will continue driving positive change and making a lasting impact.

Partnerships & Collaborations

Our success is deeply rooted in the strength of our partnerships, which continue to be a driving force behind all we do. This year, we have been fortunate to expand our network, forging new collaborations that bring together a diverse range of expertise and perspectives. From midwives and local councils to research fellows and the NHS, our partnerships reflect the breadth of our reach and the depth of our commitment to serving our communities.

As we’ve extended and enhanced our services, we’ve welcomed these new partners, each bringing invaluable contributions to our shared goals. Their support enables us to continuously improve the quality of care we provide, ensuring that our services are not only more accessible but also better equipped to meet the complex and evolving needs of those we serve.



Sandwell & West Birmingham NHS Trust :

The relationship between SWBH Maternity Services and the MNVP is crucial in providing the best possible experience for women and their families. The MNVP amplifies the voices of women, allowing for collaborative efforts that have been invaluable in supporting pregnant women during this critical time. This partnership enables SWBH to continuously develop and improve its maternity services.

By uniting women, families, healthcare professionals, and community organisations, the partnership ensures holistic care, leading to better outcomes and overall experiences for service users.



Age UK Birmingham :

The services GfS offers are not only responsive but also delivered in a flexible and accessible way, ensuring they cater to the diverse needs of different communities. Our shared organisational values create a strong foundation for partnership, allowing our collaboration to thrive. In particular, GfS's work in Early Help and Social Prescribing has the potential to significantly enrich the outcomes of the Neighbourhood Network Scheme, creating a mutually beneficial relationship that enhances the impact for service users across the board.



West Midlands Combined Authority :

I have enjoyed working with Gateway Family Services following our social prescribing walking and cycling procurement. I have been very impressed by how quickly they have been able to mobilize the staff, communications and community insight needed to deliver contract requirements. Their in-depth understanding of North Solihull and its communities have been instrumental in not only delivering the project outputs but also capturing the learning and impact which we will inform other delivery

Partnerships & Collaborations

Since December 2019, North Solihull Primary Care Network (NSPCN) has forged a strong partnership with Gateway Family Services, significantly enhancing the support we provide to our population of approximately 80,000 patients. Initially, this collaboration introduced four Social Prescribers, who have been vital in addressing the diverse needs of our community. Recently, we have expanded our partnership to include two Health and Wellbeing Coaches, further enriching the services available to our patients.

Gateway has played an instrumental role in driving these initiatives forward. Their consistent communication with our Senior Management Team ensures that we remain informed about progress, outcomes, and developments. Moreover, Gateway’s engagement with our GP practices has helped facilitate a clear understanding of the services available and how best to utilise them, which is crucial for effective patient care.

Gateway’s Social Prescribers have been essential in offering practical information and support in areas such as finance, housing, and social integration. They connect patients to support groups, encourage physical activity, and help alleviate issues related to mild depression or anxiety. Their proactive involvement in local support groups and family hubs provides a consistent and comprehensive view of the available community-based services, tailored to meet individual needs.

In early 2024, we commissioned Gateway to recruit two Health and Wellbeing Coaches (HWBCs), a new

staff discipline for us. These coaches have quickly become invaluable assets to our patients and GP practices, focusing on lifestyle changes and goal-setting to improve overall wellbeing. Their approach prioritises emotional and mental health, ensuring that they take the time to listen to and understand each individual’s unique challenges. This bespoke approach leads to personalised care and more positive outcomes, empowering patients with the tools they need for future self-management.

Overall, our collaboration with Gateway Family Services has significantly raised awareness and connected individuals to essential health and social care services related to lifestyle, wellbeing, and support. The integration with voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprises (VCFSEs) in Solihull is a critical component of our offer to citizens. Recognising that every individual faces unique circumstances, our SPLWs and HWBCs are committed to providing personalised support, guiding our patients on their journey to better health and wellbeing. We look forward to continuing this successful partnership and further enhancing the services we provide to our community.

Kate Burke
NSPCN Manager



EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY



CORE
SERVICES



NEW
SERVICES



FINANCIALS
AND
HIGHLIGHTS

- » Household Support Fund
- » Financial Performance
- » Governance & Leadership
- » Partnerships and Collaborations
- » **Future Plans and Goals**
- » **Contact Us**

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**2023/2024
Impact Report**

Future Plans and Goals

Expand Vaping Prevention Programme

Refocus efforts on rolling out our Vaping Prevention Programme to schools and youth services across Solihull and the wider West Midlands.

Boost Household Support Fund Access

Increase focus on the active delivery of the Household Support Fund, including helping adults of pensionable age access payment and benefits advice through surgeries and outreach activities.

Reignite Skills Escalator for Volunteers

Revitalise Gateway's Skills Escalator Model to support our volunteer workforce, expanding our community offerings and providing quality training and development packages for volunteers.

Evaluate and Expand Health Coaching

Evaluate our Health and Wellbeing Coach service with a view to expanding into additional partner Primary Care Networks and establishing new connections in the community.

Leverage Community Insights for Policy

Use Gateway's community knowledge to influence policy and best practices in priority areas and models to address local needs.

Grow Revenue through Workplace Wellbeing

Reinvigorate our Workplace Wellbeing offer to support staff wellbeing in both private and public sector organisations, increasing Gateway's revenue streams.

Support Fairer Futures Fund Delivery

Collaborate with Age UK Birmingham to deliver the Fairer Futures Fund within the South Locality. We will support VCSE and Health Partners to focus on key priorities, developing strategies and delivery models to address local needs.

Expand Gateway Reach in West Midlands

With Gateway services now established across Birmingham and Solihull, we aim to extend our reach with more services in the Black Country and the wider West Midlands.



EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY



CORE
SERVICES



NEW
SERVICES



FINANCIALS
AND
HIGHLIGHTS

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**2023/2024
Impact Report**

Contact Us

Gateway Family Services CIC, (GFS), is an established and pioneering provider of Health and Wellbeing Services in Birmingham and the surrounding areas. Our primary focus is working with disadvantaged communities and tackling the root cause of health inequalities. We largely do this through providing community based outreach and support services that focus on sustaining behaviour change and building resilience.



GatewayFamilyServices | @Gateway_FS | GatewayFamilyServices | Gateway Family Services CIC

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Established in 2006 our 18 years of experience in successful contract delivery in diverse community settings has strengthened our expertise, reputation and our understanding of the underlining issues that cause health inequalities. It also means we have an extensive track record of working in partnership with the NHS and Local Authorities and a range of further partners, particularly our fellow third sector organisations.



The reporting period is April 2023 - March 2024, unless otherwise stated. Questions about this report can be directed to Chris Ha, Marketing and Communication Manager, at c.ha@gatewayfs.org.



**Early Help
Edgbaston &
Northfield**

