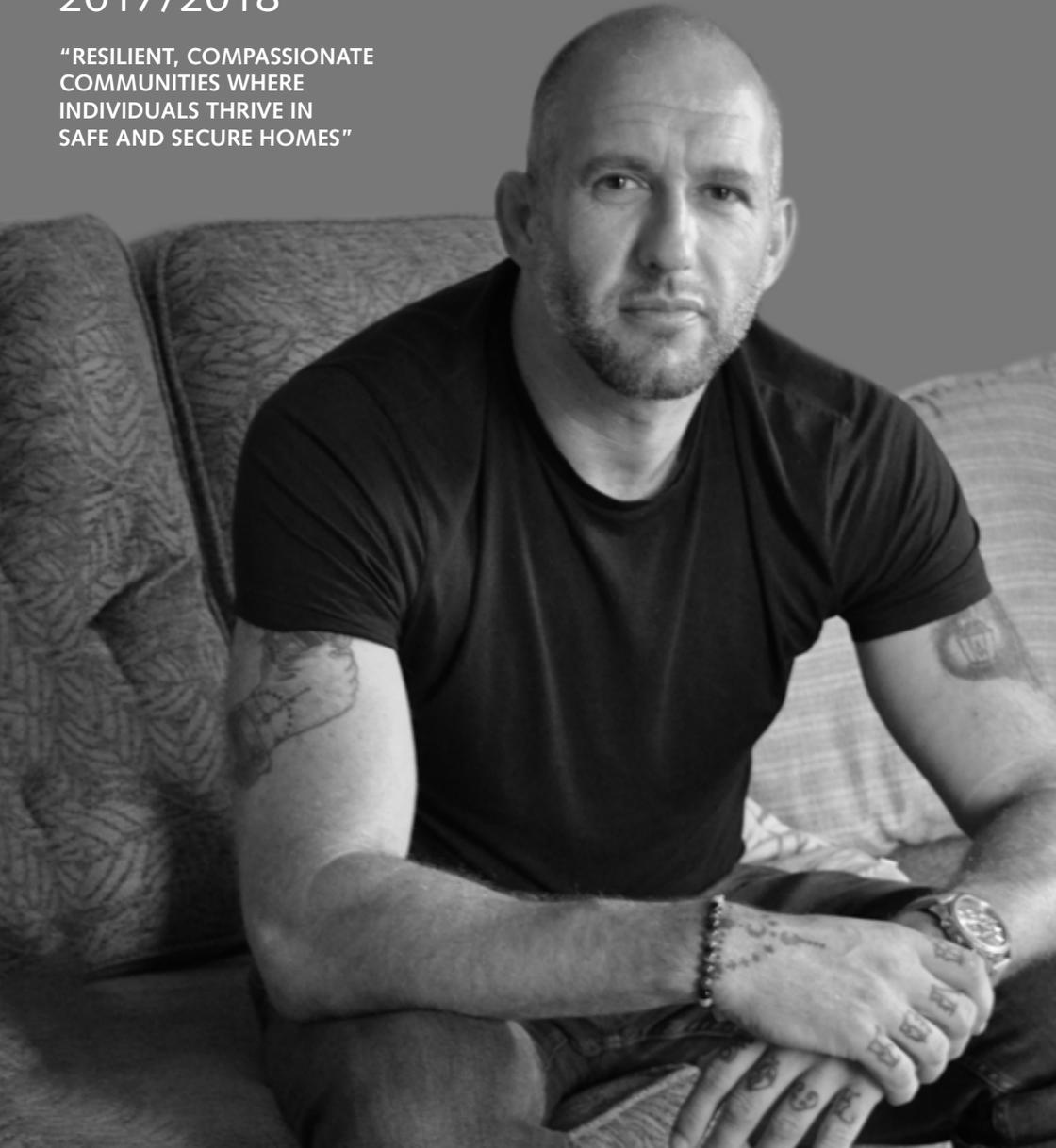




## IMPACT REPORT 2017/2018

"RESILIENT, COMPASSIONATE  
COMMUNITIES WHERE  
INDIVIDUALS THRIVE IN  
SAFE AND SECURE HOMES"



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"TO DEVELOP  
SUSTAINABLE HOUSING  
SOLUTIONS FOR  
INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES  
THROUGH PARTNERSHIP,  
EMPOWERMENT AND GOOD  
PRACTICE"

STRATEGICALLY  
PARTNERED  
WITH  


## A FAREWELL SALUTE

Kerry joined The Bridge in 2005 to lead and develop our administration team. She was a hardworking, committed, and very loyal member of staff. She was a very dear friend too. We also got to know her husband Brian, and her two daughters Jennifer and Lesley; they would often come into the office and brighten up our days.

In recruiting Kerry, we had in fact recruited a whole team – Team Elliott. Tragically, Jennifer passed away suddenly in 2011, and now we have sadly lost Kerry as well. All of the amazing things the team have achieved this year are a fitting tribute to such a wonderful person.



"THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL  
REPORT IS DEDICATED  
TO KERRY ELLIOTT  
WHO SADLY PASSED  
AWAY EARLIER  
THIS YEAR."



# WELCOME TO THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL REVIEW.

I do hope you can take the time to read this year's review, which highlights some fantastic achievements, both in terms of client work and the collaborative work which we undertake with our partners. Working together provides us with great opportunities to improve our services for clients in a more joined up way.

The Homelessness Reduction Bill received Royal Assent and therefore became an Act of Parliament on the 27th April 2017. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 is the most significant change to homelessness legislation in over a generation. It will place new legal duties on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help, irrespective of their priority need status, as long as they are eligible for assistance. Here, at The Bridge, we lent our support as the new homelessness framework began as a Private Member's Bill (PMB) introduced to Parliament in June 2016 by Bob Blackman, backbench Conservative MP for Harrow East. Our Loughborough MP, Nicky Morgan, also provided written support for the PMB.

The new legislation will provide significant challenge for our Local Authority partners in terms of securing enough temporary and permanent accommodation.

I am very proud of the committed team which we have at The Bridge, and together we have achieved some great outcomes via the Homelessness Transitions Programme, The Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, the Rutland Community Prevention and Wellbeing Service and all of our other established services which provide a vital lifeline for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable people within our communities.

To cap another very successful year, we co-authored a paper entitled 'Holistic Knowledge Management for Building Resilience in the Voluntary Sector', with Loughborough University. Following submission of this academic paper, I am delighted to inform you that we beat NASA and the European Patent Office to first place in the International Knowledge Management and Intellectual Capital Excellence Awards in Barcelona in September 2017.

Finally, I would like to place on record my sincere thanks to all of my team, for their great commitment and compassion, including our Board of Trustees, who provide significant support and oversight.

I wish you well.

**Peter Davey Chief Officer**

## OUR VALUES

### RESPECT

We have a commitment to fairness and equality. We acknowledge an individual's needs, beliefs and their right to make their own choices.

### QUALITY

We have a commitment to delivering excellence; providing a high standard of services with a person-centred approach.

### PARTNERSHIP

We work with others to create trusting and positive relationships which enhance the delivery of services for the benefit of the community.

### EMPOWERMENT

We encourage clients and staff to develop their existing skills and knowledge. We help to build self-confidence and increase opportunities to make positive contributions.

### POSITIVITY

We have an optimistic attitude and approach which is focused upon identifying innovative solutions for all.



## CHAIR PERSON'S REPORT 2017-2018

This is my first message as Chair of the Board and what a year it has been! The Bridge has continued to grow and expand its work through strategic growth and partnership, working to deliver services to thousands of vulnerable people who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Headed by an excellent Chief Officer, Peter Davey, the Strategic Management Team and staff continue to deliver current services whilst also proactively seeking opportunities that will ensure we remain strategically relevant and meet the changing needs of our communities and clients.

In respect of this hard work, The Bridge has been recognised for its excellence through several awards. In application for the internationally recognised quality standard ISO 9009:15, The Bridge were accredited as best practice for business planning, strategy and service delivery. This is a tremendous acknowledgement of the tireless work the team repeatedly put in, and I couldn't be prouder.

We have also been fortunate to have dedicated and hard-working Trustees who do so much more than turning up to bi-monthly meetings. They get involved and help support the organisation in many ways. Ensuring the sustainability of the organisation has been high on our agenda, and in August 2017 we decided to incorporate a new company; The Bridge (Trading) East Midlands Ltd. The new company allows us to explore new revenue and trading opportunities in order to support the long-term work of the organisation.

Unfortunately, illness meant that I was absent for some of the year and our Vice Chair, Richard White, stepped up to the plate and took on the mantle of Chair. My sincere thanks to him and to the rest of the Board of Trustees for all of their support, hard work and dedication throughout the year.

No organisation such as ours can achieve what we do without the help and support of our volunteers, partner organisations, members of the business community, Loughborough University Students Union, and the generous donations from the public. I would like to thank them all for their help and continued support.

### Jay Webb (Chair)



Jay Webb



Ashiedu Joel



Sue Lees



Richard White



Rachel White

Sue McAllister

Jon Olds

Karen Jewell

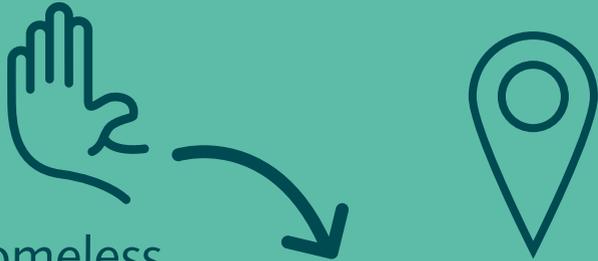
Megan Wardle



# THE NATIONAL STATE OF HOMELESSNESS

The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government reports that between April 2017 and March 2018 there were:

**214,980**  
cases of homeless prevention & relief



**9%** of which are located in the East Midlands.



**Only 51%** were able to remain in their own home.

BUT THIS DOESN'T EVEN BEGIN TO ACCOUNT FOR THOSE ROUGH SLEEPING, OR THE HIDDEN HOMELESS, WHOM ARE **HIDDEN FROM STATISTICS.**

**Crisis also reports there has been an:**

**8% rise** in homeless families and individuals placed in temporary accommodation from 2016/2017, equating to **78,000**. Research shows the forecasted figure soon to reach **100,000**.

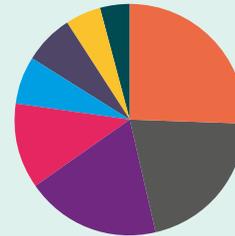
(Crisis are the national charity for homeless people. They help people directly out of homelessness and campaign for the changes needed to solve it altogether.)

# GOVERNMENT STATISTICS

## LEADING CAUSES FOR HOMELESS PREVENTION AND RELIEF

**Preventative measure taken for people to remain in their homes.**

The pie chart below provides information about the 51% of the 214,980 homelessness prevention cases, where the household was able to remain in their own home.



<b>29,140</b>	<b>26%</b> Problems with benefits
<b>22,930</b>	<b>21%</b> Debt/rent or mortgage arrears
<b>20,710</b>	<b>19%</b> Issues within the private/socially rented sector
<b>13,030</b>	<b>12%</b> Other
<b>7,320</b>	<b>7%</b> Legal issues
<b>7,200</b>	<b>7%</b> Relationship breakdown
<b>5,190</b>	<b>5%</b> Domestic violence
<b>4,800</b>	<b>4%</b> Crisis

Total **110,320**

**The Guardian reported:**

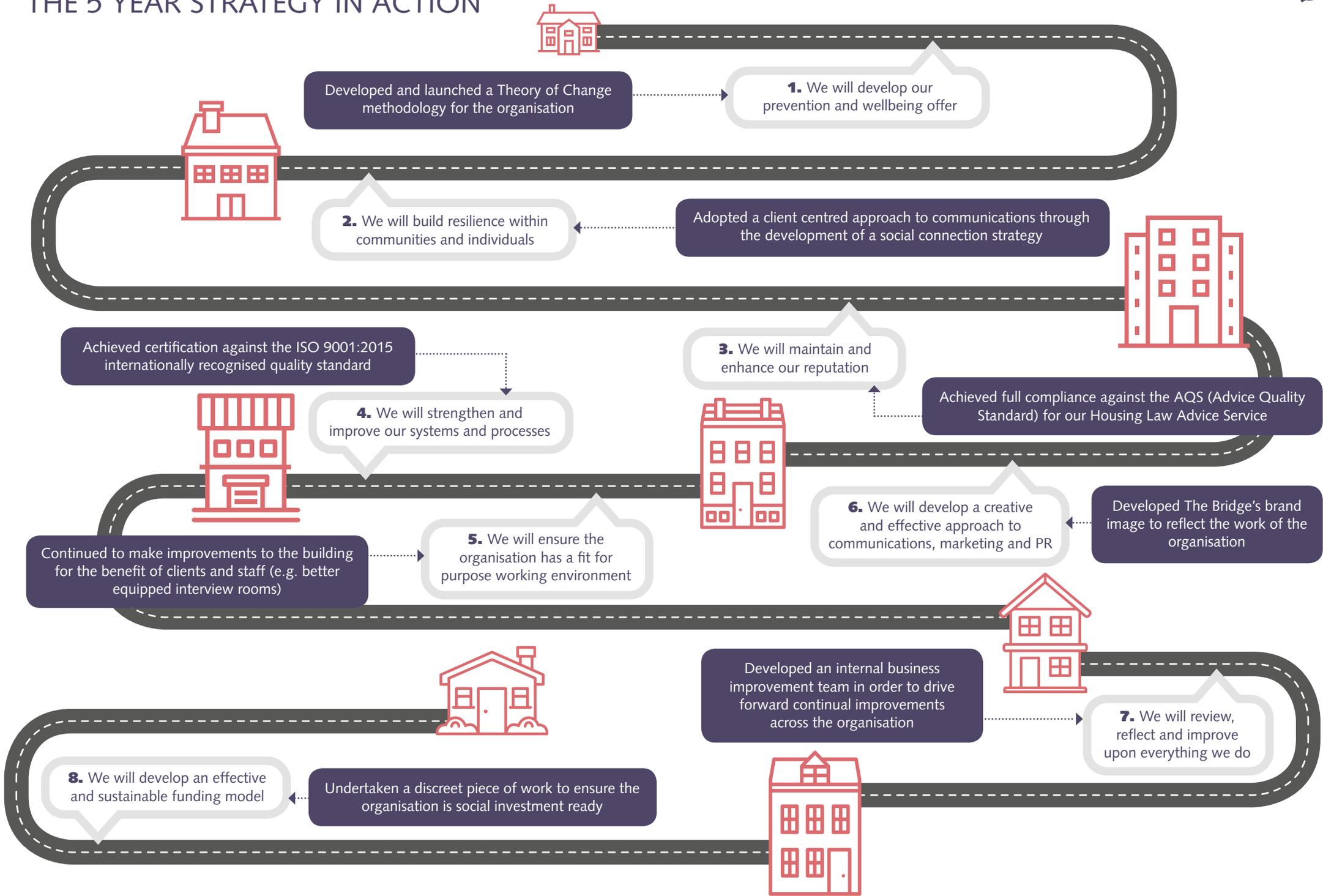
**Deaths have more than doubled** since 2013.

**43 years old** is the average age of a rough sleeper at death, 5 years younger than the average life expectancy of a homeless person.

Rough sleeping kills. **449 people died on the streets in the last twelve months.** They died from violence, drug overdoses, illnesses, suicide and murder, among other reasons. One man's body showed signs of prolonged starvation.



# THE 5 YEAR STRATEGY IN ACTION



# OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

We received **5,151** referrals for services (+11.4% on 16/17)



Homelessness Prevented<sup>2</sup> **78%**

We have worked with **2,414** households (+10.9% on 16/17)



Housing Improved<sup>3</sup> **78%**



Supported with Accessing Training & Education<sup>7</sup> **71%** (+10% on 16/17)



Improved Relationships<sup>6</sup> **67%**



Involved in the Wider Community<sup>1</sup> **51%**

Improved Finances<sup>4</sup> **62%**



Supported with Accessing Employment<sup>5</sup> **52%** (+9% on 16/17)



(Source: Internal Case Data April 2017 – March 2018)

- 1 Could include attending community events or groups, e.g. mother and toddler
- 2 Where homelessness has been delayed for a minimum of 6 months
- 3 Better living conditions, client has moved home, had repairs undertaken etc.

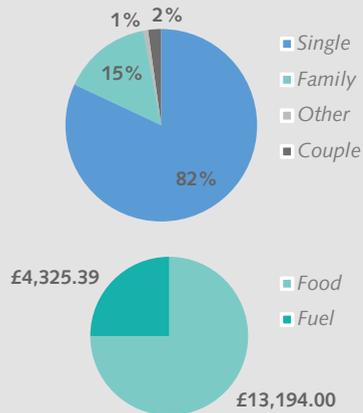
- 4 Could include debts reduced, increase in income, charity applications to purchase essential household items etc.
- 5 CV writing, assistance with job applications, interviewing skills etc.
- 6 Better communication within the home, relationships with friends, family or professionals etc.
- 7 Assistance with applications, attendance at open days/taster events, support to research courses etc.

## CHARNWOOD WELFARE PROVISION SHOWS A 32% INCREASE IN NEED AMONGST SINGLE PEOPLE

	17/18	% Change	16/17
<b>Fuel</b>	£13,194.00	-23%	£17,115.00
<b>Food</b>	£4,325.39	2%	£4,252.58
<b>Total</b>	<b>£17,519.39</b>	<b>-18%</b>	<b>£21,367.58</b>

Category	17/18 %	% Change	16/17 %
Single	82%	<b>32%</b>	62%
Family	15%	<b>-53%</b>	32%
Couple	1%	<b>-69%</b>	3%
Other	2%	<b>-21%</b>	3%



Source: Internal case data April 16 – March 18



### NASA who?

The Bridge, in partnership with Citizens Advice, Loughborough University and Charnwood Borough Council, beat NASA to first place in the International Knowledge Management and Intellectual Capital Awards.



### New year, new website:

Whilst writing this report, we have launched a new website with developed features and brand positioning & imagery to improve our service offering to clients and key stakeholders.



### Positive first year delivery of a new service:

Rutland Wellbeing and Community Service launched in April 2017 with Citizens Advice, and Spire Homes and has since achieved 73% improved mental health, and 80% improved independence for clients.

### Successful award of the Henry Smith Revenue grant:

We were successful in being awarded the prestigious Henry Smith grant of £112,800 over 3 years funding the salary for our Head of Housing Services.



### Awarded Big Potential Fund to become social investment ready:

Successfully secured £29,600 to upskill the organisation in regards to market scoping and financial modelling for the purpose of diversifying income through social investment.

### Public heroes help raise £17,489.90:

We would like to say a big thank you to those who generously donated and thereby contributed to our core costs, delivery of services, and provision of emergency food parcels.



# YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES



Together, the young people's services have had a fantastic year, having **supported 224 young people**, achieved a **100% success rate of preventing youth homelessness**, celebrated landmark anniversaries, achieved recognition as best practice in homelessness mediation and featured in Homeless Link's 'Young & Homeless' Report 2018. In September 2018 our young people's services came second in the category 'Excellence in Supporting Young People' at the 2018 Homeless Link Awards.

## talk<sup>2</sup>sort specialist mediation for 11-19 year olds

In the last year talk<sup>2</sup>sort celebrated its 15th anniversary. The service has evolved and expanded in order to meet needs of the children, young people and families who access our service. Consistent with the leading cause of youth homelessness, we have supported an increasing number of families this year who have experienced family breakdown, and recognise the impact that this can have on general emotional wellbeing, mental health and physical health. As a result of the support received, **77% of clients reported either an improved home life or improved family relationships** demonstrating the importance of mediation as a preventative measure.

**Chantelle Bramley** (*Specialist Services Team Manager*)

## Single Access Point for 16/17 year olds living in Charnwood at risk of homelessness

We are proud to be in our 10th year of delivering the Single Access Point. We continue to provide intensive and holistic support to young people and their families and aim to ensure that young people accessing the SAP can plan for their future accommodation needs. As with concerns of talk<sup>2</sup>sort, we continue to see family breakdown as the driver for youth homelessness. Over half of the young people we supported this year needed our help because of this reason. Welfare reform is also having a huge impact on youth homelessness, so with the introduction of Universal Credit in Leicestershire, we are anticipating and preparing for a rise in the need for our services.

**Leanne Fletcher** (*Advice Services Team Manager*)



(Source: Internal Case Data April 2017 – March 2018)



**50 young people accessed our Drop In Services**



**At the time of referral, 87% of families are experiencing conflict in parental relationships**

# TALK<sup>2</sup>SORT ZAFIRA'S STORY

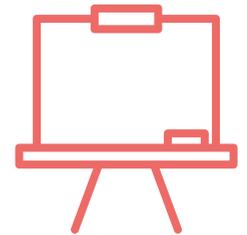
Zafira resided with her mother and her brother, Vivaan, who suffered from severe physical disabilities. She shared how worried she was for her mother spending every hour tending to Vivaan's high needs. Zafira would do her best to help whenever she could, whether cooking dinner or keeping Vivaan occupied. Although she felt positive for doing so, she begrudged the fact that she spent very little quality time with her mother.

Zafira had recently moved school and became victim to bullying. Sadly, in her next mediation session, she informed the mediator that Vivaan had passed away. Zafira did not wish to be at school and had missed several lessons over that week.

In relation to the bullying, Zafira opened up to different family members and the school's pastoral team, and also began responding in a "civil" manner which ceased the issues she had with them. Zafira also shared with her mother how she was feeling about the lack of time spent together.

In her final mediation session, Zafira said she felt much more confident and that the issues at school were rectified. She was attending all her lessons again and she and her mother were spending more time together following Vivaan's funeral. In closing, she shared the following:

"THESE SESSIONS HAVE HELPED. IT HAS GIVEN ME SOMEONE TO TALK TO. YOU WOULD LISTEN AND YOU DIDN'T TELL ME WHAT TO DO. HOME IS NICE NOW AND WE GET LOTS OF FAMILY TIME. MUM SAID SHE'LL HAVE MORE TIME FOR ME AND I KNOW SHE'S THERE FOR ME".



# SINGLE ACCESS POINT (SAP) BROOKE'S STORY

Brooke first approached the SAP wanting to explore her housing options after she had left the family home as a result of a relationship breakdown with her family. Brooke said that substance misuse and low income were the main causes of arguments at home, which were breaking out almost daily.

Initially Brooke was anxious about seeking support and found it difficult to come in to the office, resulting in numerous missed appointment. A SAP Assessor arranged to complete a home visit to check in with Brooke and offer appropriate advice, at which point Brooke had returned to her family home.

During the visit, Brooke and her mother agreed that a referral to the talk<sup>2</sup>Sort Mediation Service would be beneficial in strengthening their relationship, but unfortunately did not follow through with support as it had not been the right time for them.

Brooke later approached the SAP service again with the support of her college teacher. The relationship between her and her mother had significantly deteriorated, causing Brooke to leave the family home once again.

Brooke said things had become unbearable at home as a result of the constant arguments, and that this was having a detrimental effect on her wellbeing. Brooke agreed that she would like a further referral to the talk<sup>2</sup>sort Service. The family were also referred to our housing support service in order to support the family with maximising their income.

Brooke has been back at her family home for a significant period, and reports that her relationship with her mother is improving gradually.



**"THANK YOU FOR HELPING ME. IT'S BEEN A REALLY DIFFICULT TIME IN MY LIFE AND YOU GAVE ME THE SUPPORT I NEEDED, WHICH I AM FOREVER GRATEFUL FOR."**

**Brooke**



# SUPPORT SERVICES

**Our Support Services consist of:**

**Housing Matters Partnership:**

**Rutland Access Partnership**  
A partnership between The Bridge, Citizen Advice Rutland & Spire Homes

**Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme project.**



Our support services work to support vulnerable people and their families across Leicestershire and Rutland with a range of issues affecting their tenancy and independence such as, rent arrears and debts, substance misuse and mental health difficulties.

The last year has seen our clients faced with additional challenges as a result forthcoming Universal Credit Full Service roll out. A high number of clients have lacked confidence in their digital skills and also felt concerned about the impact this change would have on their finances. To provide the best support our clients, we have liaised with the Job Centre Plus District Manager as well as the Job Centre Plus Managers at a local level, in order to better improve relationships and our understanding of Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) systems. This has enabled the team to better support our clients through the welfare reform changes, not only by increasing their knowledge base but also through positive joint working with clients and DWP colleagues, to ensure that the transition has been as smooth as possible.

Consequently over 82% of support services clients reported that they felt their financial circumstances had improved.

**Molly Boggis** (Support Services Team Manager)

**77%** Feel more independent

**63%** Improved confidence and self esteem

**69%** Improved mental health

# HOUSING MATTERS FOR FAMILIES SUSANNAH'S STORY

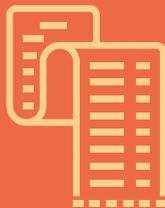
Susannah suffered from anxiety and depression, made worse by her personal circumstance as she had previously been a victim of domestic abuse and had over £5,000 of debt. Susannah quickly became overwhelmed and found it difficult to stay on top of anything in her life. One of the biggest problems was that she felt she had no one to talk to.

Susannah's allocated Family Housing Support Worker was supporting her to be as independent as possible and to tackle her problems head on. A council payment plan was set-up to address her rent arrears. This meant that Susannah was able to make small, manageable payments towards her other debts whilst she processed a Debt Relief Order through a Money Advice Service. Helping Susannah to understand this process and supporting her through this period relieved a huge amount of stress for her.

Susannah's support worker also discussed mental health support services that were available for Susannah to access should she wish, and a referral was made to Let's Talk Wellbeing, who have since worked with Susannah to address her anxiety and depression.

Through support from Housing Matters for Families, Susannah has achieved a huge amount. She has been able to speak to her Freedom Programme Tutor about her ex-partner, supported to make a Council Tax Support claim, received career advice, and contacted her solicitor to organise legal aid so that she can begin divorce proceedings.

The support given to Susannah has always been about enabling her to solve her own problems. With reassurance, guidance and time she has found it possible to make changes, where she previously felt helpless. Susannah now feels more positive and has cleared her house, which she had found difficult to keep on top of, and now has a lovely home for herself, her children and grandchildren.



# ADVICE SERVICES

Our Housing Advice service provides free and independent advice to residents of Charnwood who have a housing issue and includes the provision of the County Housing Advice Line (CHAL). We also have a dedicated Tenancy Relations Officer who specialises in advice for private tenants and landlords.

In the last year we have helped over 1000 people to improve or resolve a housing issue, varying from homelessness, illegal eviction, and rent arrears to relationship breakdown. We have seen a 227% increase in people requiring our advice due to the loss of private rented accommodation over the last year. This echoes the national picture of homelessness which has risen dramatically over the last few years, largely due to the rising numbers of people being made homeless from the private rented sector.

We have also seen one of the biggest changes to the rights of homeless people in 15 years through the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The new legislation increases the focus on homelessness prevention and extends the support offered to homeless/potentially homeless households.

We are very proud to have achieved, the highest possible compliance against the Advice Quality Standard (AQS) following an audit. The service also received commendation in a number of areas of best practice.

**Leanne Fletcher** (Advice Services Team Manager)



**100%** of CHAL callers had their issue resolved



**69%** improved finances relating to housing

**80%** of possession actions adjourned or delayed



**85%** homelessness prevented or relieved

(Source: Internal Case Data April 2017 – March 2018)

# HOUSING ADVICE KIM'S STORY

Kim approached The Bridge for advice about moving to larger accommodation after finding out that she was expecting her second child. She, her partner and their 3 year old son were living in a very small privately rented house. The landlord had already told her that he didn't want another child in the property and had written to say he would not be renewing the tenancy in August.

Kim had applied to Charnwood Borough Council for housing but was only assessed as Low Band because, with a two bedroomed house, she was considered to be suitably housed. The landlords' letter was not a valid notice and so did not increase her priority. Kim couldn't afford the costs associated with securing another private let so she was concerned about having nowhere to go if she was evicted and about the lack of space if she remained.

The Housing Adviser explained the steps necessary for an eviction and then talked to Kim in more detail about her current accommodation to check that her banding was correct. It became apparent that the dimensions of the 2 bedrooms in Kim's accommodation were unusually small and there was a possibility that the family were already 'statutorily overcrowded'.

If this proved to be the case they would qualify for the Priority Band and so the Housing Adviser agreed to contact Private Sector Housing at Charnwood Borough Council and ask for an assessment to be carried out.

Within a week the assessment had been done and the application was moved from Low to Priority band. Just over 2 months later Kim signed a tenancy for a brand new house.



"THE ADVISER WAS REALLY, REALLY HELPFUL. EVERYONE I SPOKE TO WAS PATIENT AND UNDERSTANDING. THE BRIDGE PROVIDES AN EXCELLENT SERVICE FOR PEOPLE WHEN THEY DON'T KNOW WHERE ELSE TO TURN".



# ROUGH SLEEPER PROGRAMME

In partnership with Charnwood Borough Council, we deliver the Rough Sleeper Programme working to prevent and relieve an individual's homelessness where they are/will be sleeping rough, across Leicestershire.

Between January 2017 and April 2018, we have **supported 817 clients, accommodating 400, 240 of whom were accommodated after a period of rough sleeping, and we prevented 160 clients from rough sleeping.**

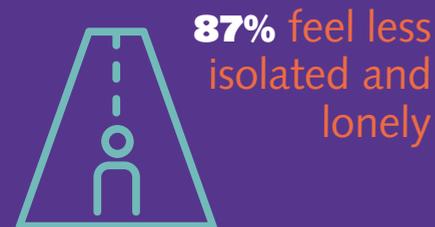
In the last year we have seen an increase in 'hidden homelessness', a term used for those sofa surfing, living in their cars or in outbuildings, and tends to affect single people who are in low paid employment with low level support needs.

One of the main reasons for homelessness in our area continues to be relationship breakdown, either with a partner or family. We have also seen an increase in the number of referrals for those who are being released from prison.

**Over 60% of the clients we have worked with have disclosed mental health issues, with over 40% disclosing an offending history and over 55% disclosed that they had a history of substance misuse.** As a result, one of our biggest challenges has been finding suitable and sustainable accommodation for those who have multiple, complex needs, prolonging a client's homelessness.

With the increase in homelessness amongst ex-prisoners, we have developed positive links with local prisons and local hospitals, enabling us to work with people prior to release and hospital discharge to prevent rough sleeping or a return to homelessness.

**Sarah Weaver** (Homeless Transitions Coordinator)



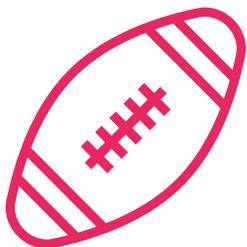
# ROUGH SLEEPER PROGRAMME NEIL'S STORY

Neil had been sleeping in his car for nearly half a year upon first interaction with The Bridge. He had left his previous area due to not being able to manage his tenancy, a breakdown in his marital relationship, and to be closer to his family to improve his support network. Unfortunately, he did not meet the local connection threshold for the Local Authority, so was at a loss as to what to do.

Whilst working with Neil he said he had lived a happy life, been happily married, with two beautiful children, and a great job. He was a keen rugby player, until he suffered trauma to the head which brought on a number of mental health issues which he was receiving limited support for.

During our work with Neil we supported him in accessing the benefits to which he was entitled, including successfully appealing against a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) decision. We supported his parents enabling them to have Neil stay with them short term. An Adult Safeguarding Assessment was completed and identified additional support for Neil and we have supported him in successfully making a homelessness application with the Local Authority.

Although Neil is still 'homeless' he has been able to continue to stay with his parents on a temporary basis and has now been placed in priority banding with his Local Authority and is actively bidding on properties.



"AT FIRST I WAS REALLY CONFUSED WITH THE NUMBER OF DIFFERENT AGENCIES, BUT SARAH HAS BEEN INCREDIBLE. AND IF I COULD SAY ANYTHING TO SOMEONE READING THIS, IT IS KEEP BATTLING, BECAUSE YOU WILL WIN".



# CUSTOMER SERVICES

In the last year we have seen a **7% increase in footfall**. Because of the growing need for support, we appointed a second Housing Triage Worker to provide extra support and a good service to clients that approach The Bridge.

Unsurprisingly, two areas that continue to dominate in terms of client enquiries is accommodation, and emergency food/fuel provisions. This is echoed by the UK's foodbank network who reported their services have never been in such high demand as benefit levels fall short of the rising cost of essential items.

This need has been recognised through our Charnwood Welfare Provision scheme, in which **30% of those we issued Hot Food Vouchers to have reported as being street homeless or of no fixed abode.**

# JASON'S STORY

Jason first approached the Bridge as he was sleeping in his car. He was quite distraught and struggling to identify the actions he needed to take to address his situation. We referred Jason to Charnwood Borough Council who prepared a personal housing plan, and assigned him to our Rough Sleeper Programme. We identified that we were able to assist Jason with the following actions:

- Charnwood Welfare Provision
- Information on food available in the Borough
- Use The Bridge as a care of address
- Approach Job Centre Plus to make a new claim for Universal Credit
- Contact a local charity (Exaireo) for assessment of accommodation needs

Jason calls into the office on a regular basis and said that he is beginning to feel increasingly confident and able to deal with his situation more proactively. He has been very grateful for the support he's received.



**2,561** Referrals for Customer Service support

**505** awards Charnwood Welfare Provision emergency provisions

Finalist in the category **'Frontline team of the year'** (under 12,000 homes)' at the 2018 Housing Heroes Awards.

# BUILDING BETTER OPPORTUNITIES

Building Better Opportunities (BBO) is a programme jointly funded by the Big Lottery and the European Social Fund. The programme is supporting projects which tackle the root causes of poverty, promote social inclusion and drive local jobs and growth. The Bridge is a delivery partner for two projects within Leicestershire, both in their second successful year.

## Youth Employability Support (YES)

The YES Project supports young people between 15 and 24 who are furthest from employment, education or training. Our Intensive Young Persons Support Worker works holistically with those individuals who need more support to break down barriers to work, such as mental health, homelessness and family breakdown.

This year, we have supported an increasing number of young people disengaged from education or training as a result of anxiety and poor emotional wellbeing. As a result of this, we are ensuring that support is tailored around these needs in order to ensure young people can work towards positive change.

## Moneywise Plus

The Community Engagement Team based at The Bridge is one of the delivery partners for Moneywise Plus. The project supports unemployed and economically inactive individuals across Leicester and Leicestershire to increase confidence around digital and financial skills to better prepare for work, education or training. The team helps to engage, assess suitability and sign individuals up to the project, whilst supporting them to identify what their goals are and signposting to the appropriate service.

As a service, we have helped to support individuals reduce isolation and increase confidence and feelings of self-worth. We have empowered individuals to recognise that regardless of age or experience they can engage, learn and achieve, thereby taking steps towards entering work, education or training.

**Chantelle Bramley** (Specialist Services Manager)



# THE YES PROJECT RICKY'S STORY

21 year old Ricky was referred to Vickee for support with his benefits and mental health. Ricky explained that he often felt extremely anxious, depressed and had a history of self-harm. Ricky was unaware of what support was available to him and so Vickee talked this through with him. He wanted support with applying for jobs, accessing support for his mental health, and benefit/budgeting support. Vickee completed confidence building work with Ricky and he agreed he was ready for support from his GP. Ricky was very anxious about attending this appointment himself and was happy for Vickee to attend with him for support. Ricky accessed the support available to him for his mental health and was happy that his need was being addressed.

Ricky had his Universal Credit sanctioned for 6 months due to missed appointments as a result of his mental health. Vickee liaised with Universal Credit and was able to submit a sicknote. Vickee supported Ricky to apply for hardship payments during this period and access food parcels.

Ricky's self-confidence increased dramatically, and he secured a sales assistant role at a local store that he enjoys.

"OFFICIALLY NO LONGER WORKING WITH THE YES PROJECT AND THE BRIDGE. IT HAS BEEN ONE OF THE BEST THINGS TO HAPPEN TO ME IN TERMS OF MAKING PROGRESS IN LIFE. THEY'VE HELPED ME WITH BENEFITS, HELPED ME WITH FOOD, HELPED ME GET INTO MEDIA, HELPED ME SEEK HELP FOR MY MENTAL HEALTH, AND THEY HAVE HELPED ME GET IN TO WORK!

VICKEE, WHO HAS HELPED ME SO MUCH WITH THE JOB CENTRE STUFF, AND IN MY MIND, MOST CRUCIALLY SHE HAS HELPED ME FIND THE HELP I NEED TO COPE WITH MY MENTAL HEALTH.

OVERALL IT HAS BEEN AN INCREDIBLE EXPERIENCE AND TIME WITH THE YES PROJECT. I'M SO PROUD OF WHAT I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE, AND I OWE IT ALL TO THEM!"



# COMMUNICATIONS & FUNDRAISING

The last year has been exciting for The Bridge, with the appointment of my position as Communications & Fundraising Manager for the first time in 20+ years.

Firstly, this year has seen us take a more human centred approach towards our brand image, which has filtered through into our communications. Our new brand **champions our clients**, and the **word 'homeless'**. We're not shying away from the matter at hand, and instead, encouraging our clients to tell their stories, and to own them with pride. You can see these on our new website: [www.thebridge-eastmidlands.org.uk/case-studies](http://www.thebridge-eastmidlands.org.uk/case-studies). We have seen a surprising amount of enthusiasm from clients who are eager to let their stories help others.

With that in mind, our biggest priority this year was redeveloping the website. As our online shop front, our story needed to be clear from the outset, creating a robust base for all communications. We have worked tirelessly with DesignSource & Jacit Web Developers to bring this together. The website boasts new functions such as an Online Triage Survey, and online Referral Form, revolutionising how people understand and access the help available. Additionally, the new site works to improve the organisations efficiencies by digitalising processes such as recruitment and referrals.

Secondly, in regards to The Bridge (East Midlands) fundraising efforts, the year has been busy generating unrestricted income. We have written to 47 Grant and Trust Fund providers with a success rate of 11%, in line with the expected return of 1 in 10.

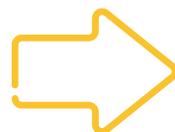
This year also marked some firsts in terms of fundraising for The Bridge. One of our colleagues at the Loughborough Job Centre Plus ran the Leicester Marathon, raising £123. We executed our first ever Christmas donations appeal across Facebook & JustGiving generating a return of £1,208. And we are now fully integrated with a Donor Management System, E-tapestry.

Looking forward, the coming year is shaping up to be more diversified, and focussed on fundraising, with plans to develop:

- Pledge based fundraising through sponsored races;
- Event fundraising;
- Online donations driven through external communications on 3rd party sites;
- Optimised Christmas appeal.

Finally, I would like to say a huge thank you to all of our supporters and donors, and engagers with online content. We do all this to support an incredibly disadvantaged group of individuals, which without your support would not be possible.

**Georgina Sothcott-Gilson** (*Communications & Fundraising Manager*)



# LOOKING FORWARD



As we're on our journey through 2018/19 and looking forward to 2019/20 we recognise the significant challenges ahead for the voluntary sector in terms of sustainability and growth as government contracts reduce and competition for alternative funding increases. In order to continue delivering the vital services our community needs, and relies upon, we need to overcome these challenges and find a way to survive in a time of continued austerity.

To ensure our continued survival, The Bridge, and the voluntary sector, must collectively innovate and trial new ways of working. We have a strong reputation for driving forward new and long-term partnerships which achieve bigger and better things for our clients. This is why moving forward with a strengthened approach to multi-agency working will be key to our success.

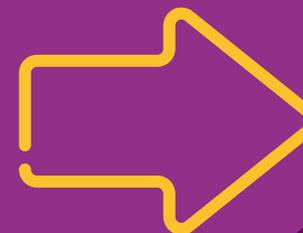
With this in mind, The Bridge is currently exploring social investment as another source of income. This will provide greater flexibility to innovate and achieve wider social impact, working with our voluntary sector and local authority partners.

Additionally, in August 2017 we incorporated a new company, The Bridge (Trading) East Midlands Ltd., which will afford us greater opportunity to generate unrestricted income for the charity through training, consultancy, and development work.

I am excited to oversee development in the coming year as we embark on sourcing new funding streams and partnerships that will enable our organisation to grow and respond to the needs of communities across Leicestershire and Rutland.

With very best wishes,

**Paul Snape** (*Head of Business Development*)



# OUR STAFF

"I am extremely proud of my high performing team. We invest significantly in their training and development. However, what makes them stand out from the crowd is their compassion, commitment and a desire to be as good as they can be. These are the core qualities we look out for when recruiting new staff, and once on the team we keep nurturing those values." - Peter Davey (Chief Officer)

**114 Courses Attended**

### Courses included:



### Welcoming new staff:

- Hannah Brookhouse
- Suzette Tonks
- Susan Holyoake
- Jenny Condron
- Clare Fillingham
- Grace Gallimore
- Joanna Carter
- Lucy Bryan
- Nicola Brown
- Fiona Atkinson
- Rufus Roberts

**Congratulations** to both Nozi and her partner Shelton & Kerry and her partner Steve on the arrival of baby Shalom and Layla-Rose

**Congratulations** Congratulation to Chantelle Bramley and her partner Tom on their Wedding.



# OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

- 3 Nuns LTD
- Advice Quality Standard
- Albert Hunt Trust
- ASAP Promo Ltd
- Ashmount School
- Beacon Rotary Club
- Loughborough
- Big Lottery Fund
- Blaby District Council
- Broomfield School
- Chandra Yoga-Lindsey Watson
- Charnwood Borough Council
- Children in Need
- Citizens Advice Charnwood
- Citizens Advice Leicestershire
- Citizens Advice Rutland
- CLG Homeless Prevention
- Clothworkers
- Countesthorpe Community College
- Coutts and Co
- De Lisle Academy
- DLNR Community Rehabilitation Company
- European Social Fund
- Fairfield Preparatory School
- Falcon Support Services
- Florence Turner Trust
- Fundraising Regulator
- Good Shepherd Wednesday Club
- Harborough District Council
- Hardwick House School
- Henry Smith Charity
- Hinckley & Bosworth District Council
- HM Probation Service
- Holy Trinity Church
- ISO 9001
- Iveshead School
- JobCentre Plus Loughborough
- John Storer House
- Kingsthorpe Methodist Church
- Leathersellers Company
- Leicester City Council
- Leicestershire County Council
- Limehurst Academy
- Living without Abuse
- Lloyds Bank Foundation
- Long Whatton C of E Primary School
- Loughborough College
- Loughborough Gospel Hall
- Loughborough High School
- Loughborough University
- Loughborough University Students Union
- Loughborough Welfare Trust
- Lutterworth College
- Melton Borough Council
- Newtown Linford School
- North West Leicestershire District Council
- Nottingham Community Housing Association
- Oadby & Wigston Borough Council
- PACE
- Pat White Flower Arranging
- Perdiem
- Prospects
- Public Sector Health
- Queens Park Bowles
- Quorn Baptist Church
- Quorn Church
- Rawlins College

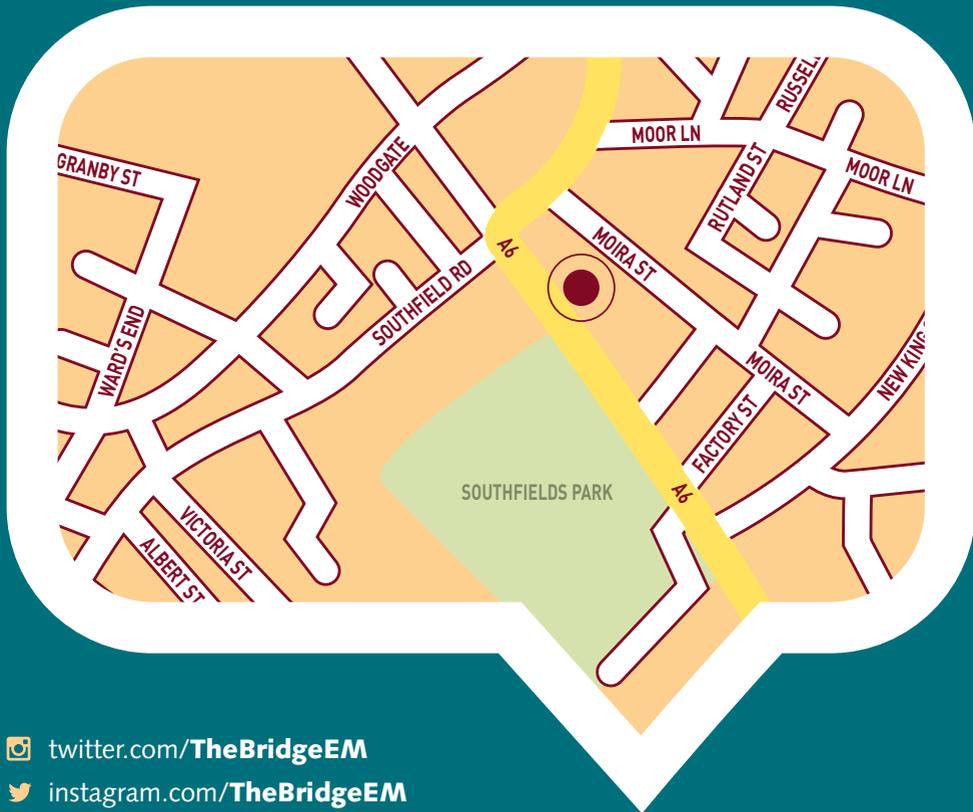
- Reaching People Consortium
- Roundhill Academy
- Rutland County Council
- Sibleby Redlands Community Primary School
- Spire Homes
- St Bartholomew's School
- Staffline OSP
- Stonewater Housing Association
- Syston Town Charity
- The Needle & Pin
- The Y
- Twenty Twenty
- Voluntary Action Leicestershire
- Wakefield Lodge Primary School
- Youth Offending Services

**"THANK YOU TO ALL WHO DONATED THROUGH JUSTGIVING, PAY PAL & VIRGIN MONEY. YOUR SUPPORT GOES A LONG WAY!"**



**Thankyou**





-  [twitter.com/TheBridgeEM](https://twitter.com/TheBridgeEM)
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-  [facebook.com/TheBridgeEastMidlands](https://www.facebook.com/TheBridgeEastMidlands)

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**Web:** [www.thebridge-eastmidlands.org.uk](http://www.thebridge-eastmidlands.org.uk)  
**Charity No:** 1050596  
**Company No:** 03114996



**To donate** text TBEM38 followed by the amount to the number 70070 (You can only donate £1, £2, £3, £4, £5 or £10 by text)

[www.thebridge-eastmidlands.org.uk/donate-now](http://www.thebridge-eastmidlands.org.uk/donate-now)

