

NARTHEX CENTRE

We are back with a presence in the community!

After an initial period of working totally from home at the start of the pandemic, we made considered decisions to safely enable the team to return to do some of its work in the community.

Post Covid The Narthex Centre is now open 2 days a week accepting donations for our Resource Centre and distributing clothing, pushchairs, small household items books, toys and toiletries to those in need. During these days we are also available for emergency money advice appointments that cannot be resolved over the phone and dealing with a whole range of queries and issues that clients need assistance with.

Although we continue to work from home part of the week, the 2 days in the centre gives some balance and allows some face to face work to happen when needed. It also means the clients get to see the team that are supporting them.

From a staff perspective the time spent in the centre brings the team together to share information, good ideas, best practice and resolve any difficult issues. Our time together is also spent doing training and having regular staff meetings and of course if gives us some informal time together which enhances team cohesion.

As we emerged from Covid some of Narthex's previous projects have now moved under the umbrella of St John's Church, namely the Seniors Lunch Club and the Place of Welcome which are now church led.

During the pandemic the Narthex Money Advice Team has grown just as the need for support has. By the end of 2021 the team increased in size taking us to 7 Advisors. We brought on some very experienced staff who have added terrific skills and experience to the team. It also increased the range of languages that we have within the team and so enabled us to more easily connect directly

with the local community. Across the team we can now offer support to speakers of Urdu, Bengali, Punjabi, Gujarati and Hindi.

You will see from the detailed account later on in this report the huge impact that the team have had in supporting the community. The range of support is wide and varied and includes resolving debt issues, helping those who are in need of housing, working with families who are dealing with disability and the impact it has on their lives, assisting with grant applications and helping people to claim their full benefit entitlement.

The team are skilled, knowledgeable and supportive and show great enthusiasm to ensure they do the very best they can for every individual or family they work with.

The Narthex Centre is a busy hub of activity, and we are incredibly thankful that increased funding during this period has allowed for the expansion of the team enabling us to work with even more people and support them through this extraordinary time.

Sandra Osbourne
Project Manager

