



The bridge[™]

IMPACT REPORT
2019/2020

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

IN MEMORY
OF KEVIN BURT
1944 - 2020

CONTENTS

"DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES THROUGH PARTNERSHIP, EMPOWERMENT AND GOOD PRACTICE."

READ CHARMAINE'S STORY ON OUR WEBSITE



- 03. A Welcome from the Chief Officer
- 04. A Message from the Chair of the Board
- 05. Paul's Story
- 06. How Your Donations Help
- 07. Sue's Story
- 08. The Bridge Turns 25: Our Journey
- 12. Numbers to Note
- 13. Highlights of the Year
- 14. Achieving Our Strategy
- 16. Looking Forward
- 18. Our New 4 Year Plan
- 20. Food Poverty
- 21. Customer Services
- 22. Darren's Story
- 24. Housing Advice
- 25. Neil's Story

- 26. Youth Homelessness Services
- 27. Anna and Seb's Story
- 28. Shannon's Story
- 30. Support Services
- 32. Scott's Story
- 33. Dawn's Story
- 34. Homeless Offenders Service
- 35. Steve's Story
- 36. Building Better Opportunities
- 37. Lydia's Story
- 38. Adam's Story
- 39. Rachel's Story
- 40. Our Staff
- 42. Partners and Supporters



A WELCOME FROM THE CHIEF OFFICER

A very warm welcome to this year's Annual Review – as usual we'll be looking back and looking forward. It's quite a big year for everyone at The Bridge, as 2020 marks our 25th Anniversary.

The organisation was originally formed to provide a two week Christmas Shelter for homeless people. We transformed two churches, providing up to 50 places for rough sleepers. Our mission was to provide some winter comfort, some kindness, and a non-judgemental space where people could access a doctor, a dentist, and a chiropodist.

They could have hot showers, haircuts, new clothes, nourishing food and Christmas gifts. It was a huge success, and I know that many lives were saved as a result. The final piece of the jigsaw was providing housing and homelessness advice, seeking accommodation for our guests when the shelter closed.

We have been fortunate to grow our organisation to meet a more wide ranging set of needs – and you can find out more about that as you read on.

On a sad note, one of our original founders, Kevin Burt, passed away earlier this year. Kevin interviewed me for my post, and remained an active volunteer up until very recently. I dedicate this year's report to him, and pay tribute for all he did. He is featured on our front cover.

This year, we wished Geoff Parker, Chief Executive at Charnwood Borough Council, a long and happy retirement; welcoming Rob Mitchell as the new Chief. Rob brings great energy to the role and I look forward to working with him. We value our special relationship with the council, and it is testament to the fact that highly successful partnerships are a long term investment.

We also had a change of MP, with Jane Hunt elected as Nicky Morgan's successor. Nicky was a hardworking, dedicated MP, always accessible and supportive, and I would like to say thanks for her public service. I know Jane, our new MP, very well through her previous role in Nicky's office, and from her time as a borough councillor. We'll work together to resolve issues for our constituents.

Finally, thanks and appreciation goes to my staff: they achieve so much, always with kindness, purpose and compassion. I also pay tribute to my supportive Board, who we continue to invest in, and I'm excited to announce that we have five new Trustees, bringing a wealth of knowledge and skills.

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.



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

As I look out onto the garden with the sun shining, it is easy to be lulled into a false sense of security. The world has changed so much in the last few months that the daily normality of The Bridge has had to adapt to the ever-changing circumstances.

Despite Covid-19 challenges, we have protected jobs and the services we deliver. The Senior Management Team have done a tremendous job in ensuring this.

This is our 25th Anniversary year! Who would have thought how much things would change; forced to temporarily close our front facing doors, delivering services at this most crucial time in a completely new and socially-distanced way, while dealing with additional, new and very vulnerable clients.

Our services have never been more important. We have seen such generosity of spirit from the public, businesses, local organisations, councils, churches, politicians, and more. Thank you all so much for your continued support.

I would like to record my sincere thanks to Rachel White, who retired from the Board in November. Over the years, Rachel has been a stalwart of the Board and the organisation; always happy to lend a hand, supporting staff and the Board in everything we do. Someone

more dedicated to our cause would be hard to find. We thank her for her hard work, her friendship and her support and wish her all the very best for the future.

During the year, another of our Trustees (Pauline Morrison) sadly left the Board. We thank her for all the hard work and support that she gave to us all during her tenure. Prior to March 2020, the Board were fortunate to appoint Rosemary Thomas, and since the year end another four Members: Amanda Soraghan, Helen Tighe, Steve Ablett, and Joanne Emmet. I thank them all for joining us and hope that they will enjoy being part of such a fabulous organisation.

I also want to pay tribute to our dedicated and hard-working existing Board of Trustees, who do so much to support the organisation: Richard White, Jon Olds, Karen Jewell, Sue Lees and Ashiedu Joel. They continue to ensure that we undertake our governance role properly, supporting the organisation and giving unstintingly their time and expertise.

No organisation can exist without the hard work of its Executive Officers and the staff and I want to thank them all for the fabulous work that they have undertaken during the last 12 months.

Jay Webb (*Chair of the Board of Trustees*)



Amanda Soraghan



Jay Webb
Rosie Thomas



Jo Emmett
Ashiedu Joel



Sue Lees
Jon Olds



Steve Ablett
Karen Jewell



Richard White
Helen Tighe



PAUL AND FAMILY'S STORY...

"My son started to struggle with school life, approaching his GCSE's. I could see his enthusiasm and demeanour had changed. We couldn't identify what the problem was.

"talk²sort Mediation was non-judgmental and we felt confident that we would be supported in the right way. We saw our mediator once or twice a month for about a year. He was our lifeline.

"As parents, we recognised that there are things that you often don't want to tell your family. Also, giving him a place to go to if he needed it, was really good.

"For me personally, it helped distil what I was seeing and feeling, offering exercises to help me work out how best to support my son. It helped me identify where priorities might be; until you experience a new situation, it's hard to recognise what is important and what needs to be done.

"As a dad and husband, figuring out how best to support my wife and working out together what our kids want from us, what their priorities are, is difficult, especially juggling jobs and day-to-day life stuff. That can get overwhelming in itself sometimes.

"I've learned a lot about the importance of having family space: meal times, a morning or weekend together. No agenda, just spending time with each other. It's powerful."

"I'VE LEARNED A LOT ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING FAMILY SPACE"



HOW YOUR DONATIONS HELP...

You can create brighter futures for those facing housing crisis.

£10 can provide 3 telephone assessment calls for local people in need.

This year, our services have continued to thrive with the generosity of local businesses, community members, organisations, and trust funders. By branching out into different fundraising methods we are constantly blown away by the efforts our community goes to in order to help our clients.

Whether this is taking part in the Loughborough Santa Fun Run, organising food donations at the local church, or hosting a 'Silly Jumper' day in the office – we want to say thank you for enabling the work that we do.

Thanks to you, our 2019/20 community donation total was a whopping £17,249.82.

Moreover, we have seen consistent increases in the amount of support we receive online, on social media and in the community. I have had the pleasure of attending events, from fayres, to school assemblies to raise awareness of our work.

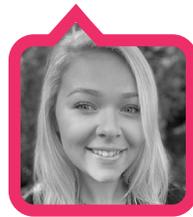
We hugely appreciate every click, every share of our posts and every word-of-mouth conversation: each time you support us, more local people find out about the services we offer.

Throughout 2020, we are celebrating our 25th Anniversary, for which we have set a £25,000 community donation fundraising target. We hope you will continue to support us in reaching our milestone target to mark the occasion.

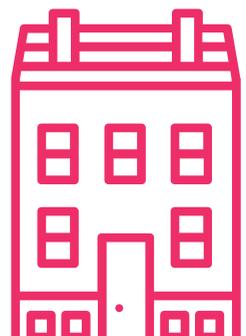
Big or small, every donation counts.

With your help, we can keep local people off the streets.

Jessica Metson
(Communications and Fundraising Manager)



"£17,249 WAS GENEROUSLY DONATED BY INDIVIDUALS, BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITY GROUPS. THANK YOU!"



SUE'S STORY...

After being offered a job in the area, Sue left her hometown and relocated... But the job didn't materialise. The money she had barely covered her initial moving costs and she was left with nothing; she was supported by Housing Matters.

"When the job didn't materialise, nobody had told me that I had to pay rent at that particular time and I ended up with a lot of arrears. I was referred to The Bridge and everyone was so helpful.

"They helped me no end with things like my debts and a Starter Pack including household items. They gave me two packs of food and I just cried. Sometimes it's the little things.

"Applying for Universal Credit is a long process and I didn't have any money from August until October. It was awful.

"My Housing Matters Support Worker helped me through this, balancing bills and referring me to other agencies that could help. It wasn't just rent arrears; it was water, TV license, phone bills. I was so confused.

"If it wasn't for everybody's help, I don't know where we would be. I still have my Support Worker to make sure I can maintain the tenancy, but I can think positively about the future now."

> Read Sue's full story on our website.



"IF IT WASN'T FOR EVERYBODY'S HELP, I DON'T KNOW WHERE WE WOULD BE."

THE BRIDGE TURNS 25...

OUR JOURNEY



The Bridge has been on a long journey from its small beginnings in 1993, and its registration as a charity in 1995, to the 25th Anniversary we are celebrating throughout 2020.

In this time, The Bridge has dealt with tens of thousands of enquiries, helping individuals and families remain in safe and secure homes. We are committed to making a difference because we have a vision of a thriving, compassionate community, and we do really care.

We recognise that our work would not be possible without the support of local people, organisations and funders, like you.

To those in the community who gather up food donations, the businesses who fundraise for us regularly, the Local Authorities and Trusts who work with us, and everyone in between...

Thank you. You are helping us change lives, daily.



1993

Organisation first established as a Christmas Shelter for the homeless over the festive period.

1995

The Bridge Housing Advice Centre first opened due to the need for support all year round.



2000

Peter Davey appointed as Chief Executive.



2002

Housing Support service established.



2003

talk2sort mediation service established. In 2020, it remains the only youth homelessness mediation service in the East Midlands.



9



2006

We moved from our old premises, at The Annex on Southfields Road, in October after renovating a derelict building on Leicester Road.

2007

The last Christmas Shelter takes place.

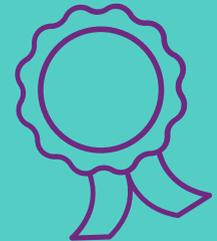


2008

Single Access Point established due to record numbers of youth homelessness locally.

2009

The Bridge is awarded 'Children & Young People Now' Awards.



2010

Housing Support service expanded to include Rutland.

2012

Housing Support expanded to deliver a county wide service.



2014

Our Choice and Control service was established.

2015

- Homeless Transitions service established.
- Single Access Point shortlisted for the 'Charity Awards'.



2016

- Moneywise Plus & the YES Project established in partnership with 'Reaching People' and 'Voluntary Action LeicesterShire'.
- Choice and Control service ended.



2017

- Rough Sleeper Programme and Rutland Community Prevention & Wellness services established.
- We beat NASA to first place at the International Knowledge Management and Intellectual Capital Awards for developing 'Charnwood Connect'



2018

- Our Young People's Services awarded the Early Intervention Award at the Children and Young People Now Awards.
- Awarded 2nd place at the Homeless Link Awards in the category of 'Excellence in Supporting People'



2019

- The Charnwood Food Poverty Group becomes operational.
- The Operational Management Team wins a Charnwood Community Heroes Award.
- Children in Need fund the expansion of talk²sort to include Leicester City and Rutland.
- The Rough Sleeper Project ends, and the Homeless Transitions for Offenders Service begins.
- Invited to showcase Youth Homelessness Services at 2x National Conferences.



2020

- The Bridge celebrates its 25th Anniversary!
- The Bridge joins Charnwood Community Action to help provide food provision throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The Rapid Rehousing Pathway for Leicestershire is extended.
- TheBridge²Excellence is launched.



NUMBERS TO NOTE

This year we have received **4,447** referrals for services...



...working with **2,190** households



OF OUR CLIENTS IN 2019-20...

99% happy with service received



Homelessness prevented for **96%**



Financial circumstances improved² for **89%**



Improved housing conditions for **93%**¹



75% supported with accessing education or training³

86% reported improved mental health



Improved physical health for **82%**



- ¹ Better living conditions can include moving home or having repairs undertaken, etc.
- ² Including debt reduction, increased income, or charity applications for essential household items.
- ³ Assistance with applications and research, attendance to open days, etc.
- ⁴ CV writing, assistance with job applications, interviewing skills, etc.
- ⁵ This could be attending community groups or events.
- ⁶ Including taking better care of oneself
- ⁷ Increased communicative skills, positive relationships with friends and family.

NB. Statistics relate to client defined outcomes upon closure of case

Reduced alcohol or drug consumption for **81%** with **87%** of people making more positive life choices⁶



66% supported in accessing or maintaining employment⁴



80% improved relationships and **81%** improved communication skills⁷



77% reported being less lonely or isolated

89% reduced involvement in crime or anti-social behaviour



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR



This year, The Bridge generated over £40,000 in funding for the expansion of the Charnwood Food Poverty Group, including a grant of £22,000 from the Intelligent Energy Trust, based in Loughborough, £7,000 from Mountsorrel United Charities and £10,000 from Leicestershire County Council's Shire Community Grant.

We were successful in applying to the Leicestershire Police and Crime Commissioner, and awarded £24,000 towards a Mediator to work with young people who have had incidences of going missing from home.



In response to the UK wide COVID-19 lockdown, The Bridge, working in partnership with Charnwood Borough Council and John Storer Charnwood, set up Charnwood Community Action to distribute food parcels locally, supporting around 600 households per week.

A new Rapid Rehousing Pathway to support those who are rough sleeping, to move quickly into accommodation and receive intensive support, was developed by The Bridge in partnership with the 7 District and Borough Councils in Leicestershire.



The Bridge, in partnership with Nottingham Community Housing Association and Falcon Support Services, tendered for the Homeless Prevention Contract in Leicestershire and were successful. The new contract began on 1st July 2020.

THE 5 YEAR STRATEGY IN ACTION

YEAR 4: 2019-20



As strategic lead, The Bridge has expanded the work of the Charnwood Food Poverty Group, consisting of 30 member organisations including the development of a new website, which outlines the work being undertaken locally to tackle food poverty.

1. We will develop our prevention and wellbeing offer



The Bridge was invited to share its best practice in relation to Youth Homelessness at two national conferences; 'Children and Young People Now: Early Help' and 'Population Health: Prevention is Better Than Cure'.

2. We will build resilience within communities and individuals



The Business Improvement Team have undertaken discrete projects to improve a number of areas of the organisation including the exploration of new recruitment practices.

3. We will maintain and enhance our reputation



4. We will strengthen and improve our systems and processes

The talk2sort Mediation Service passed its second Quality Audit, undertaken by the Public Health Directorate at Leicestershire County Council; passing all areas, with some highlighted as best practice.

The Bridge is appraising our premises options to determine the type of offices the organisation needs over the next 5 – 10 years.

5. We will ensure the organisation has a fit for purpose working environment



6. We will develop a creative and effective approach to communications, marketing and PR

The Bridge's Communication and Fundraising Manager has reinvigorated the organisation's website and social media channels, increasing the number of donations from business and the public.



8. We will develop an effective and sustainable funding model

The organisation has developed 'TheBridge²Excellence', bespoke training and consultancy. It delivered its first commissioned training course to public sector employees.



The Board of Trustees have kick-started a piece of work looking at the overall Governance of the organisation and have created a Governance Improvement Team.

7. We will review, reflect and improve upon everything we do



LOOKING FORWARD



As we are writing our annual report, the world is in the midst of a global pandemic, the likes of which has not been seen in a century. COVID-19 has rocked the world on a huge scale internationally, the impact of which will be felt for years to come.

However, the voluntary sector has done what it does best; stepping up with agility and creativity to ensure that support is provided to the most vulnerable people in society. In Charnwood, we have developed Charnwood Community Action (CCA), along with our partners, John Storer Charnwood, Charnwood Borough Council and Fearon Community Association.

CCA has ensured that emergency food supplies, and basic necessities, are delivered to those individuals and families who have had to shield or have been in financial hardship due to COVID-19. At the time of writing, CCA has just made its 10,000th emergency delivery since March 2020.

It is now August, and whilst we are coming out of lockdown and the country is opening up again, I am not sure we are all prepared for what might come in terms of job losses, homelessness and the longer term impact of the pandemic on people's mental and physical health.

Some of the short-term challenges for the country, and the voluntary sector, include the end of the 'Eviction Ban' on 20th September 2020, and the end of the Government's Furlough Job Retention Scheme on 31st October 2020. Latest figures released, anticipate that unemployment will rise from 3.9% to 7.5% by the end of the year; and whilst not quite as acute as the financial crash in 2008/9, the impact on already struggling individuals and families will be just as severe.

In respect of homelessness, COVID-19 has further highlighted the number of 'hidden homeless' people who exist in the country; those who do not normally get counted in official figures (statutory homelessness and rough sleeper counts). These 'hidden homeless' include those staying with friends or family or living on the streets who continually 'fall through the net'.

National statistics show there were

210,520 cases of homelessness prevention and relief¹

53,510 cases were of family and friends no longer wishing to accommodate¹

106,550 secured accommodation for 6+ months¹



HomelessLink suggests **4,266** people were deemed to be sleeping rough on a single 'typical' night in England, in autumn 2019.

Through the Government's 'Everyone In' programme (to ensure all homeless people can effectively self-isolate due to COVID-19), 5,400 people were provided with temporary accommodation in hotels and bed & breakfasts during lockdown; this figure is nearly 1,000 higher than the official rough sleeping figure for 2019/2020.

Moving forward, one of the biggest challenges facing local authorities and the voluntary sector is finding more permanent, and sustainable, longer-term accommodation solutions for those who have been accommodated over the past couple of months. Is there a workable, resourced solution, or do 5,400 people return to the streets? We are working with our colleagues at Crisis and Shelter to continue to campaign and lobby the Government.

At The Bridge, we have seen an unprecedented increase in the number of enquiries received for support, advice and emergency crisis interventions. In June 2020 alone, we saw a year on year increase of 93% in enquiries into our Customer Services Team.

But we do not see this as the end; as an organisation we are anticipating demand for our services to peak in the latter part of 2020 and in response, we are making plans to increase our capacity where we can. We have already received, and are extremely

grateful for, much needed and valued support from funders and our community throughout this crisis. However, our job is not done.

Over the next few months, we need to find the funding to increase our specialist housing advice provision; the team is already overstretched, and as we reopen our doors to the public, we anticipate demand to increase even more.

Being able to respond so quickly to unexpected challenges like COVID-19, highlights the strengths of the voluntary sector; we are innovative, adaptive, and amongst all this, resilient. This can be attributed to our forward-thinking vision, as a sector and individual organisations, and our ability to plan for the longer term.

As we approach our 25th Anniversary in October, The Bridge has developed its new four-year strategy which can be found on the next two pages. This has been the perfect opportunity for the organisation to review what we do, and what we want to achieve over the next few years.

Our new strategy provides us with a robust framework to build upon what we already do, to develop new and innovative solutions to the challenges which face us and the community, and to help provide families and individuals with the support they need. We will continue to work hard for a fairer and more just society.

With best wishes.

Paul Snape Deputy Chief Officer
(Head of Business Development)



¹ Compiled between April 2019 and December 2019 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

OUR STRATEGY 2020-2024



Our Vision

Resilient, compassionate communities where individuals thrive in safe and secure homes.

Our Mission

To develop sustainable housing solutions for individuals and communities through partnership, empowerment and good practice.

OUR CORE VALUES

Respect

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

Quality

We have a commitment to delivering excellence through promoting a culture of learning and continual improvement.

Our Ethos

1. We will maximise our impact by taking the most appropriate action
2. We will take a person-centred approach to all that we do
3. We will provide independent and accessible support for all

Partnership

We recognise the strengths of working together, with others, to develop trusting and positive relationships for the benefit of all, through open and honest communication.

Empowerment

We encourage the development of individuals' skills and knowledge. We help to build self-confidence and increase opportunities to make positive contributions.

Positivity

We take an optimistic and proactive approach to identifying, and exploring, the most beneficial options and solutions for all.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2020-2024

1. We will expand upon our early intervention and prevention offer

- a. We will build resilience in communities to combat loneliness, isolation, and stigma
- b. We will demonstrate the impact that sustainable housing has on health and wellbeing
- c. We will identify gaps in our service delivery and develop innovative solutions
- d. We will maintain and build upon the organisation's strategic relevance

Strategy Area: Stakeholder Perspective

2. We will ensure that everyone continues to be valued, nurtured, and respected

- a. We will invest in our staff and cultivate a high performing workforce
- b. We will strengthen our governance and cultivate a high performing Board
- c. We will adopt a strengths-based approach for the benefit of our clients
- d. We will be a competitive and well-regarded organisation to work for

Strategy Area: Internal Perspective

3. We will continually drive forward a sustainable organisation built upon our reputation and integrity

- a. We will create successful and innovative income generation solutions
- b. We will enhance our approach to marketing & PR to raise the organisations profile
- c. We will strive for the organisation to have continued nationwide recognition
- d. We will identify, and explore, effective finance and asset management opportunities

Strategy Area: Financial Perspective

4. We will be advocates of best practice, taking a reflective approach to continual improvement

- a. We will continue to invest in the ongoing improvement of the business
- b. We will better evidence our social value and impact, developing a robust reporting framework
- c. We will maintain high levels of compliance across the organisation
- d. We will establish a bespoke and supportive consultancy solution through TheBridge²Excellence

Strategy Area: Learning Perspective



FOOD POVERTY

The Charnwood Food Poverty Group (CFPG) has gained membership, momentum and recognition during 2019-20. The group now has a membership of in excess of 30 agencies who all believe in, and actively work towards, the aim of eradicating food poverty in Charnwood.

The CFPG have enhanced the food support on offer for the borough. Food provision has been wide-ranging and includes schemes to address school holiday hunger, to provide food parcels and to provide hot meals for people experiencing social isolation and hardship.

The success of the project has been due to working together in a coordinated way to achieve more for the local community. The generosity of local church groups, for example, has been a huge support in collectively moving the group's vision forward. An emphasis is placed upon appropriate signposting opportunities to empower anyone experiencing food poverty to address root causes and to work towards self-sufficiency.

THIS YEAR, THE CFPG DEBUTED THEIR NEW WEBSITE FEATURING RECIPES, SERVICE UPDATES AND NEWS.

At the end of this financial year, and at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Charnwood Food Poverty Group provided an existing infrastructure to be able to act quickly. As the lead organisation for the CFPG, The Bridge worked with partners to collectively provide emergency food for local residents. Throughout lockdown, around 600 households were supported weekly, and in August the initiative delivered their 10,000th food parcel.

Finally, I would like to place on record, our thanks to Joe McSharry (Open Heaven Church), for being the independent Chair of CFPG. His support and input is valued by us all.

Clare Fillingham
(Customer Services and Quality Manager)



Did you know?
Sadly, food poverty has been steadily increasing for a long time: from 2014-2019, the number of parcels being distributed rose by 73%.¹

¹ BBC News, 'Food bank supplies help record numbers', 2019.



CUSTOMER SERVICES TEAM

Customer Services (CST) are the first point of contact for people presenting in crisis and for all other general enquiries.

IN THE LAST YEAR, THE CST TEAM HAS RECEIVED 2,568 REFERRALS FOR INDIVIDUALS AGED BETWEEN 15 AND 89 YEARS OF AGE.

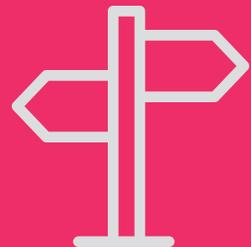
Each one of these referrals is triaged to assess which of The Bridge's specialist services are most appropriate, so that each client can access the support and assistance they require to resolve their issue. Furthermore, the team can assist people to access a range of help, such as:

- Offering Food and Toiletry Provision Parcels and Vouchers
- Signposting to services that can help people access debt advice/food parcels/meals/washing facilities
- Referrals to SOFA for discounted household goods

- Distributing Starter Packs (household essentials)
- Administering 'Care of Address' arrangements for clients without a home
- Phone use, particularly for those rough sleeping
- Assessing eligibility for Charnwood Welfare Provision, which is funded by Leicestershire County Council, to assist people in crisis who are without food/heating/lighting

For many clients, the reception staff at The Bridge are their first point of contact. We pride ourselves on welcoming every individual into our organisation, treating them with respect, and creating a non-judgmental atmosphere where people are empowered to make changes.

Hannah Brookhouse
(Senior Customer Services Officer)



WITHOUT JUDGEMENT: DARREN'S STORY...

"I HAD TRIED MANY TIMES BEFORE AND IT WENT WRONG, BUT THINGS FINALLY FEEL LIKE THEY ARE WORKING OUT. I HAVEN'T HAD A DRINK IN EIGHT WEEKS."

Darren was homeless for a number of years on release from prison and was regularly supported by Customer Services. This year, he took the steps needed to address his addiction problems and is now housed and planning his future.

"I was sleeping in parks, bushes, on sofas... I would present to the council, who recommended The Bridge, and that's where the support started really. I was surrounded by temptation.

"I felt welcomed. They gave me directions, telling me how to apply for housing but also doing a lot themselves behind the scenes.

"Even when I missed appointments, or was in a bad state, the Reception team would always accept me again. It meant a lot because I felt like I had burnt a lot of bridges elsewhere. Battling addiction, it was hard to get myself along the process, but they never gave up on me.

"They would chat to you whether you're having the worst day, or a successful day. They understand. I can't speak highly enough of them."

Darren would often present to the reception for food parcels, a hot drink, or to use the phones to actively find himself a rehab.

"One of the main things was the food they would provide. Sometimes that's all you had for the day. They'd always give whatever they had, and it would set you up for the day. I'd feel more energised and replenished to be able to go to appointments or try and sort things out.

"They always had a next option. Individuals like myself, especially with addiction, easily feel judged, but the staff at The Bridge were different. It felt almost like family, with the reception staff."

Darren is now housed in a suitable rehab, detoxed and actively healing from his alcohol addiction. He has started driving lessons and enjoys cooking for the other residents two days a week.

"I had tried many times before and it went wrong, but things finally feel like they are working out. I haven't had a drink in eight weeks."



"I FEEL OPTIMISTIC NOW. THE OPTIONS HAVE OPENED UP AND I CAN'T BELIEVE WHERE MY LIFE IS AT THE MOMENT. IT'S A BIG STEP."

HOUSING ADVICE

Advice, assistance and advocacy for social tenants, private tenants, the homeless and landlords, who live in the Borough of Charnwood and who are over 18.

We have been offering specialist housing advice to the local community for over 20 years. In the last year, the Housing Advice Team (HAT) has received 741 referrals from people living in Charnwood requiring housing advice.

Of these referrals, 180 people were homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days, and a further 205 households were at risk of future homelessness at the point they accessed the service.

The main cause of homelessness amongst our clients has been the end of an assured shorthold tenancy, closely followed by issues with affordability and rent arrears.

We have seen a 269% increase in clients reporting eviction by parents, family or friends.

We have also seen an increase in clients becoming homeless due to a relationship breakdown, both violent and non-violent. This year, we have successfully introduced 'drop-in sessions' across the week, meaning that it is now even easier for clients to access the right advice at the right time.

Leanne Fletcher (*Advice Services Team Manager*)



"Throughout 2019/20, an incredible 98% of HAT clients stated that we had prevented or relieved their homelessness."



NEVER GIVING UP: NEIL'S STORY...

Before receiving support from our Housing Advice Team, Neil had been in and out of prison for 28 years, homeless on release.

"I've never had my own place before. I'm now five months out of prison, have been offered my own flat, I'm clean and I've been in no trouble.

"I'd just been released, homeless, when I came to The Bridge. The Council had offered me a hostel, but I wanted to be alone and stay out of trouble, especially with my mental health issues.

"My Housing Advisor recognised my mental health problems and didn't want to put me in a high-risk environment.

"It was hard for me to explain all of my issues in a 20 minute housing interview, so having my Advisor there really changed things. She knew I was vulnerable, did the research and never stopped trying."

Neil was offered a temporary room while his Advisor continued to liaise with the Council for something more permanent, providing Neil with advocacy and assistance.

"My Advisor kept pushing and eventually I was offered my own flat. Finally, everything started to fit together. The flat was matched to me and everybody at The Bridge was behind me.

"That's all I needed really: the right opportunity so that I could be different. I've always wanted somewhere to be on my own.

"Without the flat I'm in now, I would definitely be in the cycle of prison and the streets again, because I was just surviving. That's how it was for 28 years. It's dangerous too, I probably got beaten up ten times while sleeping rough. My Advisor still contacted me once I had moved into my flat, to make sure I was ok. I feel a lot better now.

"I'm still trying to work out what I enjoy and what the future is. I can think about all of that now. I feel like I will be staying out of prison too. It was very difficult to adjust to normal life, and I wouldn't have been able to do it without all the help I received."

Now, Neil hopes that in a few years he will be able to volunteer at an organisation to help others.



YOUTH HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

talk²sort

Offering young people, aged 11-19, and their families, the chance to improve communication and relationships to prevent future homelessness across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

talk²sort understands the importance of young people and families being able to access the right support at the right time. With the leading cause of homelessness amongst young people in the UK continuing to be relationship breakdown, it is as important as ever that we provide a service which reduces the likelihood of youth homelessness.

Of our clients this year, 100% said that homelessness had been prevented or relieved, with 89% reporting improvements in communication.

talk²sort has been recognised as delivering best practice in homelessness mediation, providing a service which is tailored to meet the individual needs of the young people who access it. Whether it is challenges around emotional well-being and mental health, or use of defective coping mechanisms when dealing with conflict, mediation provides an empowering and future focused way of dealing with issues and challenges faced.

The broader impact is undeniable, with 100% of 2019/20 clients stating they had reduced intake of drugs or alcohol, and reduced involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour.

Chantelle Bramley

(Specialist Services Team Manager)



Single Access Point

Supporting 16 and 17 year olds in Charnwood who may be having difficulties living at home.

The Single Access Point (SAP) service has been supporting 16 and 17 year olds within Charnwood for the last twelve years. This year we have had 44 referrals to the service, all from young people who are experiencing homelessness or difficulties with their housing situation.

64% of referrals were from young people aged 17, many of whom were looking ahead to their 18th birthday when, for some, more housing options become available. The most common reason for approaching the SAP continues to be family breakdown with 73% of young people reporting this issue.

Additionally, over a third of young people were experiencing a lack of boundaries and routine.

Of the young people who chose to participate in our closure feedback, half had accessed education or employment who were previously not in education, employment, or training.

100% of young people reported feeling less isolated or lonely following our support and 75% said that their housing conditions had improved.

Leanne Fletcher

(Advice Services Team Manager)



COMMUNICATION IS KEY: ANNA AND SEB'S STORY...

When Anna reached out for support her relationship with her son, Seb, had deteriorated. She said:

"When Seb turned 14, his hormones hit him: he went from a boy to a mini-man overnight. He's always had some anger issues that were dealt with, but with teenage hormones it got a little out of control.

"He was heavily influenced by an undesirable crowd. That summer, we had an argument that resulted in him threatening me. That was an eye-opener. I didn't know how to deal with it, but I knew it couldn't go on."

Anna was signposted by a colleague to Early Help and undertook a parenting course.

"It's a massive learning curve, parenting teenagers. Doing the course really helped me learn new skills. Being a single parent, you do sometimes lack confidence because you don't have anyone to bounce off.

"When mediation was suggested I was sceptical; I knew Seb didn't want to engage much. But, I wanted to give it a try because our relationship had really broken down.

"We used to do everything together and he was very open with me. I was keen to keep that, as I never had that with my parents... but it was gone.

"The toolbox that I now have is invaluable. I've been using the skills that I've learnt without him even knowing.

"Mediation challenged me to break down my thinking, delve into my thoughts and open my eyes. I can approach things differently, stepping back as Seb grows up.

"The journey has been stressful and there have been dark times. You have to have faith and keep putting the work in. To have a supportive mediator there was really reassuring.

"Mediation empowers you. I feel like I'm able to do this on my own now. Thinking of the future, I'm hugely positive.

"I am more prepared and Seb is making better choices. Our relationship is so good now; it's very different now because he is now a young adult, but it is better than I thought it ever would be."



KEEPING YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE: SHANNON'S STORY...

"MY ADVICE TO ANYONE IN A SIMILAR SITUATION IS TO JUST KEEP GOING AND FIND THE SUPPORT YOU NEED"

"I first contacted the Single Access Point because I was struggling at home with my mum; it was verbal, things she was calling me and saying to me. As time went on, it continued to escalate to threats.

"I had previously left home, but I had to return. It seemed difficult to get the help from different organisations at first because I was under 18 and couldn't get a tenancy by myself."

Shannon had also been offered family mediation, but her mum did not engage with it.

"Then earlier this year, I went to The Bridge and the SAP team helped an awful lot; we started looking at housing options. We discussed shared accommodation, rental opportunities and they supported me registering with the Council.

"We found a shared flat initially, which I put the deposit down for, but things got so bad at home that I had to leave sooner than I thought, so I moved in with my girlfriend instead. I just had to go.

"Being at home affected me mentally and physically. I was so underweight that I even had to visit dieticians and I went back on some medication for my mental health. My mum wouldn't provide me with food, so I had to get my own; The Bridge gave me food parcels.

"I'm still struggling with it now, but things are so much better. Whatever I was dealing with, I could go in and talk to my SAP worker."

Thinking about the future is now a positive thing for Shannon. She added:

"I can work the hours that I want and I feel a lot more free; my mum used to tell me what hours I could do.

"I'm even going to University in September to study Mental Health Nursing. That's something I never even considered before as I'd planned to drop out of college.

"My SAP Worker supported me even once I had moved out, like writing letters to Student Finance to prove estrangement from my parents. It's those sorts of things that people don't think about. The SAP team are always there.

"My advice to anyone in a similar situation is to just keep going and find the support you need to get into a better situation. There is help out there."

"BEING AT HOME AFFECTED ME MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY. I WAS SO UNDERWEIGHT THAT I EVEN HAD TO VISIT DIETICIANS"



SUPPORT SERVICES

Housing Matters and Housing Matters for Families

Longer-term housing related support and Floating Support to maintain tenancies in Leicestershire. Available for both single people and couples over the age of 18, or families, to positively manage their accommodation and reduce risk of future homelessness.

This year, our Housing Matters Service celebrated its 8th year of operation. Throughout the year, we have received 200 referrals to our Floating Support Service, delivered in partnership with Nottingham Community Housing Association (NCHA), which offers support to individuals at risk of homelessness; helping them to maintain their accommodation and reduce the risk of future housing crisis.

The most common presenting issue was rent arrears and affordability, with 69% of clients seeking support in this area.

Our Accommodation Project, delivered by Falcon Support Services, received 239 referrals, supporting individuals who are not owed an accommodation duty by the Local Authority. We have also supported 71 clients through our drop-in services, providing one-off support for a variety of housing related issues.



83% OF CLIENTS REPORTED IMPROVED FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AFTER RECEIVING SUPPORT FROM THE SERVICE.

Also delivered in partnership with NCHA, Housing Matters for Families received 90 referral this year, many of which came from colleagues in Children and Families Services, Housing Associations, and local Councils. The majority of referrals were for families who were experiencing difficulties with rent arrears or affordability.



90% have improved financial circumstances

83% and 78% report improved physical and mental health respectively

The Rutland Community Wellbeing Service

Providing advice and support to individuals within Rutland on a broad range of wellbeing issues. The service is delivered in partnership with Citizens Advice Rutland, Longhurst Group, Age UK and Vista.

Over the past year, The Bridge has received 53 referrals for individuals seeking support with housing difficulties, domestic abuse, money management, healthy lifestyle, mental health and social isolation, amongst other support needs. 60% of referrals were for clients at risk of homelessness due to a relationship breakdown.

Amongst the clients' who's cases have been closed across the year, the average length of support has been 18 months. 100% reported their homelessness had been resolved or prevented and 93% advised their relationships with others has improved

Rapid Rehousing Project

Finding accommodation for local people, In Leicestershire who are homeless and not eligible for help elsewhere.

The Rapid Rehousing Project is funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, as part of the Rapid Rehousing Pathway and the Government's commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027.

The Project supports individuals, who are rough sleeping, to access and maintain accommodation sought by partners in the Local Authority; working to prevent repeat homelessness by offering flexible, intensive one-to-one support to individuals who would not be able to obtain accommodation without the scheme.

There are many reasons why people may not be eligible for support elsewhere: for example if somebody has lost their accommodation through an act or omission, they may be considered 'intentionally homeless'.

Across the year, we have received 31 referrals to the Rapid Rehousing Project and 83% have maintained their accommodation.

Molly Boggis (Support Services Team Manager)

95% of all individuals report a decrease in antisocial behaviour or offending



A FRESH START: SCOTT'S STORY...

Rapid Rehousing

Scott received support from Rapid Rehousing after his marriage of 20 years broke down.

"I was asked to leave the house mid-afternoon, with nowhere to go. I had never been homeless and suddenly it was just me and one bag of clothes.

"After some temporary accommodation, the Council found me this flat, but I had nothing. It was lonely. Bare floors, walls and no furniture. I would come home and just have to sit on the floor with nothing.

"My Rapid Rehousing Support Worker was fantastic. She dropped round food parcels when I needed them and referred me to agencies like Turning Point. She helped me apply to get the flooring laid and get the fridge, cooker and sofa.

"I hadn't dealt with bills before. My Support Worker helped me deal with financial issues and organised automatic rent payments, to avoid arrears. I wouldn't have been able to make the transition without her. There was rarely work available and I didn't know about the organisations that could help me.

"I can start to think about the future now; I look forward to being able to start working again and move somewhere bigger so my children can come and stay with me.

"I never used to talk to anybody, but the more help you get the easier it is, and you can learn to keep going. I would definitely recommend the support of The Bridge."

> Read Scott's full story on our website.



"I would definitely recommend the support of The Bridge."

CREATING STABLE FUTURES: DAWN'S STORY...

Housing Matters

33

"When I was first referred to Housing Matters, I was homeless. After I fled domestic violence, I had to move around because I didn't want to be found. But I'd left with just the clothes on my back after 29 years of marriage.

"I was seeking support to find accommodation and financial advice, after staying at a refuge in Birmingham and then on my sister's sofa in Leicestershire."

Dawn stayed on her sister's sofa for four months, while her housing paperwork was transferred. She added:

"When I was at my sister's I was on edge all the time, unable to go out. I would panic because my ex-husband knew people locally. I moved around a lot to shake him off.

"It took a while for all the paperwork, including my court proceedings, to be transferred. But eventually, I was offered this flat with the support of The Bridge and the local council.

"I've had various help. I still am receiving help, including from Living Without Abuse. I'm getting there, but it's a long process and I still struggle because of what happened before.

"With the support of Housing Matters I was able to settle into the flat. I was referred to make charity applications from organisations like Glasspool, to get furniture like a bed and a cooker, which I had none of. I was also awarded PIP which helped financially.

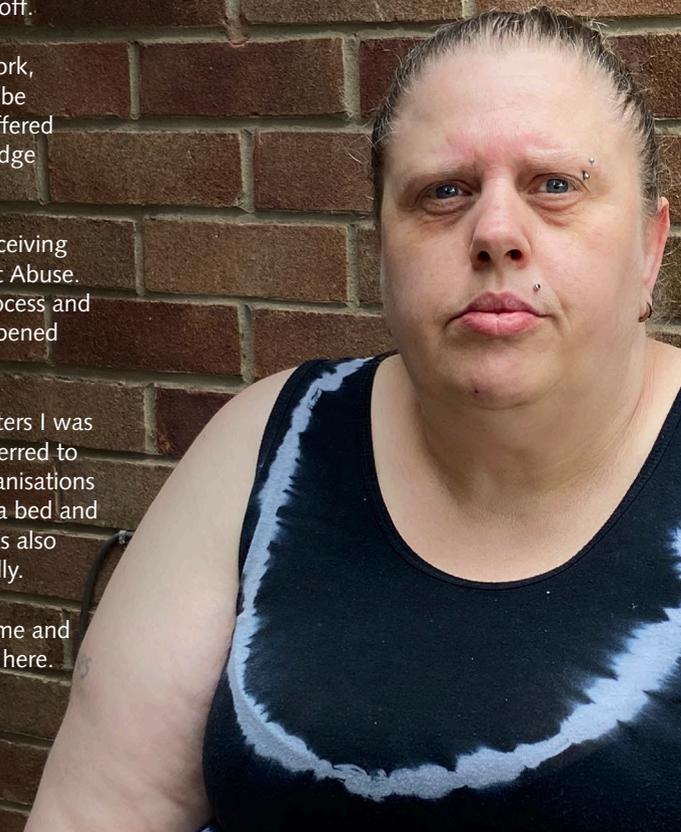
"My daughter was then able to come and move in with me; I love having her here.

"My Housing Support Officer is still there when I need her, even though my case is closed... She is even supporting me in my Universal Credit tribunal.

"With this stable accommodation, I feel safe. I have my own place with my daughter, and we can get on with our life. It's hard but I'm coping."

Recognising the progress she has made, she added:

"My advice to other people in similar situations would be to just do it. Walk out. It takes bravery but there is always help out there. Don't be intimidated that there's no one there to help because there always is. I just wish I'd done it sooner."



HOMELESS OFFENDERS SERVICE

Supporting offenders, or those with an offending history, who are homeless or rough sleeping, to access accommodation.

The Homeless Offenders Service (HOS) provides intensive and holistic one to one support, tailored to the individual's needs, to address any barriers that prevent them from accessing accommodation.

This service is in high demand, as there is no duty for prisons or probation to ensure accommodation on release, only a duty to refer to relevant services that assist with this.

We are proud to say that 100% of our HOS clients in 2019/20 stated their housing conditions had improved and that their homelessness was prevented or resolved, during their time with the service.

We support our clients to successfully sustain a tenancy and reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Our specialist HOS Mediator provides mediation to strengthen and improve relationships with family members, or key individuals, thereby improving the chances of sustaining accommodation and more positive futures.

We received 270 referrals to the service last year from prisons, probation services and local authorities, along with many self-referrals. Of the services' clients, almost half are aged 31-40. A high proportion of our clients are male, with a ratio of 9:1.

100% of clients said they had reduced their involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour, making more positive life choices for themselves and 83% stated an improvement in mental health

Molly Splevings

(Senior Homeless Offenders Officer)



NEW BEGINNINGS: STEVE'S STORY...

Steve was homeless on release from prison. Struggling to adjust to life in a hostel, he was evicted. He said:

"I was sofa-surfing, staying on my brother's floor and with friends all over the county if I had to. I had such a disruptive life, with nothing of my own."

Steve sought support from The Bridge and his HOS Worker accompanied him to meetings and property viewings, recognising the environment that Steve needed in order to thrive, and advocating for other options. Steve continued:

"It was soul-destroying being homeless for that long, stuck on different waiting lists. There seemed to always be something in the way. But my HOS Worker never gave up and the Exaireo Trust re-examined their eligibility and offered me a shared place.

"I have somewhere safe to stay now. I try to keep it as nice as possible, reporting repairs and even cleaning the cooker.

"It's the things you don't think about that get in the way. Not knowing how to print something off, or fill out a form via email. Not being able to travel to an appointment. Everything stacks up against you. My HOS Worker always offered their help.

"Even after I've moved into this flat with Exaireo, my HOS Worker still checks on me; supporting me to make a Charity Link application for clothing and household essentials."

Since being housed, things have settled. Steve's HOS Worker completed a housing application with the Council, and he soon hopes to apply for his own home. Reflecting on his journey, he said:

"When I first started with the service, there wasn't even a future. I've been on holidays, had cars and houses. I went from all that to nothing. Believe me when I say lives can change. Three years ago my life was like a normal life: a household, children, girlfriend and a job.

"I didn't deal well with my relationship breakdown and I was angry that I'd let four people down who I shouldn't have. Now, I'm not close to where I want to be with my children, but we communicate via letter and I will always keep that up until I can be closer to them.

"When I was homeless, I had no chance. I couldn't see them anyway, because I didn't want them to see me like that, not having had a bath for three days.

"To people in a similar situation to how I was, my main advice is to stay away from illegal substances. Accept treatment. You can't be stable without it.

"Keep your head clear. Go to the meetings. Be polite and be proactive in getting the help you deserve. It is hard, but you can never give up."

"I have somewhere safe to stay now"



BUILDING BETTER OPPORTUNITIES

The Building Better Opportunities (BBO) programme, jointly funded by the The National Lottery Community Fund and the European Social Fund (ESF), helps to tackle poverty and social exclusion faced by the most disadvantaged people in our communities.

Youth Employability Support (YES) Project

The YES Project supports young people to enable them to overcome barriers and take steps towards employment, education or training.

The YES Project has continued to achieve positive outcomes with those aged between 15-25, supporting them towards employment, education or training. Our Support Workers are on-hand to help and encourage young people to achieve their potential and continue to adapt to meet the needs of those accessing the service.

We are proud to say that this year, 100% of our clients stated that their housing conditions had improved, homelessness was prevented or resolved and that their financial circumstances had improved.

Poor emotional well-being or mental health, family breakdowns and housing difficulties should not prevent young people from moving forward and making positive choices. Being a part of this delivery partnership ensures that we are able to refer and signpost young people to the right support at the right time.

Benefiting from our Intensive Support Workers' holistic approach, 100% of 2019/20 clients stated they had seen improvements in both their physical and mental health.

YES PROJECT
Believe, achieve, work



Moneywise Plus

Moneywise Plus supports adults who are unemployed or economically inactive in Leicester and Leicestershire to move closer towards education, training, job searching or employment.

We have had a successful year in supporting clients to overcome any barriers they faced in returning to education, training, employment or job-seeking.

The team works in a holistic way to ensure that the needs of individuals accessing the service are met.

For this service, our team received 286 referrals in 2019/2020.

Soft outcomes included improved bills and money management, internet access and entering education or employment.

Being part of a consortium of voluntary sector organisations means that we can ensure that individuals are able to access the right support and advice when needed, with the ability to signpost to external agencies as and when required.

Digital, financial and employability skills are just some of the areas with which the team provides interventions. Providing support with confidence, self-esteem and emotional well-being and mental health is another key part of ensuring individuals feel equipped to move forward and enter education, training and/or employment.

Chantelle Bramley
(Specialist Services
Team Manager)



LYDIA'S STORY...

YES Project

37

"Before I started with the YES Project, I was lonely. It's helped me meet new people and talk to others. I was doing Learning and Confidence training at the Library, who suggested YES to me.

"It's helped massively with my confidence, although we are still working on it now.

"I do sessions like cooking and meditation on Zoom, getting to know people and learning skills I can use in day-to-day life. I'd recommend those to anybody, as it helps with anxiety too.

"My Support Worker also helped me a lot with social media, making sure I was safe online and had the correct privacy settings to protect myself."

Lydia was out of education and employment when she came to the YES Project. She added:

"I have goals that we're working towards now and I feel better about the future. I'd love to go into Animal Care, so we are looking at volunteering and opportunities for me to get experience, which will be great."

> **Read Lydia's full story on our website.**

"I WAS SAFE ONLINE AND HAD THE CORRECT PRIVACY SETTINGS TO PROTECT MYSELF."

RE-WRITING YOUR PATH: ADAM'S STORY...

YES Project

"When I was first introduced to the YES Project, I wasn't as independent as I am now. Although there's still a way to go, it's really helped with my confidence and my motivation too.

"I was involved with Soft Touch Arts initially, but I was living alone and quite isolated, struggling with mental health... My engagement dipped and that's when the YES Project really started to help me.

"My Support Worker helped me put a lot of things in place, like being referred to Let's Talk Wellbeing and CBT. They even supported me in getting the letters I needed from my Doctor for my Universal Credit."

His Support Worker added:

"At first, it was really about identifying the biggest barriers for Adam and addressing them head on. Adam struggled with routine and so we helped him a lot with his schedule. Before, nights became days and days became nights... which didn't help Adam's motivation at all.

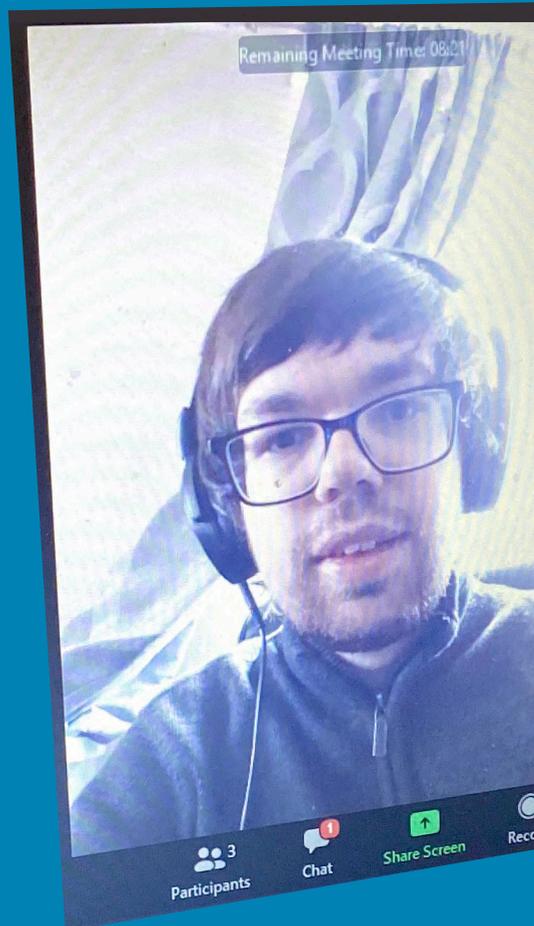
"He's very creative and wants to draw, but that lack of motivation sometimes stopped him... So, we factored that into his routine and continued to support him to improve his mental health and confidence."

Adam said:

"I'm working with lots of different agencies now, like Leicestershire Cares and The Prince's Trust and doing Zoom sessions. I've been enhancing my employability; building a CV, learning about job applications and doing mock interviews.

"The mental health support has been the most beneficial to me. It's allowed me to be more independent, confident and get involved with more sessions.

"Before, I felt like 'whatever happens, happens'... It felt like it wasn't going anywhere. Now, I have goals set and I can think about the long-term as well as the short-term. I'm looking towards employment and education opportunities now, which I never thought I'd be able to manage before."



CHANGE, FOR THE LONG-TERM: RACHEL'S STORY...

Moneywise Plus

39

When Rachel was referred to Moneywise Plus, she had been out of employment for a little while following a drastic change in her home life. She said:

"I had my fourth child with my long-term partner of seven years, who left after her birth. It was like starting again from scratch.

"Before that I was working, but I suffered from a lot of health issues like degenerative disc disease. There are certain things I can't do anymore; I became quite depressed.

"When my daughter turned two, I signed back up with the Job Centre to try and find employment and update my CV; they recommended the Moneywise Plus service."

When Rachel met with her Moneywise Plus Advisor, they assessed her digital skills and researched employment options.

"My advisor taught me new skills: I was so behind the times with computers and things that I didn't know where to start before.

"The first steps were very much about communication, digital abilities and looking into my options.

"It really gave me my confidence back and I didn't feel so worthless. Life has been tough and it was fantastic to have someone who was easy to talk to and supportive.

"My advisor changed my way of thinking and I feel a lot more positive. She told me to look on different websites for jobs that I wasn't even aware of; things I didn't have time to do for hours by myself as a single parent.

"Being on my own suddenly, my life was turned upside down. I felt like I should be working by now and paying into a pension, but I was stuck at home in an isolated village with no independence.

"I feel like an adult again. It has helped with my depression and I feel like doors are opening for my future. I've always wanted to be a Prison Officer, which I've now applied for and it feels more within my reach.

"I'm excited to get into work and get my life back. I feel a lot more positive with the new knowledge I've learnt."



OUR STAFF

We are committed to ensuring our staff have plenty of opportunities to develop within their roles; both because we value them as employees and so that we can confidently say all of our staff are equipped to provide the highest level of service possible.

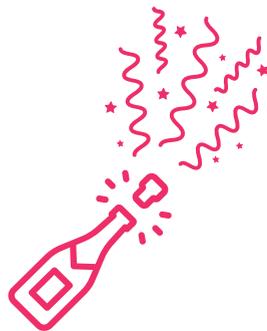
Every day, our staff dedicate themselves to their work in preventing and relieving homelessness, and for that, we are incredibly proud.

Over the course of the year, our staff have taken part in countless training and learning opportunities, including:

- ✔ C-Card Training
- ✔ Housing Duties to Young People
- ✔ Mental Health First Aid
- ✔ An Introduction to Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma
- ✔ Understanding Domestic Violence
- ✔ Unpredictable Environments
- ✔ Welfare Benefits and the Coronavirus
- ✔ And much more...

Welcoming our New Starters...

Steve Gregson	Megan Shadforth
Penny Taylor	Ruth Harris
Lydia Gallaway	Sarah Plummer
Mary Bullivant	



A huge welcome to the latest babies of The Bridge!

Congratulations to Lauren Norton (Head of Housing Services), and her partner Adam, on the birth of baby Jack; as well as to Chantelle Bramley (Specialist Services Team Manager), and husband Tom, on the birth of Percy.



WORKING AT THE BRIDGE:

"I joined The Bridge in January 2018, it was my first job after a 10 year career break looking after my three children.

"It was a complete change of career, but I've always been a people person and I really enjoy meeting everyone who comes into The Bridge, or whom I speak to over the telephone.

"I've learned so much over the last two years, working as part of a great team who genuinely care about their clients and will go that extra mile to help and support them. We continually strive to improve, and we never stop learning. I can honestly say that I love my job!

"We realise how difficult it is for people to walk through our front door and so before anything else happens, particularly in Reception, the most important thing is to make someone feel as comfortable as possible.

"Sometimes space, time and understanding, is what people haven't found elsewhere and what we are able to give; we build that rapport.

"Our role in Triage is often the first point of contact for clients with The Bridge. We see people in the most difficult of circumstances and feel it is important to treat all our clients with the same dignity and respect.

"We don't judge anyone; everyone's circumstances are different. It is great to see our clients progress and the difference we have helped them make in their lives."

Sue Holyoake
(Housing Triage Worker)



Happy 20th Anniversary!

As we commemorate our 25th Anniversary, we are also delighted to be celebrating Peter Davey's 20th Anniversary in his position as Chief Officer of The Bridge. A massive congratulations to you Peter, you should be very proud of your achievements!

Under your leadership, The Bridge has supported thousands of local people which has made a profound difference to our community; not to mention the personal impact you have had on the lives of your team over the years; you really do care!



OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Thank You



3 Nuns Pub, Loughborough
 Action Homeless
 Advice Quality Standard
 AGE UK Leicestershire & Rutland
 Alex's Wish
 Amazon Smile
 Badger's Sett Pub, Cropston
 Beacon Christian Fellowship
 Beacon Rotary Club
 Loughborough
 Big Lottery Fund
 Blaby District Council
 Blackbaud
 Broomfield School, Leicester
 Bosworth Academy
 CAOS Conflict Management
 Charnwood Borough Council
 Charnwood Lottery
 Children In Need
 Church Pharmacy, Loughborough
 Churches Together in Anstey
 Citizens Advice Charnwood
 Citizens Advice Leicestershire
 Citizens Advice Rutland
 Countesthorpe Leysland
 Community College
 Department for Work and
 Pensions
 EASE Retirement Group
 Edith Murphy Foundation
 Elim Church, Loughborough
 Equality Action
 European Social Fund
 Exaerio Trust
 Fairfield Prep School,
 Loughborough
 Falcon Support Services
 FareShare

Fearon Community Association
 Florence Turner Trust
 Fundraising Regulator
 Garfield Weston Foundation
 George's Fish and Chip Shop,
 Loughborough
 Glasspool
 Graham & Sue Harris Charity
 Fund
 Halifax Bank
 Harborough District Council
 Hinckley & Bosworth District
 Council
 HM Probation Service
 Holy Trinity Church, Hinckley
 Homefield College, Mountsorrel
 Hoton Village Hall
 Intelligent Energy Community
 Fund
 Iveshead School, Shepshed
 Job Centre Plus Loughborough
 John Storer House
 Julian House
 JustGiving
 Kibworth School
 King's Church, Loughborough
 Kirby Muxloe Women's Institute
 Leicester Adult Learning College
 Leicester CharityLink
 Leicester City Council
 Leicester City Football Club
 Leicester South Food Bank
 Leicestershire and Rutland
 Community Foundation
 Leicestershire Cares
 Leicestershire County Council
 Living Without Abuse
 Longhurst Group
 Loughborough College

Loughborough Grammar School
 Loughborough Hospital
 Loughborough Muslims Society
 Loughborough Rugby Football
 Club
 Loughborough University
 & Students Union
 Loughborough Wellbeing Project
 Maud Elkington Charitable Trust
 Melton Borough Council
 Mountsorrel United Charities
 Needle & Pin Pub,
 Loughborough
 New Life Community Church,
 Loughborough
 Newtown Linford Primary School
 North West Leicestershire District
 Council
 Nottingham Community Housing
 Association
 Oadby & Wigston Borough
 Council
 Open Gate Trust
 Open Heaven Church,
 Loughborough
 Our Lady of the Angels Church,
 Loughborough
 PACE
 PayPal
 Perdiem Limited
 Police and Crime Commissioner
 Public Health Leicestershire
 Quorn Baptist Church
 Quorn Churches
 Quorn Stone
 Reaching People Consortium
 Royal Oak Pub, Loughborough
 Rutland County Council
 Seagrave Village Primary School

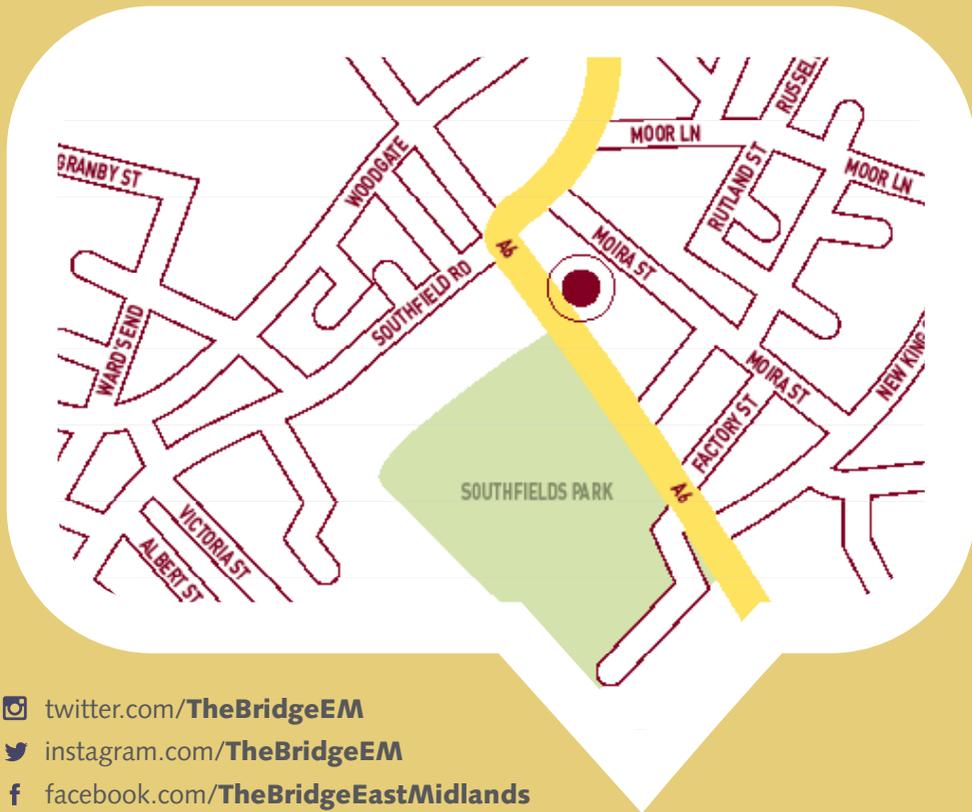
Shepshed Food Bank
 Soar Valley Community Food
 Project
 Soft Touch Arts
 Spire Homes
 St Bartholomew's United Church,
 Quorn
 St Mary in the Elms Church,
 Woodhouse Eaves
 St Mary's Catholic Church,
 Loughborough
 St Paul's Church, Woodhouse
 Eaves
 St Pauls C of E Primary School,
 Woodhouse Eaves
 Stonebow Primary School,
 Loughborough
 Stonewater Housing Association
 Tesco Ltd
 The 29th May 1961 Charity
 The Henry Smith Charity
 The Leathersellers Company
 The Loughborough Welfare Trust
 The Salvation Army
 The Soar Project
 The Y, Leicester
 Thomas Estley Community
 College, Broughton Astley
 TK Maxx Loughborough
 TwentyTwenty
 United Reformed Church
 Uppingham Town Council
 Vicars Relief
 VISTA
 Voluntary Action Leicestershire
 Waitrose Ltd
 Watermead Nursery,
 Loughborough
 Wreake Valley Academy

WOW!
 WE WOULD
 LIKE TO GIVE
 PARTICULAR
 THANKS TO OUR
 TOP COMMUNITY
 BUSINESS
 SUPPORTER,
 THE NEEDLE
 & PIN PUB.
 YOUR INNOVATIVE
 FUNDRAISING
 IDEAS ALWAYS
 BLOW US AWAY!



**AND A BIG THANK
 YOU TO ALL
 INDIVIDUALS
 WHO HAVE
 DONATED FOOD
 AND TOILETRIES,
 OR THROUGH
 JUSTGIVING,
 PAYPAL & VIRGIN
 MONEY. YOUR
 SUPPORT GOES
 A LONG WAY!**





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

The Bridge, 38 Leicester Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 2AG
Tel: 01509 260500
Fax: 01509 260505
Email: assistance@thebridge-eastmidlands.org.uk
Web: www.thebridge-eastmidlands.org.uk
Charity No: 1050596
Company No: 03114996



www.thebridge-eastmidlands.org.uk/donate-now

