



Encouraging cohesion through education, social action, money advice and families work.

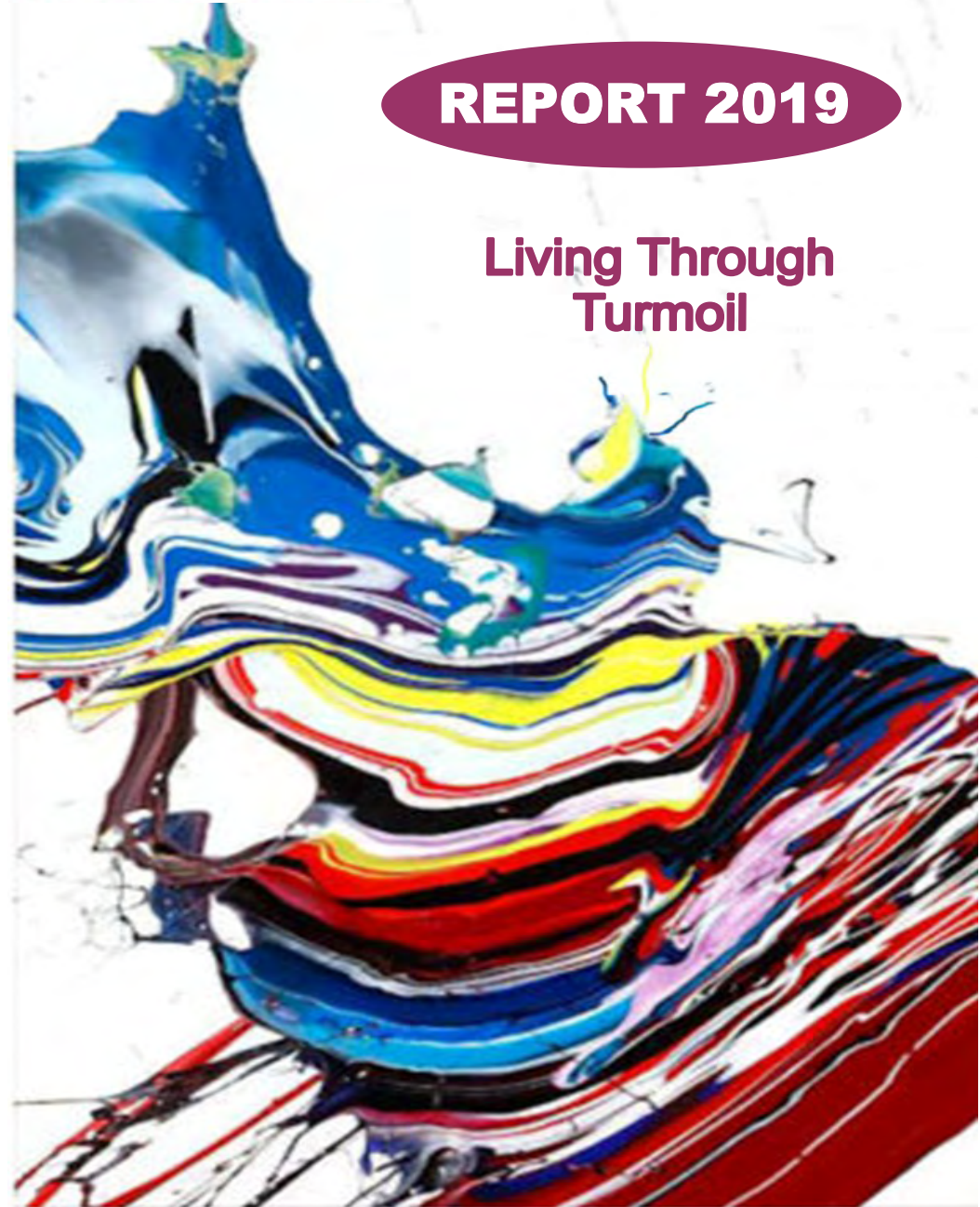
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**REPORT 2019**

**Living Through  
Turmoil**





Produced and printed in-house by Barbara Brookhouse

## MORE ORGANISATIONS/TRUSTS /FAITH GROUPS



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## CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

2019 has been a transitional year for Narthex Charity and the Trustees have recognised that in our rapidly changing and evolving context the Charity needs to be flexible.

Whilst wishing to maintain the Christian ethos and recognising that the Charity was 'birthed' from St John's Church in Sparkhill the Trustees acknowledged that the Charity's relationship with the Church has needed to change as we look to a future in which we are increasingly partnering with others.

Reflecting back over the last few years we can see that this transition has been under way for some time, in particular since the development of the foodbank. Initially this was in separate premises near the Church later moving to larger premises in Tyseley and alongside this the development of satellite foodbanks and advice work outside of St John's Church premises.

The growing levels of both food poverty and indebtedness have been particularly marked across

much of South East Birmingham and Narthex is increasingly partnering with like-minded local organisations, churches and chaplaincies and supporting them as they serve their communities through social outreach delivering foodbank, debt and general advice services.

The diagram opposite shows how this has developed with the Charity now partnering with others in Sparkhill, Hall Green, Yardley Wood, Stetchford, Highgate, Sparkbrook, Balsall Heath and at the QE Hospital.

Alongside this developing model of partnership the Trustees have taken a fresh look at the Charity's vision and core activities. Three elements of the Charity's vision have been emphasised: 1) Narthex – should continue to be a safe welcoming place, providing an interface between church and community, meeting people at the point of need and supporting people to move on. 2) All who connect with the Charity will be treated in a non judgemental way

news about their benefit claim. DWP's own figures estimate that £400million went unclaimed in disability benefits last year, largely due to claimant error or fear of assessment, so any way we can redress that error must be time well spent.

So another year has passed, blood pressures recorded, GP and foodbank referrals made, but every contact with every person I believe, 'Makes a Difference' however small.

**Mary Carroll**  
Volunteer Parish Nurse



# PARISH NURSING

It feels like its been a year of 'letting go' in many ways, as we said sad goodbyes to several members of our lunch club who had battled cancer to the end of their lives and in their different ways had tried to keep on smiling to friends and family.

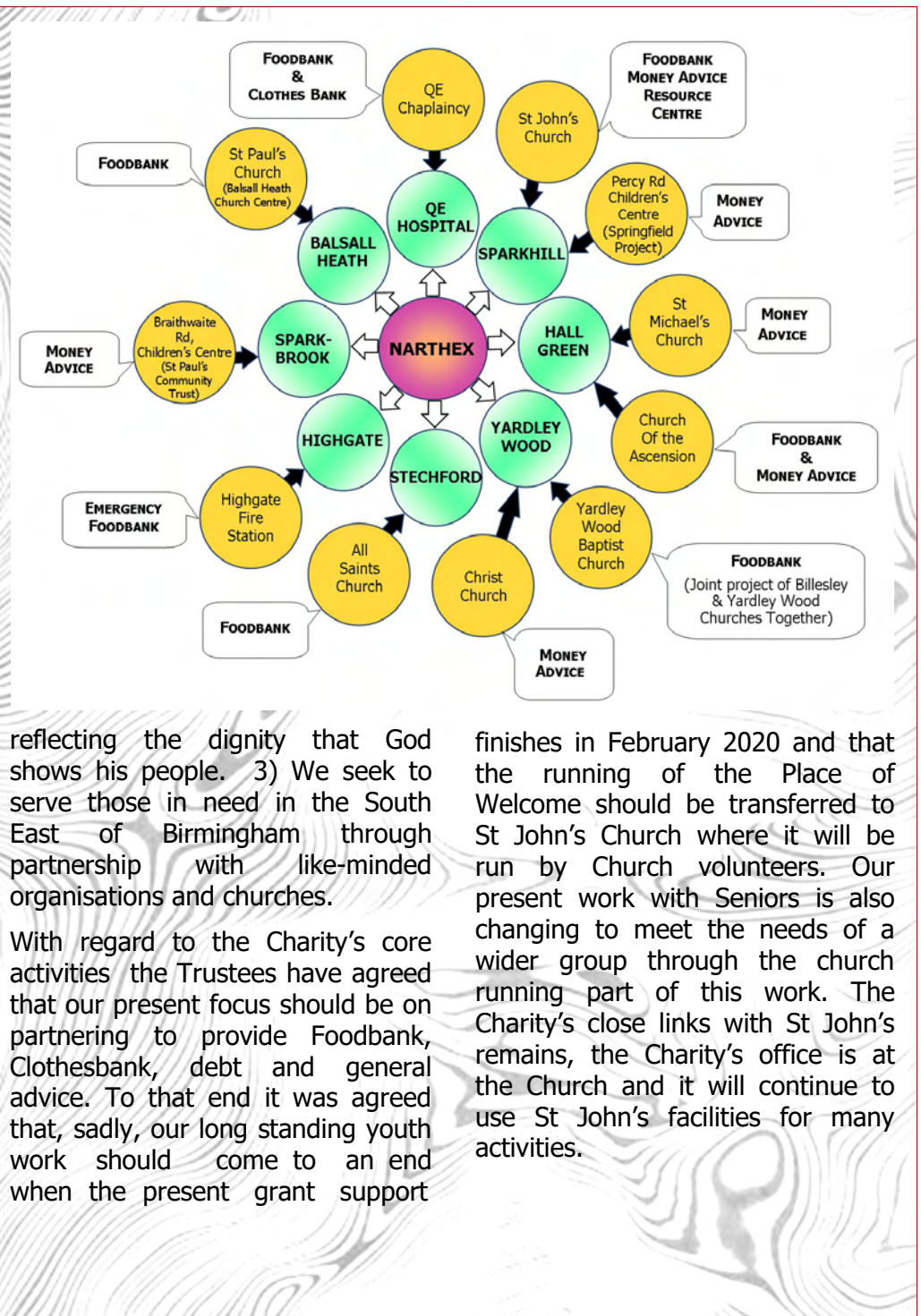
The ensuing loss we all felt led to conversations, sharing and reminiscing among our members and the loss was shared by the wider community. Our Ring and Ride driver even attended Eileen's funeral as she had been a stalwart of arranging outings using their services!

For myself too it has been a year of 'letting go' as my mother, after numerous hospital admissions, a flood in her flat and deteriorating health, was taken into care in July. This family situation has taught me many things and allowed me to see first hand (again - my father was in care for 10 years with dementia), the amazing care offered to the

elderly in care homes up and down the country for minimum wage and no recognition. I am fortunate that I can still visit mum and take home made cake or tuck her into bed according to the time of day and she still knows my name which is a privilege not shared by the families of many dementia sufferers.

Aside from the Good Companions Lunch Club, I have continued to make home and hospital visits whenever possible. I have been assisted in this since Christmas by Debbie Gurling, the local Anna Chaplain. For the lonely isolated elderly, these visits are welcomed as often long days pass with only 15 minute visits from paid carers to look forward to.

Assisting with PIP and DLA forms and other health and care issues continues on Thursdays every month and the needs continue. It is always good to see families returning sometimes bearing good



reflecting the dignity that God shows his people. 3) We seek to serve those in need in the South East of Birmingham through partnership with like-minded organisations and churches.

With regard to the Charity's core activities the Trustees have agreed that our present focus should be on partnering to provide Foodbank, Clothesbank, debt and general advice. To that end it was agreed that, sadly, our long standing youth work should come to an end when the present grant support

finishes in February 2020 and that the running of the Place of Welcome should be transferred to St John's Church where it will be run by Church volunteers. Our present work with Seniors is also changing to meet the needs of a wider group through the church running part of this work. The Charity's close links with St John's remains, the Charity's office is at the Church and it will continue to use St John's facilities for many activities.

During 2018 the Trustees took advice and had many discussions about the pros and cons of converting from a Charitable Company to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) governed by a new constitution. In December 2018 an application to change to a CIO was made to the Charity Commissioners and in April 2019 we received confirmation that our application had been successful.

Through this preparation the Charity is now better prepared to serve in our rapidly changing context.

An indication of the present level of poverty in South East Birmingham can be gauged from figures published in May 2019 by End Child Poverty: Children living in poverty in Birmingham 35.6%, with in the South East of Birmingham figures of; Sparkbrook 55.6%, Springfield at 50.8%, Bordesley Green 56.9%, Acocks Green 33.8%, Stechford and North Yardley 33.9%, and across the whole Hall Green Ward 42.6%. This is contributed to by the lack of secure work, low income and the roll out of Universal Credit with a 5 to 8 week wait and a repayable advance that reduces further monthly receipts until it is repaid.



During 2019 all of these factors have greatly increased the demands on the services we and our partnering churches and organisations are providing.

While the Charity continues to face increasing demands due to the growing level of poverty experienced amongst many of its clients, the non-payment of a substantial sum from a statutory funder for which work was undertaken put pressure on our financial position. Through the generosity of our supporters, be they grant giving organisations,

This lack of experience, exclusion and isolation often leads to reduced confidence making it harder for them to compete with their peers now and later in life.

### **TWO CASE STUDIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN HELPED THROUGH THE PROJECT:**

**I**n school one young lady who at the start of the year was often escorted to the sessions in tears by a member of the pastoral team. Gradually she became happy and confident, making eye contact with me and other young people, including those older than her and would speak up during activities and conversations. The pastoral team have also let me know that they have seen the improvement in her wider school life.

**A** young lady that has been with us from the start has become a real leader and role model to the other young people. She often will make sure younger ones are OK and understand activities and will look after them on trips before adult leaders have the chance to.

It has been a real privilege to be able to make a difference in the lives of these young people. By allowing the young people space to discuss big issues that they feel unable to discuss at home due to their parents not speaking English, or parents working long hours. The young people have learnt how to articulate thoughts and contribute well in group discussions. Being listened to and ensuring everyone has the opportunity to speak has contributed to a rise in confidence which can be transferred into school and academic achievement.

We have been very grateful for funding support from the BBC Children in Need Scheme, but unfortunately this project will come to a close in early 2020 when funding finishes.

**Rebekah Rothnie**  
Female Youth Worker

## YOUTH WORK

This project is a youth club for girls aged 10 - 16 years experiencing deprivation and social isolation. The project has sought to improve interpersonal and communication skills, increase life chances and reduce social isolation.

The following activities have been run during the year:

- A weekly youth club on a Saturday
- Day trips and additional holiday activities
- Lunchtime sessions in schools for young people identified by the schools pastoral teams
- Support for young people from one school to complete the Duke of Edinburgh scheme
- An after school club from February – July in term time.



**Red Wings Horse Sanctuary,  
Warwickshire**



For almost all of the young people we have worked with we are their only activity outside of **Birmingham Central Library** attendance at a place of worship, family and school. Most young people rarely leave Sparkhill and even more rarely Birmingham, giving them a reduced world view and less experience than their peers in other areas or from more affluent backgrounds.

churches or individuals we have never-the-less been able to continue offering hope to many individuals and families throughout South East Birmingham. Thank you.

I would like to give a particular thanks to two staff members, Sandra Osbourne who supervises the work from the Narthex Centre from St John's Church and Les Allan at the Tyseley Foodbank and its support of the satellite foodbanks. They effectively managed the day to day running of the Charity for an extended period while Nigel Brookhouse (CEO) was unable to travel to work in the office due to ill health.

Thanks must also go to the Trustees who have been so creative and supportive. During the year we said goodbye to two Trustees, Sarah Smith and James Lynch. I would like to give my personal thanks to Sarah who during the year put a great deal of time into preparing a Risk Register, after many years as a trustee she resigned at the end of 2019. The Trustees will miss her wise council, clear thinking and attention to detail. James Lynch was briefly a Trustee during the year but found he had to resign after taking up a demanding job in

another part of the city.

During the year we were pleased to welcomed three new Trustees, Rev Paul Day, James Lynch and Jamie Walsh.

I am also very grateful to Geoff Holt who, as well as being a Trustee, is our volunteer Finance Manager and who has agreed to take additional responsibility for HR in 2020.

To the many volunteers and staff who have made the work of the Charity possible, to the congregation of St John's Church who provide facilities from which much work takes place, thank you.

The Charity has fulfilled its mandate to the communities it serves, to those with whom we partner, to those who fund us and to the requirements of the Charity Commission. We have come through a challenging year and I believe that we are now better prepared for all that the future may bring. Please stay with us, for only with your support can we continue to serve and the need is greater than ever. Thank you.

Yours sincerely

*John*

**Rev John Self**  
Chair of Trustees



## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**D**ear Friends and Supporters of Narthex.

I've resisted the annual statement that it's been the busiest year ever etc. But it's certainly been one of the most difficult years ever. We have invested a number of years training up staff to a very high standard and to then have another charity or organization come along and offer better salaries than we can afford and entice them away comes as a bit of a blow. While I cannot in any way be disappointed with the staff as it's a testament to the work we have achieved by investing in them and someone else wanting to take them. It leaves a hole that is difficult to fill and clients who have for years come to them for support and help are quite upset as they feel they've lost a friend who has made a difference in their lives. We lost 4 staff during 2019, but it also came when we were facing financial challenges that were making things difficult. As you will see in Geoff's report a large

amount of funding is outstanding by a statutory body. This put immense pressure on our cash flow.

Also, last year was a difficult one for me personally as I was diagnosed with a heart condition that took me out of Narthex Centre for quite some time. I worked from home after somewhat of a recovery. My health improved but I was not allowed to travel from Derby where my home is to Birmingham where I work. I then entered a period of working from home and am grateful to the medics who with a total now of 28 pills a day have made me a lot better and I am thankful to still be able to work. (Obviously at present due to COVID 19 its back to overseeing things from home, but that's for next year).

Our foodbank has faced a crazy year of need and heartbreak as so many people came to us. To arrive at a foodbank means you've been everywhere else and now its time to visit a place you're not really looking forward to, to tell

advised to get as much information as possible together and to supply this at the earliest possible time, so that the assessors could see beforehand what the medical professionals' assessment of her condition is.

Pat was glad of this advice and said she would get everything together as soon she possibly could. Pat rang in to talk to us on a number of occasions prior to her assessment; she was feeling anxious and just wanted to talk. Each time Pat rang she said she just felt unsure and apprehensive about the process and just needed someone to listen to her concerns.

Pat informed us sometime later that her application and assessment went well and that she is now in receipt of Personal Independent Payment. She has since contacted us for help with other issues in her life, particularly looking at support for her son, who wants to explore the possibility of moving away from home into supported accommodation.

We continue to work with Pat and she is happy and comfortable with our service and the support we are able to provide.

### Network Support Team



## CARERS

During 2019 we registered 17 new Carers and continued to support over 50 Carers with their ongoing needs.

Many of the new Carers we registered were struggling to get support put in place e.g. Birmingham City Council Occupational Therapy Assessments, Respite Care, Personal Independence Payment, Travel Assistance etc. We were able to help individuals and families to work through the process and move forward with their issues.

In addition we also frequently referred Carers to the Narthex Money Advice Team to ensure that they and the person they are caring for are in receipt of all the state benefits they are entitled to. The Carers really welcomed this; as it gave peace of mind that they and the cared for person is in receipt of their full entitlement. Carers also had the opportunity to discuss any other emerging needs and where appropriate get support to make relevant grant applications or apply for other benefits.

### Case Study

Pat is a single mom with a 19 year old son she cares for. Pat has a number of health issues which impact on her mobility and in addition she suffers from depression. Pat's son Tom has moderate learning difficulties, which impacts on all aspects of his life including, learning, daily living needs and employment opportunities.

Pat initially signed up to our service as she needed support during the process of applying for Personal Independent Payment. She was particularly anxious about the assessment process and we spent time with her going through the process, her application form and the type of evidence that the assessors would be looking for. She was

strangers you can't feed your partner and kids, to say that you have no food and no chance of getting any money to buy some. It's a lonely desperate place that hurts and offends one's pride, where you feel a failure and ashamed to be here. But as the food parcel comes out and you've chatted to people who don't condemn you or make judgements, there is an overwhelming sense of - thank God we can eat tonight!

But for us running the foodbank we are grateful to be able to help, because other kind people have donated food for us to give to hungry people who are destitute. We also feel a great sense of anger. It's wrong that people have to come to strangers to get food for their kids because their wages or benefits are so low there's often no money left by the middle of the third week and you're wondering what to do. I want to say that **"FOOD IS A CONSEQUENCE, BUT POVERTY IS AVOIDABLE"**.

Wages that allow a family to live and pay their bills, buy their own food and have the dignity of doing so is a human right of all. A system that supports families in crisis to pay their bills, buy food and not have to come to a Foodbank is a

human right of all. But it's not happening and we all should be shouting from the roof tops to our MPs and to employers that could pay better, "FOR GOODNESS SAKE DO THE RIGHT THING, GIVE YOUR PEOPLE THE DIGNITY OF LIVING A LIFE THAT OFFERS THEM CHOICES".

Other projects have also felt the weight of need and destitution. At the end of the year we had a money and debt advice team that was run off its feet and had over a 6 week waiting list. Christmas came at a good time for all our staff as the extended break gave us all time to recuperate.

I'm not going to go through all the projects as per normal but encourage you to read the staff accounts of their work. It truly is an eye opener as to what goes on at Narthex.

I am going to pick up a bit of what John, our Chair, has written about and the change to becoming a charity CIO. This process caused us all to reflect on where we were, what we do and where we do it. To ask - Can we continue to get funds for an ever-widening area and is it time to define boundaries and

also define what we do and don't do and with who. For the past 9 years we have had a strap line for our foodbank that brought home clearly what we felt at that time, it said, "Serving South Birmingham" and in our desire to help those hurting and damaged by life and by the action and decisions of others, we had moved somewhat away from that.

Responding to need and requests for help had put a huge pressure on funds and to an extent our staffs well-being, but having seen it - doing it and stopping the expansion in the directions that were not South Birmingham, was not as easy.

But it also had some good recognitions come out of that time. We had partnered with faith groups and children's centres for money and advice and this was working and was paid for on a daily basis by the very places that needed help but couldn't afford their own worker, or didn't need someone who was with them full time. This made us realise we were doing something a little unique in that we were doing the work in their buildings and local people were identifying us with them. This then

allowed them to capitalize and for some, ride off the back of what we were doing, to do other work. This will be something we look at in 2020, as to how we can help churches and children's centres provide a service at a cost that's attainable and in doing so, see a footfall not seen before that opened opportunities to relate and identify need in their own patch. For us it has allowed us to use our expertise and qualifications to meet need that no one is doing, but at the same time it is cost effective. To build on this we will need two or more staff to train in our way and then offer their services to centre's that don't have this expertise yet. For a period of time we will need to raise the funds to do this, so we will need partners who can fund this work for us.

In closing we have discovered and experienced deep sadness and great opportunities in the work we do. In coming through this year I would like to thank all who have partnered with us through grants, donations and

The largest group coming from Albania with 52 people supported, followed by Pakistan with 11 people supported. The faith groups supported were Muslim x 56, Christian x 27, Orthodox Church x 2, 1 x Sikh, 1 x Catholic, the rest were not known or didn't want to say.

Our main referral sources during the year were Black Country Women's Aid, Red Cross, Adavu, Family Centres, Restore and Narthex. We have continued our positive relationships with our referral sources, and we continue to work together to bring about positive change and provide or refer individuals and families to agencies to offer appropriate specialist support.

One of the highlights during the year was the refurbishment of the Resource Centre, courtesy of B & Q. We were one of fifty local projects who were supported by B & Q to mark their 50th anniversary, by offering help to local charities and community initiatives. As a charity we rely so much on the generosity of volunteers and the B & Q team of volunteers donned their aprons, painted, wallpapered, and made general repairs all with good spirit, using their home improvement skills to create a much improved and welcoming environment to for all the vulnerable people we seek to help.

### **Resource Centre Team**

## RESOURCE CENTRE

During 2019 the Resource Centre underwent some significant changes. We had long standing staff sadly leave the project to go onto alternative employment and unfortunately we experienced delays in recruiting suitable replacements. However we have still been able to work with a significant number of individuals and families during the year. We have supported them with clothing, household items, toiletries, books and toys for the children and made onward referrals to access specialist support when needed.

During 2019 we helped 113 females, 10 of which were expectant mums, 18 males and 171 children; a total of 302 people were supported.

The families we have served have come from various countries and faiths, these include;

Afghanistan	Gambia	Pakistan
Africa	Ghana	Senegal
Albania	Guinea	Somaliland
Algeria	Iraq	Syria
British	Jamaica	Tunisia
Eritrea	Kenya	Turkey
Ethiopia	Kuwait	Uganda
Gambia	Liberia	Vietnam
	Namibia	
	Nigeria	

commissioned funding and ask you stay the course please. Could you consider funding us to grow in the right areas and continue to make a difference to people in crisis and destitution? To those who are hungry, to those in destitution where food is not the issue, where loneliness and barriers make them poor, where debt isolates them and where every day is a battle to try to cope and manage, where living such straightened lives is crushing hope and bruising hearts and lives. With your help we can make a difference, we can be a difference and we can empower people to help themselves to make change in their own lives.

I would like to close by thanking the Congregation, the Church Wardens and PCC for continuing to make available the resources of the church halls and other facilities in the church. I would also like to say a huge thank you to the staff team for their caring and dedicated work and to also say a massive thank you to our volunteer team who over the year have given the work of Narthex over 30,000 hours of their time. We trust and hope we can count on you all to continue to make a difference with the communities we support.



**Nigel Brookhouse**  
Chief Executive Officer

## NARTHEX FUNDERS

ALBERT HUNT TRUST  
 ALL CHURCHES TRUST LTD  
 THE ANCHOR FOUNDATION  
 THE ARCHER TRUST  
 THE BARNABAS TRUST  
 (STEWARDS CO)  
 BIG LOTTERY FUND  
 BISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM'S  
 CHARITABLE TRUST  
 BVSC - AGEING BETTER  
 CB AND HH TAYLOR TRUST  
 THE CHARLES BROTHERTON  
 TRUST  
 THE CHURCH WELFARE  
 ASSOCIATION  
 THE CLOTHWORKERS'  
 FOUNDATION  
 COMIC RELIEF  
 THE COTTON TRUST

UMBRECK CHARITY  
 THE DMF ELLIS CHARITABLE  
 TRUST  
 EDGAR E LAWLEY FOUNDATION  
 EDWARD AND DOROTHY CADBURY  
 CHARITABLE TRUST  
 THE ERIC F SPARKES CHARITABLE  
 TRUST  
 THE FITTON TRUST  
 THE FREDMILL TRUST  
 FRIENDS HALL FARM STREET  
 TRUST  
 G E GEE TRUST  
 GARFIELD WESTON FOUNDATION  
 GJW TURNER TRUST  
 THE GRANTHAM YORKE TRUST  
 THE GOODENOUGH CHARITABLE  
 TRUST  
 THE GRIMMITT TRUST

More Narthex Funders Page 13

## SOME ORGANISATIONS/TRUSTS /FAITH GROUPS



More Organisations/Trusts/Faith Groups on Page 43

### CASE STUDY 3

Sarah was seeking support as she wanted to progress within her current role where she was a lunch time supervisor at a local school.

In addition to progression and up-skilling, Sarah wanted to undertake a food hygiene course and perhaps set up a business venture mentoring young boys.

The first few sessions I had with Sarah were very in-depth. These sessions revealed that there was much going on in Sarah's life and according to her, things were borderline chaotic.

We spoke about the varying job interests that she had and agreed that focusing on one thing for now

will be beneficial until other areas in her life settle down.

Sarah was naturally quite vocal but lacked confidence. The main thing we worked on during the sessions we had was building her confidence.

It was very difficult to meet with Sarah because she worked. However in May 2019, Sarah was ecstatic that she was promoted to 'Safeguarding Lead' at the same school she was working in.

She explained that all she needed was someone to steer her on the right track and give her that little boost of confidence to make this happen.

### Positive Futures Team

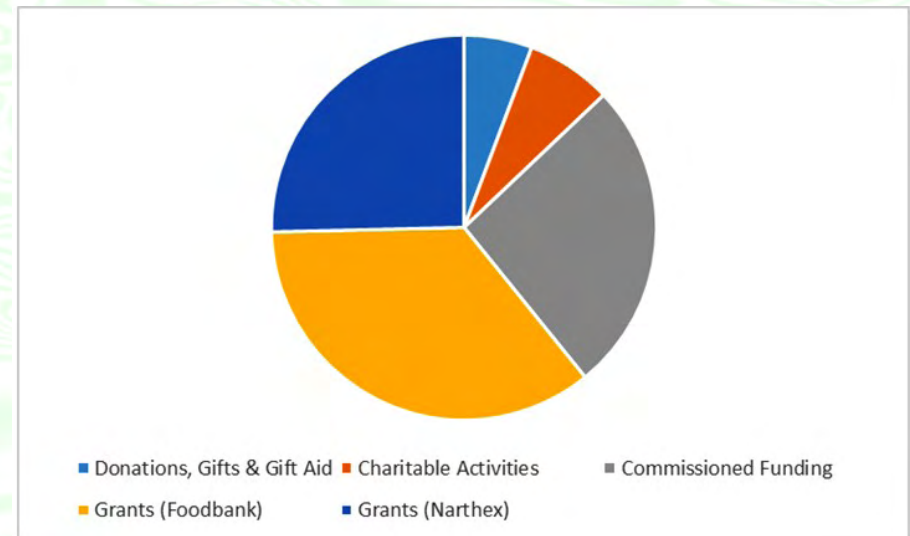
## FINANCE REPORT

2019 has in many ways been a challenging year for us as a Charity and one in which we have seen ever increasing levels of need and in terms of rising numbers of individuals and families we have had the privilege of supporting.

We have also been greatly encouraged by growing numbers of supporters showing an interest in our work and who have made a real difference. This income stream has increased by 90% since 2018. This has helped to offset reduced levels of grant funding we have received during the year.

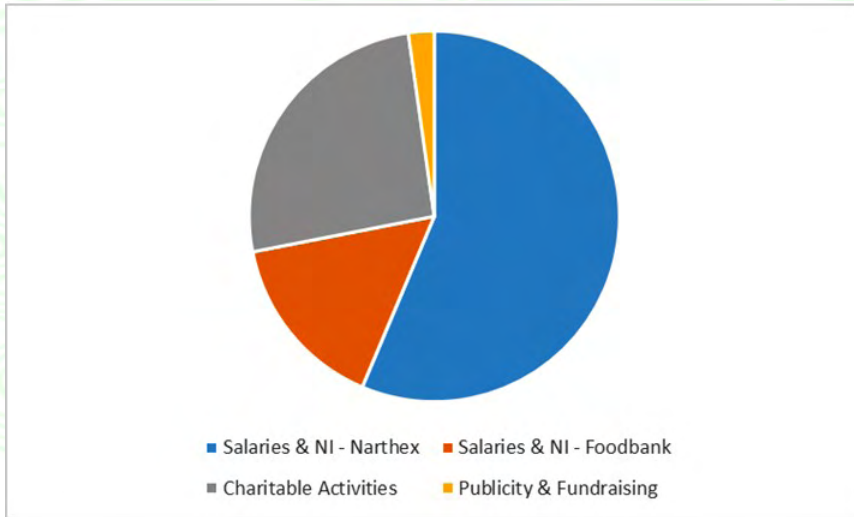
A particular challenge has been the non-payment of a significant sum from a statutory funder, which has necessitated a number of loans so that we could maintain our essential services to our clients. At the time of writing this report this funding has still not been received.

### BREAKDOWN OF 2019 INCOME



During 2019 only 2% of our income was spent on publicity and fundraising (2018: 2%) – this reflects the vast majority of our income is spent on serving the clients and communities we serve.

### BREAKDOWN OF 2019 EXPENDITURE



Particular mention must be made of the huge contribution of our many volunteers, who faithfully and selflessly give generously of their time and efforts – we estimate this equates to a cash value of at least £316,000:



### CASE STUDY 1

Samantha joined the programme in February 2019. Having been a full time parent for many years, she had no work experience. Client remained diligent attending coffee morning and job club. She got an interview for the role of Lunchtime Supervisor. Having been unsuccessful at about four

interviews for the same role within three months, she was very nervous about this interview. Our engagement workers supported her thoroughly. They set up an interview technique session and a subsequent mock interview for her. This time around, she got the job!!! She was over the moon.

### CASE STUDY 2

Baljit joined the Stepping Up programme in March 2019 where she was seeking employment after being a full time parent for many years. She did have qualifications from abroad but wanted to update her basic skills. She was also interested in finding a cleaning job within a school but also gain qualifications in child care.

Over the next following months, we worked on updating her CV and employment agencies were contacted on her behalf. Cleaning vacancies were sent to Baljit so she could apply. We also researched local child care courses within the area.

Baljit was very proactive which led to her successfully enrolling on a child care course in a local college in April 2019.

We devised a plan where we would update her CV, apply for her desired roles and also explore training courses.

## POSITIVE FUTURES

### EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND PROJECTS (ESF)

Positive Futures

Aegis

Stepping Up

The cohorts of residents that we worked with were predominately women trying to enter the workforce for the first time and a smaller number returning to work after bringing up a family. Although we did work with some men, this was a smaller amount and they proved more challenging to keep engaged in the programme.

During 2019 we worked with 90 local residents who were looking to find new employment or improve their employment skills.

The support that the programmes offered assisted individuals to create an up to date CV, search for relevant and appropriate work, identify training opportunities relevant to career aspirations and introduce individuals to employers, through a bespoke job-matching service.

The programmes were delivered both in-house at Narthex as well as in the community at a local Children's Centre and Foodbank. Being able to offer this support in a variety of venues was advantageous as it meant that we were attracting people at different starting points on their journey back into work who had varying needs. We held a regular weekly Job Club which was open to all participants where they could get assistance, encouragement and training relevant to their work goals. The job club was in fact a very successful element of the programme and participants looked forward to the chance to meet each other and the camaraderie that came from having a common goal to finding employment and improving their work skills.

I would like to take the opportunity to add my personal thanks to our Accounts Assistant, Sufina, who has joined the Finance Team during the year, and keeps our increasingly complex accounts in excellent order. Thank you Sufina.

In summary, yes we do of course need finance to operate, but at the end of the day it is all about making a difference in the lives of those we serve!

Huge thanks to everyone who has contributed in any way during the year.

**Geoff Holt**  
Finance Director



## MORE NARTHEX FUNDERS

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

THE KEITH AND JOAN MINDELSON  
CHARITABLE TRUST

KINGS HEALTH QUAKERS

LILLIE JOHNSON CHARITABLE TRUST

THE LORD AUSTIN TRUST

LORD MAYOR OF BIRMINGHAM'S  
CHARITY

THE MICHAEL MARSH CHARITABLE  
TRUST

MORRISONS FOUNDATION

THE PAT NEWMAN MEMORIAL  
TRUST

THE PATRICK TRUST  
PEARL GP MANAGEMENT

REUBEN FOUNDATION

THE ROBERT MCALPINE  
FOUNDATION

ROUGHLEY TRUST

ROWLANDS TRUST

S M B TRUST

THE SOBELL FOUNDATION

THE SOUTER CHARITABLE TRUST

SOUTH BIRMINGHAM FRIENDS -  
(SBFIT)

SPARKHILL TRUST

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH,  
BADDESLEY CLINTON

THE TRUSSELL TRUST

THRIVE/BMSP

WAITROSE

WED CHARITABLE TRUST

ZAB ZIMBABWE ANGLICANS

More than ever we are seeing single parent families with kids desperately trying to make ends meet, often young women who have escaped a bad relationship or abusive marriage. Some are young girls who have married a much older man for various reasons i.e. security and discover it is not what they thought it would be, they may have been abused or faced other tragic situations. They gradually grasp they no longer have to put up with the situation.

We realised how important it is that we don't stop asking for food, because even when we are quite well stocked it is not long before a crisis or a big employer goes into administration and many get made redundant. A few instances lately have shown us the importance of planning for a crisis and not waiting till it happens before we ask for food. If it wasn't for the fact we are so well known and have such extensive reach, there are times in the past year that we would have been crushed by need.

We need to get more advice and guidance workers as the need is growing and we have a 6 week waiting list. We are part of a collective and this info we feed into the wider picture of our joint support for the areas we support. This will help us provide a wider level of support to the local communities and help us inform external agencies we work with who have the opportunity to provide professional support that we are not qualified to give, or is outside of our remit. It also helps us plan for areas of support we are currently not doing work in. We are living in a time of fast changing community, where the fabric of the extended family is fast changing and in some ways breaking down. We are seeing growing seniors who no longer have family near or have no family left.

**Foodbank Team**



<b>Total no. of food parcels distributed then 1 visit)</b>	<b>9,478 (includes more than 1 visit)</b>
<b>Of which:</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Disabled</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Not disabled</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Not declared</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Age:</b>	
<b>0-24</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>25-64</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>No religion</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Christian</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Bhuddist</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Hindu</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Jewish</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Muslim</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Sikh</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Not declared faith</b>	<b>17</b>

**These stats help us shape what we need to be prepared for, what type of parcels to have ready before we open to people in need.**

## **GOOD COMPANION CLUB / SIT AND BE FIT**

**T**he Lunch Club has had another successful year albeit the numbers have been smaller than in previous years as sadly we have had a number of members pass away and some members have experienced long term illness which has prevented them from attending quite so regularly.

Our regular staff team and volunteers have continued to make the weekly meet a time of fun and companionship. It is a time when the team can see the members in person and check with individuals on how they are and see if there is anything that we can help them with. Members genuinely enjoy having the opportunity to come together regularly as a group, but also know that if they need help with any aspect of their lives we will be happy to assist. We have had a few new members join the group during the year, all of whom have been introduced by current members.

The group have continued with some external visits/outings; however greater consideration has had to be given due to the health and mobility of many of the members, but the annual outing to the pantomime and visits to the posh fish 'n chip venue have continued.



**Birthdays are always welcome, along with a game of bingo!**

**SIT AND BE FIT** – our exercise group for ladies over 50 has unfortunately also lost a number of regular attendees due to illness over the year. Those who are still attending still enjoy the companionship the group brings and the positive feelings of being engaged in regular exercise. We will re-launch the group in the new year to try and increase our numbers.

### **CASE STUDY - Winnie's Story**

**W**innie is 78 years old and has been attending the lunch club for roughly 5 years. She lives alone in a high rise building on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor. She has 3 adult children, two of who resides in Birmingham (whom she rarely sees) and one who lives in the Caribbean. It appeared that she has a closer relationship with her son who resides in the Caribbean but distance had an impact on how often they communicated.

Over the past 2 years Winnie's physical health (mainly due to loss in appetite) and memory began to decline to the point where it was

causing concern for myself and carers. She also gradually stopped attending sessions due to her progressive ill health.

There was a particular day that I escorted her home because she was feeling really ill. Outside her home, I realised that Winnie was unable to recognise that she had to use the key to open her door. I also remembered eventually getting inside and Winnie wanted to sit with her coat on. She stated she felt better sitting in her coat without the heating or television on. I remembered being in that moment with Winnie and wondered if this was what happened on a daily basis. The quality of life Winnie was living was poor and disturbing.

I saw this as real concern and so this was raised with the carers who then instigated a safeguarding meeting. There were real discussions around Winnie moving into a care home due to safety and not having any other support around.

Prior to the meeting, a family friend started coming around and



### **OF WHAT IN THE DBANK**



## **AN IDEA GOES ON FOOT**



playing a more active role with Winnie. The son who is based in the Caribbean had asked if he was able to give a little support to Winnie. By the time of the safeguarding meeting there was a massive turn around in Winnie's overall health.

Through the family friend's intervention within a couple of weeks, Winnie was back to her old activity here at the centre but also her overall energy levels had picked up in such a way that other participants and staff were amazed at her turn around. Some even questioned if this was the same person!

When I sat and discussed Winnie's overall health improvement with the family friend and the carers, we realised that Winnie may have been feeling depressed for reasons such as feeling lonely, not

### **Network Support Team**

seeing her children and the awareness that her memory is declining and there was nothing she could have done about it.

Winnie is now attending another session with the family friend. She was only attending one activity but now with the support of the family friend is now attending 'A Place of Welcome' and continues to thrive and smile.

To see Winnie's progression from the point where we thought she would be admitted into a care home to now being an active member is indescribable. What was really important to note through this process was the importance of support and encouragement and as the family friend puts it – a bit of Tender Loving Care was all that was required!

## MONEY ADVICE

Narthex Sparkhill has supported the most deprived of the wider community within the Small Heath locality in Birmingham throughout 2019. The Money Advice Workers have worked with passion and at a high standard level to assist and advise clients with various matters. They have also completed much casework around Welfare Benefits, Housing, Debt and Fuel Poverty to improve the standard of living for thousands of clients.

Appointment based Money Advice surgeries have been provided at various Children Centres, Springfield, Percy Road, St Paul's, and Braithwaite Children Centre. Furthermore, Narthex Sparkhill has provided its Money Advice Services at the hub of St John's Church in Sparkhill, Christ Church in Yardley Wood and The Oak St. Michael's Church. Narthex Sparkhill has further extended its services to the Church of Ascension and Foodbank in Hall Green which has seen a rise in the number of clients attending the drop-in at the Foodbank and a rise in the client matters from

August. There has also been a variety of ethnicities attending the drop-in with many being referred directly from the Foodbank itself. The Children Centres book their appointments through a referral made by Family Support Workers and Midwives at the centres. While all the Church appointments are booked via the Narthex Centre and referrals from the Churches and JMC. The only drop-in service running is available once a week at the Church of Ascension Foodbank on a Friday afternoon.

In light of delivering the Money Advice surgeries, Narthex has identified that there is a huge need to further develop clients' general knowledge and skills to self-help with budgeting, placing bids for housing and logging in and out of their individual Universal Credit Accounts. Furthermore being able to add simple messages to their journals and check their to-do list on the Universal Credit accounts as this is one of the main causes for payment sanctions.

To assist in these areas, Narthex

we kept most of the volunteers as they know their community, so its local people supporting local people. Our clients are made up of people who've lost their job or they've moved on to Universal credit and been waiting 5 - 6 weeks to be paid, they borrowed some money so they have to give over a 1/3rd back of what they have been given. Many are people on zero hour contracts or on low pay.

The Clothesbank has also gone crazy with people desperate for clothes. We took on partnership support for the homeless unit in Heartlands Hospital in October, so we provide some clothes and simple food parcels including can openers to the key worker there. We have provided over 400 clothes packs for people in need and see this becoming even worse once the mortgage and debt holiday comes home to roost.

### Stats:

**Foodbank Vouchers issued: 5215**  
**How many People fed: 9212**  
**6142 adults; 3070 children**  
**196 per week**

**How many referrals per average week? 110**

**Top two reasons for referrals: Benefit delays, low income**

**Top 5 referral agencies: Sparkhill JCP, Citizens Advice, Yardley JCP, MP Jess Phillips Office, and QE Hospital**

**Top 5 Areas (council wards) clients come from: Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East, Sparkhill, Acocks Green, Balsall Heath West, Tyseley and Hay Mills**

**Total food distributed: 112 tons**

**32 % BAME**

**53% single people**

**15% single parents next biggest group**

## **FOODBANK/SATELLITES and CLOTHESBANK**

I was asked the other day what progress we had made in the last year, the sad part of answering the word progress means that we are seeing more people than ever in crisis. These past 12 months have been shocking as we grew to over 4 tons of food a week: We had 9212 people in crisis = 6142 adults, + 3070 children = an average of 196 people per week, which is classed as progress?

We have continued providing food and personal hygiene supplies in this, our 3rd year of this grant. It's amazing to see the difference in a person's face when they find out that our staff are friendly, non-condemning and nice. It's also sad to see tears well up in their eyes when they realize they get to eat together tonight as well as the kids, they don't have to pretend they ate earlier or will have something after they have gone to bed, tonight they don't have to cry themselves to sleep as they are so hungry.

It's even more exciting to see what difference it makes when we give them some washing powder, toothpaste and shower gel, tinned pet food for the cat or dog. Over the next few days they can pretend things are normal because there's some chocolate as a treat and enough for 3 meals a day for all in the house and if they go careful it will stretch to 4 days.

Clients also go upstairs and get some underwear and clothes and one of our money advisers gets in touch with their utility supplier and gets some emergency money put on the meter for a few days so they can be at least warm and have a bath. These are all things many of us take for granted. Nearly 10,000 came to us last year.

We took on the Foodbank at Stechford because it was going to close and

has developed and scheduled workshops for budgeting, housing and Universal Credit. Clients that will be identified by the Money Advice workers will be invited to attend the workshops to benefit themselves in the longer term.

Members of the Narthex team have reached out to the community by attending the coffee meetings at the local schools in the area to provide them with information on how the services at Narthex can be accessed and what support is available to them. This has also aided in the rise of clients wanting to access the services at Narthex. Any challenges that Narthex has been faced with due to language barriers and being able to communicate with the

community has now been resolved as there are now 2 community language-speaking Advisors.

The communication barriers have been broken and clients are more comfortable to approach Narthex and can now communicate with more ease and confidence.

Subsequently with the success of the workshops and doing outreach work via other community gatherings within the Small Heath Area, Narthex will be well equipped to provide vital information about the Money Advice and other services within Narthex. This will further encourage client interest and see a rise in the number of clients attending the services.

## **NARTHEX SPARKHILL ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **GRANTS AND TRUST FUNDS:**

The Money Advice services have seen successful growth in the number of Grants and Trust Funds like the Charis Grants, Severn Trent Trust Fund, Glasspool and the Yardley Trust being awarded to clients. These awards have been for white goods worth £350 each for every cooker, washing machines and fridge freezers that have been awarded. They have also aided in clearing fuel debts and wiping off outstanding arrears owed on clients gas, electric and water accounts. There have been more than 3189 Big Difference Scheme applications submitted by Narthex and out of

every 10 applications being submitted 8 of the applications are successfully being awarded, reducing the overall water charges for clients by up to 90%. Clients are left with only the remaining 10% of their water charges to pay.

Throughout 2019 there has been an overall of 88 cases that Narthex supported with Grants and Trust funds. This consists of 46 cases where clients have been supported with utility issues and switching. There have been a further 36 cases where clients have been assisted with grant applications to reduce utility bills and a combination of 121 grant applications for white goods/debt, the majority of the applications has resulted in a successful award being made to the client or the white good being directly delivered to their homes. Clients are being made aware of the scheme through intervention with Narthex regarding other matters they may have seen the Money Advice Workers.

### **WELFARE BENEFITS:**

There has been a total of 726 cases that Narthex has assisted clients during 2019. The highest number of new cases has been in Universal Credit at 199 new cases. This number has continued to rise with more and more new claims being made with the new system now fully being rolled out. 241 cases out of the 726, Narthex has supported the clients with benefit entitlement checks as many do not know what they will be eligible to claim and what their entitlement will be. 136 of these cases Narthex has

assisted with Council Tax matters, these consist of new claims for Council Tax Support and supporting with Council Tax bills.

Narthex has always seen a high rise in the number of clients wanting support with Welfare Benefits at the beginning of the year as this is when clients receive their winter bills and new Council Tax bills. Whilst their outgoing expenditures tend to increase at this time of the year, they are also looking at ways of increasing their household income. There are thousands of pounds of unclaimed

parcels and toiletries for himself and his family. A plan was discussed and put into place to help him manage his debts and increase his household income. Mr S was made aware of what work will be completed step by step to improve his situation. This helped him keep focused and concentrate on moving forward. It gave him a sense of relief that things will start to move in a more positive direction for him.

Over the next few interventions with Mr S, a referral was made to Step Change and he was offered the option of a Debt Relief Order (DRO). This was best suited for him as he was not in a position to pay any of the debt off himself. Narthex also aided him in raising part of the fund required to pay his fees for the DRO by applying for the Acts 435 fund.

This was best suited for him as he was not in a position to pay any of

**Rajna Begum**  
Money Advice Worker

the debt himself. Narthex also aided him in raising part of the fund.

Furthermore, Narthex assisted him in completing the Council Tax Support Claim and Discretionary Housing Payment online resulted in awards being made to him. Both of the awards contributed to a reduction of his Council Tax Bill and his monthly payments and help towards the shortfall in rent charges.

Narthex was able to gradually aid Mr S through his financial difficulties and assisted him in getting into a better position to manage his expenses while his debts were also being managed by Step Change.

The support and help he received allowed him to gradually rebuild his confidence again and helped him to see light at the end of all his debts and difficulties he was experiencing.

I completed an Acts 435 form to get help with the smaller debt and have her phone bill paid for so that she can have her mobile reconnected and allowing her to have access to her phone. I also completed the Warm Home Discount, the Big Difference Scheme, the Severn Trent Trust Fund Application, and the British Gas Trust Fund Application and issued 2 food vouchers for the Foodbank.

Throughout the 13 face to face interventions with Mrs R and 9 allocated casework time, all of the grant and trust fund applications that have been completed to assist her, have successfully been awarded to her. They have contributed to paying off all her debt and arrears for the total of £3,500 for her water, fuel and mobile bill. Her gas and electric meters have not been removed from her property after my interaction and her mobile phone has been reconnected. Furthermore, no court action has been taken against her.

All deductions that were directly

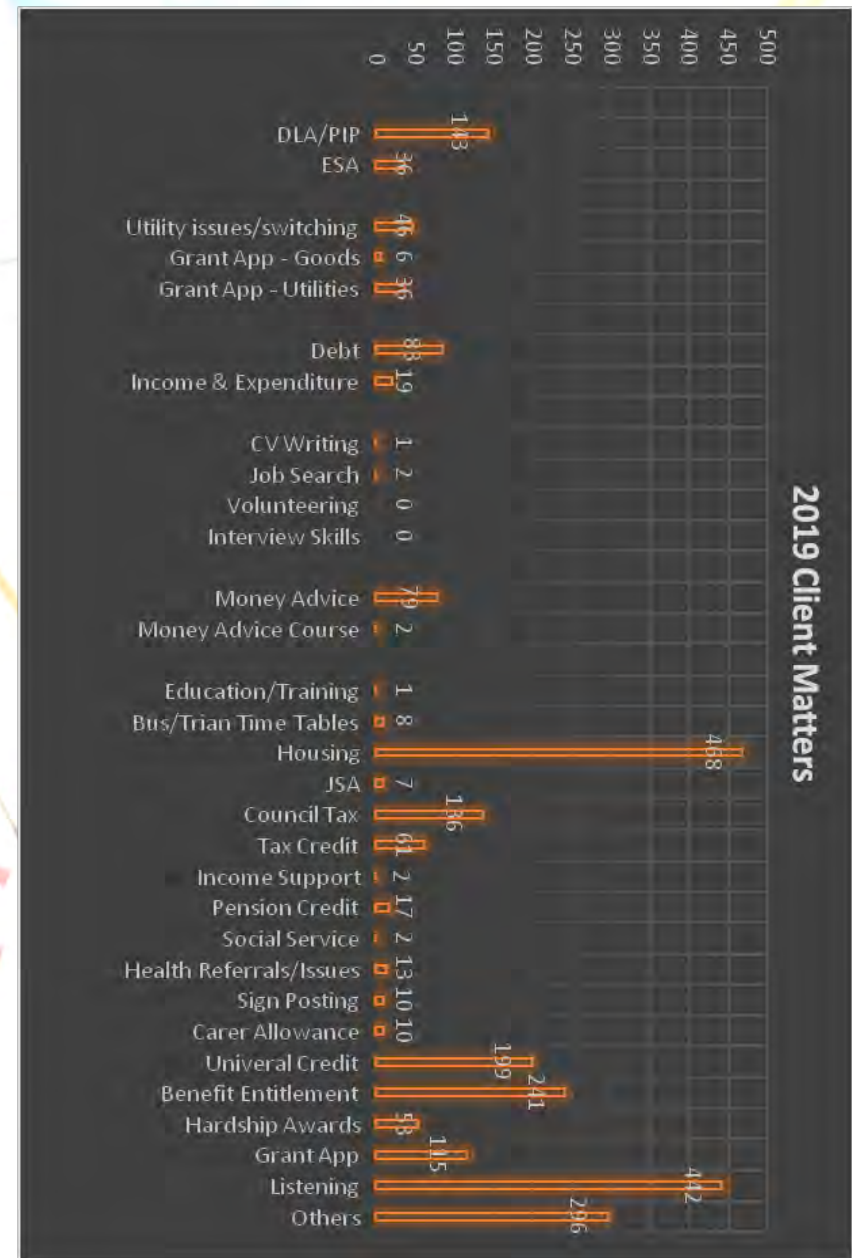
being deducted from Mrs R Employment Support Allowance has now stopped, her income has now been maximised again. She has also been added to the Priority Register for her gas and electric as she has mental health needs and has been registered as a vulnerable person living alone. Her panic and anxiety is being better managed as her problems have gradually been dealt with.

### CASE STUDY 2

Mr S came to see the Money Advice worker in September 2019, he had debt totalling up to £14,000 and this was rising. He had recently lost his job due to health needs and it was having a devastating effect on his mental health and his household income. He was not able to feed himself, his wife and his young dependant child, he did not have enough income to manage his bills as well as his housekeeping and food.

He was instantly issued a food voucher allowing him to access the foodbank and get food

## THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENT ASSISTED PER CLIENT CASE MATTERS STATED IN THE GRAPH OVER THE YEAR 2019.



Welfare Benefits every year and it is an area of concern that Narthex has been able to provide the support and assistance required for a blissful outcome for clients, also resulting in successful benefit awards being awarded to them.

### **HOUSING:**

There has been an overall of 468 cases for housing matters, this number consists of new housing applications, either registering the clients with Homes Direct and Birmingham Home Choice. Clients have been successfully registered onto the housing register after Advisors have been able to identify if they qualify to be registered or not. The number also consists of cases where disrepair has been reported and concluded for clients and various other matters surrounding social and private housing.

Housing advice is in high demand at Narthex and is much needed for the community within Small Heath, with it being at the top of the chart for client matters in 2019. With more and more clients being made homeless or living in very poor living conditions, Narthex has been able to aid in improving this for their clients.

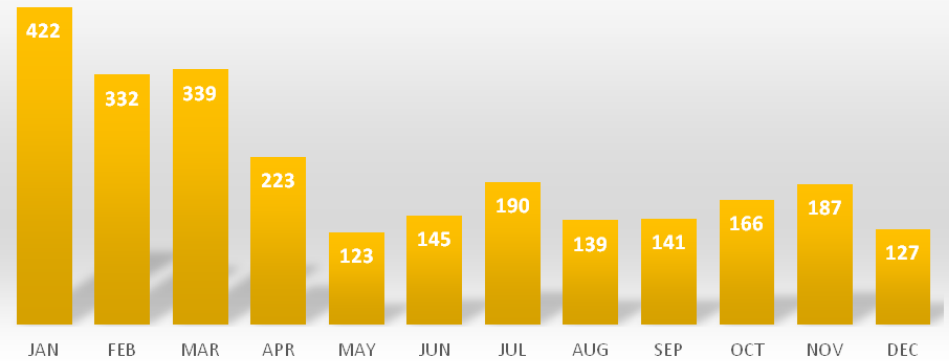
### **MONEY ADVICE AND DEBT:**

There has been an overall of 102 cases which consist of 83 for debt matters and 19 for income and expenditure cases, and a further 81 cases for money advice. While assisting clients with money advice, Narthex has assisted in resolving debt and maximising income for the clients. It has also resulted in the completion of grant applications and trust funds to reduce some of the debts they have been responsible for. There have also been referrals made to Step Change to complete IVA and DRO.

**THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES PER MONTH THAT NARTHEX HAS ASSISTED IN THE YEAR 2019.**

**THE OVERALL TOTAL OVER THE YEAR 2019 IS 2534, THIS IS BEYOND THE TARGET FIGURES PREDICTED FOR 2019.**

Total Monthly Case Matter 2019



**CASE STUDY 1** Mrs R came to see me in November 2019 at the Hall Green Foodbank drop-in surgery with several matters which she required assistance with. As she has mental health needs she needed to understand all the information and advice that was being given to her. She required support with several utility bills as she had accumulated a large debt for a total of £3,500 and was struggling to pay for them. She was having payments deducted directly from her Employment Support Allowance, which meant there was little income remaining to pay anything extra on the bills and was struggling to buy food for herself.

It was causing her anxiety and distress as she was receiving notices from her fuel supplier to have her meter removed from the property and her mobile phone had been disconnected.