



Edgbaston Neighbourhood Network Scheme Newsletter

April 2026



Feature Story:

Creativity, Community and the
Power of Mental Health

Great mental health allows people not just to cope, but to flourish. It shapes how we think, connect and contribute to the world around us. When wellbeing is supported collectively — especially through creativity and the arts — it becomes a powerful force for stronger, more connected communities.

Creativity is a natural human instinct. Whether through painting, music, dance, writing, drama or craft, creative expression offers a safe and meaningful outlet for emotion. Engaging in the arts can reduce stress, build confidence and provide a sense of purpose. It allows individuals to process experiences in ways that words alone sometimes cannot. Importantly, creativity does not depend on talent or professional training. It thrives in community centres, libraries, parks and living rooms — anywhere people gather with openness and curiosity. These approaches also align with our priorities in supporting community-led activity.



The value of the arts in supporting mental health is backed by strong evidence. In 2019, the World Health Organisation published a landmark review examining thousands of studies on arts and health. The report found that engaging in the arts can promote mental wellbeing, help prevent mental ill-health, and support recovery from conditions such as anxiety and depression. The findings reinforced the idea that creativity is not a luxury, but an important contributor to public health.

This evidence was further supported in the UK by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing that highlighted similar conclusions in its parliamentary work on arts in health. The commission showed that creative and cultural programmes can reduce loneliness, strengthen social bonds and improve overall wellbeing. It demonstrated that arts initiatives can complement traditional healthcare by addressing the social and emotional factors that influence mental health.

One of the most powerful aspects of creativity is its ability to bring people together. When communities gather around shared experiences, barriers soften. People meet not as strangers, but as collaborators. In these spaces, individuals can engage in quiet reflection — sketching, listening, crafting or simply sitting in shared silence. This kind of collective calm can be deeply restorative, offering comfort without the pressure – and anyone can engage regardless.

At the same time, natural conversation often flows effortlessly – the ‘social magic’. While painting, rehearsing or knitting, people talk — not in forced or clinical ways that occur in therapy, but in organic, human exchanges. Stories are shared, laughter emerges, and friendships form. This balance between silence and build spontaneous chat creates psychological safety. People feel both independent and supported, reducing isolation and nurturing belonging.

Communities that prioritise creativity build stronger social connections which mean individuals are better equipped to face challenges. Stigma around mental health decreases as open dialogue becomes normal. Confidence grows, not only in artistic ability but in personal value.

Mental health is not only about treating illness; it is about creating environments where people feel seen, heard and connected. Creativity and the arts offer accessible, inclusive pathways to achieve this. The evidence from 2019 and beyond makes it clear: when we invest in activities that may include arts activities, we invest in collective wellbeing.



UPDATES

>>> WE'VE GOT A NEW LOGO!

We now have a new look logo and ask that all our funded projects utilise this alongside the Birmingham City Council logo on all new promotional materials. If you need a copy please email us at



**Edgbaston
Neighbourhood
Network
Scheme**

nnsedgbaston@ageukbirmingham.org.uk

SMALL GRANTS FUNDING UPDATE

As a team that has extensive experience working in the charitable sector, we asked our newest recruit Richard to share his tips on finding funding for projects.

“Obtaining funding for projects can be so difficult and takes up so much time and energy from delivering the day-to-day work, so I was always looking for easier ways to take out the research element of the process. The one bulletin that I actively looked for each month was Charity Excellence. Concise, simple to use and had all the latest relevant funding news and always seemed to have a personal touch! You can check this out on the link below!”

<https://www.charityexcellence.co.uk/>

Don't forget, if you have an idea or want to start an activity for over 50's or Adults (18 -49) with additional needs in Edgbaston, North Edgbaston, Quinton, Harborne or Bartley Green then you can apply for a £500 microgrant to get you started.

We also have a grant programme offering up to £20,000 over 2 years.

Edgbaston Neighbourhood Network Scheme - Gateway Family Services

Our latest funded project will see a free 12-week boxing course available for adults aged 50 and over, which will include a free comprehensive health check by the British Heart Foundation. Course begins on Friday 10th April 2026, 8pm -9pm at St. Boniface Church, Quinton Road West, Birmingham B32 2QD.

To register your interest, contact: Keith Tucker on: 07375 032325 Email: **birminghamboxingproject@gmail.com** Website: **birminghamcommunityboxingproject.co.uk**

EVENTS



>>> MEET & GREET COMMUNITY SESSIONS

We had a fantastic start to our Meet & Greet sessions across Harborne, Quinton and Bartley Green Libraries. These sessions brought together local residents and service providers to share ideas, discuss community needs, and explore how we can support more active wellbeing across Edgbaston. The sessions take place in the last week of every month, and we would love to see more people join the conversation.



>>> QAC NEXT STEPS TRANSITION EVENT

We were pleased to attend the QAC Next Steps Transition Event on 17 February, where we connected with students, families and service providers. The conversations provided valuable insight into the needs of young adults with additional needs, which will directly inform our upcoming gap analysis and help shape our priorities from April 2026.



>>> NORTH EDGBASTON OPEN IFTAR

ENNS attended the North Edgbaston Open Iftar, a welcoming event that brought together people of all faiths and backgrounds. Organised in partnership with local councillors and community groups, the evening highlighted the importance of inclusion, connection and community spirit, with a range of local organisations and partners in attendance.



>>> RHYTHM FOR THE BRAIN WORKSHOPS

Our funded project, Rhythm for the Brain, continues to deliver engaging drumming and sound-based workshops for adults aged 50+. These sessions combine relaxation, music and social interaction to support mental wellbeing, boost confidence and reduce stress. Participants have shared positive feedback, and new sessions will begin on 16 April at St Germain's.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND TRAINING

We are now using Eventbrite to list all our events and free training.
You can sign up to receive updates at:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/120738619268?msockid=0b483ffea2486ce138172951a3e96d20>

Training

Easy read - making all your communications accessible for everyone
29 April, 10:00am- 3:45pm, Gateway Family Services, Harborne

REGISTER HERE >

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

30 April, 10:00am-1:30pm, City Road Baptist Church

REGISTER HERE >

Introduction to Welfare Benefits

22 June, 9:15am -12:45am - online event

REGISTER HERE >

Highlight Event

Inclusion, Insight & Wellbeing Day

Thursday 16 April, 10:30am-2:30pm
Midlands Arts Centre

Living well, leaving well

Wednesday 6 May, 10:00am-2:00pm
Birmingham Botanical Garden

The BIG FREE SUMMER lunch

Saturday 13 June, 10:00am -1.30pm
Martineau Gardens, Edgbaston

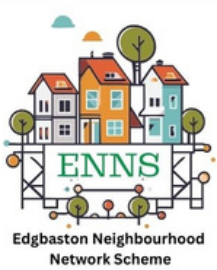


UPCOMING EVENTS AND TRAINING



COME AND MEET YOUR EDGBASTON NNS REPRESENTATIVES at your local library

- Curious about what the ENNS does?
- Are you thinking about starting a new community group in your area and need funding?



funded by
Birmingham
City Council

Faraza



Natalie



Sandra



Richard

HARBORNE LIBRARY

Last Tuesday of every month
9.00-1.00

QUINTON LIBRARY

Last Thursday of every month
10.00-1.00

BARTLEY GREEN LIBRARY

Last Friday of every month
9.00-11.00

NO NEED TO BOOK!



Together in Time Tea Dances

Quinton Methodist Church, 10 Ridgeway Avenue,
Halesowen, B62 9AU

Join us for an afternoon of music, laughter, and friendship at our dementia-friendly tea dances. Everyone is welcome – people living with dementia, their carers, family, and friends. Enjoy music, gentle dancing, and a delicious afternoon tea in a relaxed, supportive atmosphere. It's a chance to share smiles, make memories, and celebrate the joy of dancing together.

Each tea dance is **FREE** to attend and will run from **2 - 4pm** on these dates:

- Monday 17th November 2025
- Monday 26th January 2026
- Monday 30th March 2026
- Monday 20th April 2026
- Monday 29th June 2026
- Monday 28th September 2026



We'd love to see you there. To book, go to xpress-yourself.co.uk/dance-classes Or call 07826 622302 (Mon 8am-3pm, Thu 8am-2pm)

Suicide Prevention: what everyone needs to know

for communities in Edgbaston, North Edgbaston, Bartley Green, Harborne and Quinton with additional needs and over 50's.



This session builds awareness of suicide, including its impact, how to talk about it openly, recognising warning signs, and how we can all help create a safer, more supportive community.

Book your place using the QR code



for information: contact:
nnsedgbaston@ageukbirmingham.org.uk

MONDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 10.00am - 12.00pm

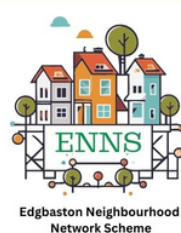
EDGBASTON COMMUNITY CENTRE, 40 Woodview Dr, Birmingham B15 2HU
Hall 2. Refreshments provided. Free parking onsite/ near by.



CARING TOGETHER

A Dementia-Friendly Day for Carers and Loved Ones

Tuesday 24 March
10am to 2.30pm



funded by
Birmingham
City Council



Designed for carers and the people you care for

Spend time together in a relaxed setting and connect with others who understand

Attendees can expect:

- Practical advice and guidance
- Dementia-friendly activities
- Free lunch
- Free support bag

To book, scan QR Code



07970 416372

nnsedgbaston@ageukbirmingham.org.uk

Justham Family Room, Level 5A, B:Music
8 Centenary Square, Birmingham B1 2EA



Grief & Me

5 FREE Workshops

CO-DEVELOPED FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND/OR AUTISM.



It is fun and interactive



You will learn more about self care



You will learn more about how loss may affect you



You will learn how to offer support to a friend who is grieving



Wednesdays.



10.00am- 12.00pm.



Midland Mencap
Weoley Castle
Community Centre,
Bottetourt Rd,
Birmingham B29 5TE



Call 0121 427 6404 to book a space

June 10th 2026
June 17th 2026
June 24th 2026
July 1st 2026
July 8th 2026

