

# WHAT'S YOUR IMPACT?

  
*The bridge*<sup>™</sup>

Preventing & overcoming homelessness, together.  
Impact Report April 2021- March 2022

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# Our Year

# Welcome

## From our CEO

A warm first hello from me, the new Chief Executive Officer of The Bridge (East Midlands). Joining the organisation in November 2021, I have been excited to progress my grounded insight on the needs of the community gained during my 5 years of service as a CEO in the charity sector.

I have taken over the reins from Paul Snape who led the organisation fantastically as Deputy CEO through the pandemic. We have now reached a time where Paul is leaving the charity after an incredible 19 years of service. As an organisation, we are truly grateful for the dedication Paul has given to both the community and The Bridge and wish him the best of luck for a successful future.

I have been so impressed by the whole of our organisation who embeds such strong core values into their culture, ensuring I am motivated and inspired every day.

I am proud to present this year's

statistics that demonstrate the life changing difference our organisation is making in the community; shown in the fact that 88% of our clients have been prevented from or overcome homelessness. The remaining 12% represents the complexity of the cases we have seen this year, with more clients reaching crisis point faster than ever. Therefore, the work of our committed staff delivering our vital services together with our clients, ensures they are empowered and supported through this time.

We can only continue our work with the support of the community. As such, I ask that you consider what you can do in partnership with The Bridge to make a difference. So please get in touch in order to prevent and overcome homelessness, together.



*Sue Langley*

*Chief Executive Officer*

# 5703 referrals

Were received from April 2021 - March 2022

## And of our clients

**88%**  
prevented or  
overcame  
homelessness

**91%**  
Improved financial  
circumstances

**77%**  
Feel more  
independent

**90%**  
Improved housing  
conditions

**66%**  
Have been able  
to access or stay  
in employment

**76%**  
Have improved  
self-esteem

**85%**  
Now making  
more positive life  
choices

**87%**  
Improved  
mental health

**86%**  
Improved physical  
health

**72%**  
Improved  
communication  
skills

**70%**  
Have been able to  
access or stay in  
education

**83%**  
Have reduced  
their involvement  
in crime

# From Our

# Chair

The world has changed so much in the last year, and we have all had to deal with these changing circumstances in how we operate, including both the Board of Trustees and our staff. They have met the challenges of new ways of working including office moves, working from home and our new hub model. We are indebted to several organisations who have supported us with these new ways of working including Charnwood Borough Council, John Storer House and GTS Security Services Ltd.

The services we provide have never been more vital, as individuals and families struggle to manage day to day living, debt, homelessness, and food poverty. We have been fortunate to have been awarded funding

## Our Board of Trustees

Richard White, Jon Olds,  
Amanda Soraghan, Karen Jewell,  
Helen Tighe, Jo Emmett,  
Steve Ablett, Ashiedu Joel

by a number of organisations, including The National Lottery and the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities; we are very grateful. Being recognised by external organisations is only achieved by having dedicated and committed staff, headed by our new excellent Chief Executive Officer, Sue Langley.

My thanks also go to our dedicated and hard-working Trustees who support the organisation in so many ways. No organisation such as ours can achieve what we do without the help and support of our partner organisations, members of the business community, and the generous donations from the public. I would like to thank them all for their help and continued support.



**Jay Webb**  
*Chair Of Trustees*

**1. We will strengthen our current service offer**

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

**3. We will develop a creative, sustainable, and future focused charitable organisation**

**4. We will be advocates of best practice with an embedded culture of continual improvement**

# Our

# Strategy

The Bridge has a 4 year organisational strategy (2020-2024) which serves as the framework for us all to work towards. During the 2021-22 financial year, the Senior Management Team at the Bridge has reviewed our strategy to ensure that as an organisation we remain relevant and responsive to the current social landscape.

The strategy aligns with The Bridge's vision, mission and core values. It is focused upon the future sustainability of services that provide advice and support for preventing and overcoming homelessness, securing and

maintaining tenancies, and promoting personal well-being.

We have a skilled and committed team who are dedicated to shaping and providing a number of vital services that are responsive to the needs of the local community.

Working in partnership with agencies is another key component to providing the best services that we can. We continue to adopt a strengths-based approach to develop targeted solutions for continual improvement. With this, we look forward to a strong future in partnership with our local community.

"The need to remain agile in society's changing environment is stronger than ever.

We at The Bridge will continue to evolve and adapt, to support those that need us most"

- Sue Langley,  
Chief Executive Officer



*Clare Fillingham*

*Head of Quality & Infrastructure*



# This year we supported 2330 households

Across Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland between April 21 - March 22

## How we've helped



## Localities

1. North West Leicestershire
2. Charnwood
3. Melton
4. Hinckley & Bosworth
5. Blaby
6. Leicester City
7. Oadby & Wigston
8. Harborough
9. Rutland

# Services

## Summary

As an organisation we have faced some significant changes this year such as welcoming our new CEO, implementing and adapting our services to better meet the needs of our clients. We have also seen the end of some services; such as our Moneywise Plus Service, Homeless Offenders Service and the Rutland Community Wellbeing Service. Thank you to everyone, staff and partners, who worked together to deliver the life-changing support that was provided.

This year, we have also said goodbye to our offices at Leicester Road and 'moving house' was no mean feat, however our team worked together to ensure the move was as seamless as possible both for each other and also for our clients.

As our team is at the heart of what we do, an exciting and valuable addition to this year's Impact Report is our 'Staff Stories'. As much as we are proud of our successes shown in our client journeys, the team have taken

the time to share with you their experiences on the front-line to provide you with a realistic image of the challenging national picture we are facing and continue to face.

I would like to finish with a huge thank you to our incredible team for their hard work over the past year. Not only do they work tirelessly to empower our clients, they are always seeking new learning opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills, working flexibly to the benefit of our service delivery, and going above and beyond to ensure our clients are safe. You make our organisation what it is!



*Molly Boggis*

*Head of Programmes & Services*



# Advice & Homelessness

# The Triage

## Team

The Triage Team are the first point of contact for enquiries from both clients and professionals. They provide initial advice, support and guidance regarding the range of services we deliver, ensuring the most appropriate recommendation is made to reflect our clients' needs. In addition, the Triage Team make sure we provide a welcoming environment where every client feels both comfortable and confident to discuss their concerns, and will signpost to external agencies where appropriate.

Demand for our services has remained consistently high over the past year. This is largely due to an increased number of clients facing a housing crisis, financial difficulty, food poverty, isolation and deteriorating mental health. The Triage Team often act as a lifeline for clients who have limited social interaction and are unsure how to access support.

As a result of contacting the Triage Team, 99% of clients stated that

they had seen an improvement in their financial circumstances and 96% had improved mental health. During the pandemic, although our offices were closed, we continued to deliver a service that was fully accessible to the community via the free phone telephone number.

We have now reintroduced face to face support and the Triage Team attend drop-in facilities within the community to assist clients who may struggle to use technology to engage with our services. We look forward to implementing the roll-out of drop-in hubs across Leicestershire so that clients are able to access face to face services locally.



**Mark Chandler**

*Services Manager:  
Advice & Homelessness*

# Staff stories



**Steve Gregson**  
*Triage Worker*

Our Triage service helps our clients in a wide variety of ways. Besides taking referrals, we are also able to provide initial support to clients directly.

I personally gain the most satisfaction from my role when I feel that I have facilitated real positive change for a client. As clients contact us regarding a specific issue they are experiencing, I have the opportunity to talk with them about their situation more broadly and suggest additional sources of support. For example, an individual called us to request a referral to a food bank as they were self-employed but unable to work due to the pandemic. In addition to a referral to Your Store, I was able to help with a utility top-up, complete an application to

the Household Support Fund and signpost to other services who can assist with debt advice.

Vulnerable clients on low income have experienced the most significant impact of the last year; struggling to feed themselves and their families, trying to avoid debt, and attempting to maintain uninterrupted supply of utilities. In the last year, we have continued to provide support and assistance in alleviating these difficulties for those in need.

Speaking to clients directly 'makes it real'. It broadens our awareness of what's actually happening, and I take great pride in working for an organisation that tackles these issues directly. I feel privileged to work in a team of positive and passionate individuals from whom I draw daily inspiration and am continually developed by.

# Specialist Housing

# Advice

The Housing Advice Team provide specialist advice and advocacy on all housing related matters to the homeless, social tenants, private tenants, and landlords within the Charnwood Borough over the age of 18.

We have seen a considerable demand for the service throughout this past year due to increased economic and social instability, exacerbated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Consequently, the team have faced a considerable challenge but have adapted to ensure a consistent high standard of service delivery to all clients, whilst prioritising those most in need.

The team received 944 referrals over the last year for households needing housing advice, a 12% increase on 2020/2021.

We have also seen a shift in the type of issues experienced by clients requiring housing advice in the Charnwood area. Historically,

we have identified the end of an assured short-hold tenancy to be the primary cause of homelessness. This remains a fundamental factor, but we have now seen relationship breakdown become the main cause of homelessness affecting 20% of cases, closely followed by parental or family eviction and violence and harassment.

Feedback from clients after accessing the Housing Advice service has been very positive, with 96% stating they had avoided becoming homeless and 100% that they were happy with the service provided by the team.



**Mark Chandler**

*Services Manager:  
Advice & Homelessness*

# Meera's Story

## *Housing Advice*

Meera was studying at university when suddenly she found herself homeless. "I was living with a friend and had no means of support. I was studying at university, but I failed my exams. My friend had a breakdown and asked me to leave - I had nowhere else to go".

Meera found a room in a property but needed the first month's rent upfront. "I had nothing to pay for a deposit on my own place, and there was a delay in my benefits being paid. I applied for different services to get help but wasn't getting anywhere. I have asthma along with other health problems, the anxiety of the situation just made it worse".

Meera came to The Bridge having exhausted her options. Gaining support from our qualified solicitor on the Housing Advice team, together they explored the next steps. They searched for funding for Meera's rent in advance. Unfortunately she was not eligible for support because of a lack of her own funding, so Meera found herself stuck.

With the support of The Bridge, Meera was able to access specific funding for a rent deposit on her own accommodation. "I found The Bridge, and finally I had the help I needed. Within a few days I wasn't homeless. Without The Bridge, this next step would have been unreachable".

"Seven months later, I am now set up in my new home and enjoying life. I am back in education and trying to pass my exams, with the aim of getting a job as a nurse".

"Receiving support from The Bridge was an incredible life changing situation. My support worker was extremely helpful and made my life so much easier. It can seem like there is no one around to help, but The Bridge is there and there should be more awareness about the work that they do".



It can seem like  
there is no one  
to help, but  
The BRIDGE is  
there

Meera  
Who received support from  
Housing Advice



# Housing Advice

## IAPT

The housing crisis is having a profound impact on mental health and well-being. Equally, mental health issues can have a detrimental impact on sustaining accommodation. So this year, The Bridge introduced the IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) Housing Advice service across Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland, to complement the work of the existing Housing Advice team.

This particular service aims to support clients to overcome the barriers associated with maintaining stable housing and facilitate improved mental well-being.

The IAPT service works in partnership with VitaMinds, who offer a range of Cognitive Behavioural Therapies to support clients experiencing mental health problems and help promote well-being. Co-production events have been held with VitaMinds during the year to promote access to, and engagement with, mental

health services and identify barriers experienced by the community in doing so.

Demand has been high - between April 2021 and March 2022 we received 181 referrals requesting housing advice. Feedback from clients using the service indicates that 100% had their homelessness issue resolved and 99.4% believed their housing conditions had improved.

With the impact of the pandemic and the effects of the cost of living crisis on mental well-being we foresee that there will be considerable demand for the service going forward.



**Mark Chandler**  
*Services Manager:  
Advice & Homelessness*



**Nozi Moyo**

*Specialist Housing Advisor on  
the IAPT Partnership*

Instability caused by homelessness can have a huge impact on an individual's mental health. Housing Advice and IAPT helps clients with the barriers they face in accessing accommodation, in order to create or maintain stable housing situations whilst improving well-being.

In addition to individual referrals to the service, Housing Advice, IAPT and VitaMinds conduct drop-ins on a quarterly basis to raise awareness of mental health support and give Housing Advice. The clients have an opportunity to give feedback on the barriers they faced when engaging with services in the past. These issues range from technology to language barriers, their responses help develop our service for future support.

One of the complex cases I recently worked with was a family of 6 who were evicted for having substantial rent arrears of £23,000. The family

had failed to pay rent since 2020 as they were on zero income. Due to being asylum seekers, they were not being allowed to work nor claim benefits.

On the day of eviction, no help was provided by main services due to the fact they did not have the right to remain in UK. After that day, the family would have become street homeless.

However, I assisted the family by contacting services that support asylum seekers, and thankfully they were provided with temporary accommodation. Further assistance was provided to help them apply for long-term accommodation as well as ongoing financial support, and this will continue until they get the right to remain in the UK.

For me, it is fulfilling to see clients when they progress from being at risk of homelessness and transition into long-term settled accommodation, as it gives them peace of mind and stability.

# Staff Stories

# **Young People & Families**

# YES

## Project

The YES Project is a free Youth Employability Service programme working with young adults aged 15-24 who are not in education, employment or training. The project is a partnership of youth organisations and charities from across Leicestershire using a tailored, holistic approach when it comes to the support offered.

As one of these partners, The Bridge works with young people who face barriers to finding work, due to issues such as mental health difficulties, homelessness, or substance misuse. Our intensive support workers on the project engage these young people to take the steps needed to ensure they have a safe and secure home, their well-being needs are addressed, and to overcome the barriers to work towards employment.

To achieve this, young people are presented with many options of social activities, training courses and assistance with employment skills such as CV writing. Through this service, many young people develop the abilities needed to

make friends and think about their future aspirations.

Within the last year, referrals to our service have seen a 77% increase compared to the previous year. This change is reflective of the transition after the pandemic, with young people able to explore opportunities as lock down restrictions are removed. Young people with extra barriers to overcome have been very isolated but now, with the correct support, can start to move forward.

Of those who worked with our support workers over the year, 100% of them felt able to access and maintain employment, and felt their emotional and mental health had improved by the time they signed off the project.



**Mary Bullivant**

*Services Manager:  
Young People & Families*

# Tyler's Story

## YES Project

Before Tyler was referred to The Bridge, he was sofa surfing for around a year and stuck in a cycle with bad mental health- he wanted to get back into work but didn't know where to start.

Sharing his story, Tyler said "I felt like I wouldn't get anywhere, and it felt hard to get housed".

"My worker at Universal Credit told me about the YES Project and referred me to the service. I didn't know if it would work for me. I assumed it would be one meeting and then I would get left to do paperwork on my own, which would be a long process due to me being at the bottom of the list for a property. But then I started working with my support worker from The Bridge on the YES Project, which made me more optimistic. A few months in, I felt a lot better- I trusted that my worker would help me".

"Not only did we apply for a property through filling out forms together, as my worker helped with the housing application, it moved way faster than I could have thought due to the hard work and help from my worker".

Tyler was then offered his own flat, where his worker secured his rent in advance and relevant furniture such as a bed and a fridge.

Speaking about this process, his support worker said: "Tyler made it clear to me that he was anxious about this next stage as he had never had his own tenancy. So I worked with Tyler to set up his utilities and direct debits".

Within this time, Tyler's mental health support was also a focus.

"My worker signed me up to Mental Health Matters to support with my mental health. Together we also signed up to my new GP, as I have several medical issues that I need support with".

Once Tyler was set up in his new accommodation and had the right support for his mental health, together they looked at his employability skills by updating his CV and signing up to groups at Leicestershire Cares. Tyler is now applying for jobs in his local area.

Reflecting on his journey, Tyler said: "Without the support from my worker, I would not have got anywhere. Now, I feel more positive about the future".



Without the  
support from  
my worker, I  
would not have  
got anywhere

Tyler  
Who received support from  
YES Project

# Single Access

## Point

The aim of the Single Access Point (SAP) service is to work with 16-17 year-olds who have a connection to Charnwood to overcome the challenges they are facing with their housing to ensure they have somewhere to stay that is safe and secure.

A lot of our work involves being an advocate for the young person and ensuring they are given the right options and support. Of the young people that SAP supported last year, 100% knew about the services that could carry on supporting them once our support came to an end, empowering them to continue to make positive changes in their lives long term.

All referrals we received to SAP resulted in the housing issue being resolved for the young person. The majority continued to stay happily and safely at home following support to the family as a whole unit. One

young person was offered and accepted their own tenancy with support in place to maintain this. Through partnership working, five young people were housed in supported living accommodation, providing them with ongoing support to ensure all their well-being needs were met.

It has been great over the last year to get back to meeting people in person, both the young people and their families as well as other professionals to ensure we are all working together to achieve the best outcomes for the young people we are supporting.



**Mary Bullivant**

*Services Manager:  
Young People & Families*

# Lily's Story


## *Single Access Point*

Due to past trauma and relationship breakdowns, Lily spent a lot of her teenage years sofa surfing- but by the time she was 17, her situation escalated.

Telling her story, Lily said “I became pregnant and moved in with my partner. Being a young mum and new to it all, it was a lot of stress - everything was piling on top of me. After I had my son, I was diagnosed with post-partum depression and fell into a dark place. My partner wasn't helping, and the relationship then broke down- so I was kicked out of the house with my son. I also had an incident with my mum so couldn't stay with her. But thankfully, my grandparents took me in”.

was being worked with, instead of people working against me. In the past, I have been passed around to different services, so I didn't know who to trust and was worried to open up. But through getting actual results with Single Access Point, I was able to open up more – it gave me the belief that things would get better. I was never left in the dark”.

The Single Access Point explored Lily's housing options with her, which resulted in them completing a housing application together for her and her son. Talking about this support, Lily said “I'm dyslexic and can't read or write. Without the help to make these applications, I wouldn't be in the place I am now. My worker encouraged and supported me to be more positive and go out there and progress. I'm now just waiting on the application decision but am looking forward to having a home for me and my son”.



“I then started to receive help from The Bridge, and with my worker on Single Access Point supporting me, it released a lot of pressure. I got so much help and support - I felt like finally I

“Once my housing application is sorted and I'm in a more stable place I'm looking to do a college course, to create a stable future for me and my son – and so my son has a role model, too”.

Reflecting on her journey, Lily said: “Now I feel like me again. I haven't felt like this in such a long time. If it wasn't for The Bridge, I wouldn't be in the place I am today”.



# Charnwood Food

## Poverty Group

The Charnwood Food Poverty Group (CFPG) has been in operation since 2018, with over 30 members consisting of organisations who work together towards a coordinated approach to provide food and additional support to those facing food insecurity. The group consists of food banks, social supermarkets, hot food providers and advice services.

Last year saw the launch of Your Store: a social supermarket that invites those struggling with the cost of a weekly shop to become members for a low weekly cost. The membership then allows them to choose from a selection of fresh, healthy foods as well as receive support that empowers members to address the underlying causes of their food insecurity. The main hub in Loughborough is at John Storer House, with pop-up stores in Mountsorrel and Shelthorpe. The project has been an amazing success, with members far exceeding expectations.

Most of the services are provided with the help of volunteers, which without their dedication and hard work, would make it difficult to continue to offer such a variety of support. Many local supermarkets have also been invaluable to the work of CFPG, donating food to individual projects as well as the group as a whole.

Food provisions continue to evolve within Charnwood to meet the needs of the community, connecting us all through the common goal of supporting people who need help, with a non-judgemental approach.



**Mary Bullivant**

*Services Manager:  
Young People & Families*

I wouldn't have  
been able to do  
any of this on  
my own

*Helen  
Who received the wrap around support from  
Your Store  
Delivered by  
The Bridge, John Storer House  
& Charwood Borough Council*

# Helen's Story

## Your Store

Helen worked with her partner in a special educational needs school, but had to stop working in January 2022 because of ill health during her pregnancy. Due to increasing risk, her partner also had to stop working to help care for her and their toddler. The reduction in income led the family to financially struggle. Helen had been donating to a food bank near her workplace

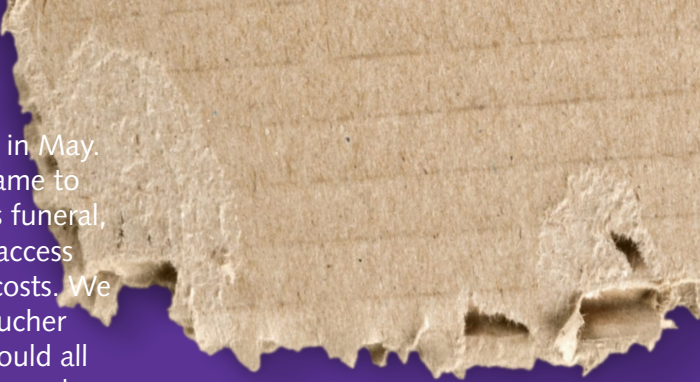
for a number of years but because she is out of their catchment area they were unable to help- but they told her about Your Store.

Revisiting her initial visit to Your Store, Helen explained "I initially felt so ashamed and embarrassed when I first came to Your Store. But after an initial conversation with my worker, we hit the ground running looking at the support that was available to our family. I quickly felt comfortable and realised there was nothing to be ashamed of".

Helen went on to explain the support she received, "my worker helped me check that I was getting the correct financial support. My worker helped in so many ways, such as accessing childcare support for my toddler, and managed to get my family a freezer so that we could save money by freezing reduced items".

Helen's daughter was born very premature at around 27 weeks. The baby was transferred from Leicester Hospital to Northampton which meant the cost of petrol and hospital parking was far more than they could afford. Helen explained "in the time where we were visiting the hospital, my worker also managed to give us £100 petrol vouchers to help with visiting our daughter".





Sadly, their daughter died in May. Helen added: "When it came to the time of my daughter's funeral, my worker helped me to access support with the funeral costs. We also received a clothes voucher which meant our family could all get a new outfit for the funeral. This made me feel like we could do our daughter proud".

Reflecting on her journey, Helen said: "I wouldn't have been able to do any of this on my own. It's hard to know what help is out there, and at the time our daughter was in hospital I didn't mentally have the capacity to do any of it. Without the help, we wouldn't have coped at all; we were already maxed out on our overdraft from trying to keep things afloat".

Now, Helen's partner has been made redundant, so their focus is him getting back to work. Helen explained "I would also love to return to teaching as this is what I have always loved doing. I'm hoping in coming months I will be able to get help with our debts, as I'm ready to tackle them now. As soon as we're in a position to, we want to start giving back to food banks again and pay the kindness forward".

Helen encourages anyone who needs the support to go for the first time. "You'll see it's not as scary or as shameful as anyone would think. Just know how much it will help your mental health - because there is a helping hand waiting for you if you're struggling. You don't feel ashamed or embarrassed - as being open takes a huge weight off your shoulders. I am so grateful for all the help and don't know where we would be without it".

# talk2sort

## Mediation

talk2sort Mediation is a confidential, impartial, and non-judgemental service, that works with young people aged 11–19 and their family members experiencing conflict at home across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. We support clients to openly explore the issues and feelings they are facing, through facilitating a safe space with a future focused approach, so changes can be maintained once our involvement has ended.

Of our referrals this year, 100% stated that family breakdown was occurring within their homes- but by the end of their time in our talk2sort service, 92% felt these relationships had improved. Utilising a tool-kit of creative activities within sessions, young people and parents are supported to break down communication barriers to better understand each other's emotions and behaviours.

As educational facilities have reopened after the pandemic, there has been a 375% increase

in referrals to this service from schools (up on the previous year). In response, our drop-in services have resumed in schools and colleges which offer 1:1 Mediation to young people, in a secure environment away from home. Home visits are also offered, and we continue to utilise other meeting methods such as Zoom if that is the preference of those we support.

Following the mediation intervention, 100% of young people reported feeling closer to other people, being able to think more clearly, and felt they are dealing with problems well. It has been fantastic to support these families and young people to break the negative cycle of conflict.



**Mary Bullivant**

*Services Manager:  
Young People & Families*

# Sophie's Story

## *talk2sort Mediation Drop-in*

When things were difficult at home and consequently impacting her school work and relationships, Sophie was put in touch with the talk2sort mediation service. Sophie explained: "My relationship with Dad wasn't good at the time. We were arguing a lot and I didn't feel heard when I wanted to be alone. I just used to stay in bed and sleep all day and miss school".

"My friends would ask me what was wrong, and I would take it out on them. So, I spoke to my school teacher about what was happening". It was Sophie's school teacher who knew about the talk2sort mediation service, and organised a session.

In their sessions, Sophie and her mediator spoke about how things were at home, and how this was different to how Sophie would like her relationship with her Dad to be. Together, they explored

Sophie's triggers, how this impacted her mood, and how to communicate this to her Dad. "We then stopped arguing, and Dad listened more, so we both didn't get as stressed" Sophie explained. Sophie's mediator provided visual aids for Sophie to explore and recognise her feelings. "I found the 'Blob Trees' really helpful. They have people with different moods, and after every session you circle how you're feeling about being at home". Throughout their sessions, Sophie said the blobs she chose got more positive.

"Now there is less arguing at home, I am getting on with my Dad better. It feels a lot more positive and I'm less stressed so I pay attention at school".

Sophie's Dad also said that things have never been better between him and Sophie, as they're identifying quality time opportunities together.

The teacher who put Sophie in touch with talk2sort also said Sophie seems in a good place right now. Looking to the future, Sophie said "my dad also says I'm creative, so I have chosen Media Studies and Art GCSEs next year. I'm looking forward to doing the things I enjoy".



# Street Homeless & Offenders

# Joe's Story

*Told by the Outreach Team*

Outreach is carried out in the early hours of the morning to engage with vulnerable individuals who are rough sleeping. The team cover the whole of Leicestershire and Rutland in supporting individuals into accommodation and ensuring the right support is in place for them to succeed.

Individuals rough sleeping on the streets may have little access to essential items. The Outreach Team are able to offer clients essential supplies such as a hot drink, hot food, water, sleeping bag, tent, or clothing; by making use of the Co-operative Community Dividend Fund who kindly granted £2,000 for such items this year.

Not only do the Outreach Team initially assist individuals off the street, but they also ensure relevant support is in place for the client to break the cycle of rough sleeping.

Most recently, the Outreach Team received a report regarding a gentleman called Joe who was rough sleeping. The Outreach Team went to the area at 6am

to attempt to engage with Joe. He was located, and told the team he had been sleeping on a bench for 2 weeks since coming out of hospital, after suffering with his mental health due to a bereavement in his life.

After initial conversations and gathering the relevant information to liaise with the Local Authority, the Outreach Team confirmed the case and supported Joe in communicating with the council. The Outreach Team also got a food parcel for Joe and signposted him to external agencies to support him in his substance misuse.

Once the council had made initial enquiries, they offered him temporary accommodation. The Outreach Team drove Joe to the B&B, checked him in and showed him to his room. Joe was extremely grateful for the support given, and his case will now be passed to our Supported Lettings Team to provide assistance in accessing long term accommodation and support in the skills required to sustain a tenancy.





# Rough Sleeping

# Initiative

The Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI), formally known as the Rapid Rehousing Pathway, is delivered in partnership with the Local Authorities across Leicestershire and Rutland, alongside Falcon Support Services. The service aims to identify and support individuals who are rough sleeping to access and maintain accommodation, working to prevent repeat homelessness by offering intensive 1:1 support to individuals.

The RSI is funded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, as part of the Government commitment to end rough sleeping by 2027. Annual rough sleeping statistics, published in February 2022, show that rates have fallen for a fourth year in a row with a 9% reduction in rough sleeping compared to last year. Numbers have fallen in every region of England, taking levels to an 8-year low overall.\* However there are still many rough sleepers who need support.

\* [www.gov.uk/government/news/number-of-rough-sleepers-reaches-8-year-low](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/number-of-rough-sleepers-reaches-8-year-low)

Over the last year, we have:

- Increased Outreach services - sessions are now completed on a daily basis from 6am instead of several times per week.
- Completed 327 outreach checks, which includes repeat checks of an area.
- Supported 32 clients who were rough sleeping to move into accommodation.
- Worked intensively with 32 clients to support and empower them to maintain their accommodation.



**Molly Splerings**

*Services Manager:  
Street Homeless & Offenders*



*Jess Reid*

*Supported Lettings Officer on  
the Rough Sleeping Initiative*

Clients benefit from Supported Lettings because they have someone in their corner reassuring them that they can take care of themselves, and empowering them to reach the goals they want to achieve, such as accommodation and work.

Sometimes, clients feel resistant at the start of support because they can't shy away from issues, such as debt or rent arrears, anymore. Addressing them head on can cause a lot of distress, as they may have been avoiding the issues for months or even years. However, they quickly see how things can change and that gives them confidence to trust the process and be guided by our support.

Going from rough sleeping to a tenancy can be a big change for our clients and something they aren't used to, after spending many years living very chaotic lifestyles. It can be a challenge to not return to the lifestyle they're used to and sustain their accommodation. However, it is possible for a lot of our clients. For example, a recent client of mine previously struggled with an addiction, was living in his car, and barely had enough money to get through the week. Now he has a tenancy and a full-time job that he enjoys, which enables him to not only sustain his tenancy but also save his money to build a stable future.

I like working for The Bridge because there is so much support available under 'one roof'. As well as this, all staff embed our values of empowerment and positivity, and there is no judgement about anyone's situation. This allows empathy for individual's situations - and that shows in the successes of our work.

# Staff Stories



you don't understand  
how much it means  
to me, thank you so  
much. I'm literally  
about in tears

*Feedback from a client who had  
support in gaining a rent in  
advance deposit from the  
Dynamic Framework*

# Dynamic

# Framework

Since June 2021, The Bridge have been subcontracted by Nacro to deliver accommodation support to males across Leicester City, Leicestershire and Rutland under the Dynamic Framework.

The Dynamic Framework team can work with any males over the age of 18 who are open to probation and who have an accommodation need; varying from those who are street homeless to clients who have newly accessed a tenancy, and many situations in between. The team can work with clients who are in custody (typically within 12 weeks of their release date) or in the community. To support our work, staff members are

co-located into relevant Prison establishments, as well as co-locate with Probation teams.

Over the past 9 months, this fast-paced service has received 511 referrals for support. Of those who successfully completed their action plans:

79% were supported to secure social or supported housing

76% prevented becoming homeless

98% progressed in obtaining accommodation



*Molly Splevings*

*Services Manager:  
Street Homeless & Offenders*



# Our Future

A huge thank you  
from us all

## Fundraising Highlights

# £25,127



£214  
**Amazon Smile**



£701.50  
**Charnwood Lottery**



£1,077  
**Facebook**



£4,023  
**Just Giving**



£2,417  
**QR Code**

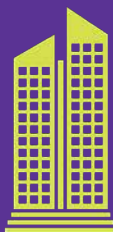


£6,408  
**Webpage**



£1522.60  
**Churches**

Quorn Baptist Church,  
St Mary's Church,  
St Michael & All Angels Markfield,  
Trinity Methodist Church,  
Woodhouse Eaves Methodist  
Church



£20,722  
**Businesses**

Leaders Ltd, Needle & Pin  
Loughborough, Bom Bom  
Pâtisserie, Trevor Parr  
Association, Straw & Pearce,  
Barratt Homes Foundation,  
Perdiem Ltd,  
Covanta

A massive thank you goes to Mewies & Co at Mountsorrel for kicking off our fundraising in 2022 by raising £4,000!

# Fundraising

## Message

During the pandemic and in the post-pandemic reality, the demand on our services grew significantly whilst now economic impacts started are leading us to the cost-of-living crisis, making the task of securing money for our crucial services even more difficult.

The Status of Fundraising, 2021 Benchmark Report published by Blackbaud states that for a lot of organisations, the post-pandemic reality has had a negative effect on their income generation activities. Contributing factors include financial insecurities in households after the pandemic, drops in donor numbers, and lower gift levels.

This challenging reality is clear for us to see. From the highly successful anniversary of The Bridge in 2020 where fundraising targets were exceeded (£97k), we are now are down £51k in financial year 2021-2022 (to £45,849).

We will see the full harshness of this reality in the financial year to come, but knowing that our clients will need us more than ever before

gives us the necessary strength to do our best – in all areas of the organisation – from the vast portfolio of our life-changing services through to the handful of business development positions. We stand united to be our best and deliver our best, but we know it won't be possible without your sustained commitment. We are sincerely grateful to all our donors, friends, partners, and supporters, for your continued reassurance. Though we ask you all to work with us- because only together will we make the biggest difference.

Every single one of our donors is so important to us. You have impacted our clients lives as we did with our services, by supporting us financially- so on behalf of us all: thank you.



*Magda Korytkowska*

*Community Engagement Lead*

# Our

# Community

I joined The Bridge as the Community Engagement Lead in March 2022. This new role in the organisation aims to support the ongoing sustainability of the charity, through a fundraising strategy that engages with the donors and fundraisers in our community. Since being in post, I have been planning and developing new initiatives to financially support the organisation and raise awareness about the life changing work we do.

To engage with our supporters and local businesses, two brand-new fundraising assets have been published: a Community

Fundraising Pack and Business Partners brochure (please get in touch for more information).

I am excited about what we are going to achieve together in the next financial year, but within the short time I have been here I am proud to outline some of this year's achievements below.

## **The Bridge2Collaboration**

As the country recovers from the pandemic we begin to realise the full impact it has had locally, collaborating with businesses and engaging communities is more important than ever before.

On 11th February 2022 The Bridge2Collaboration was launched. Targeting the change makers and thought leaders of local businesses across the East Midlands. This new partnership aims to build, nurture and promote local businesses, whilst ensuring that we all have a safe place to call home.

During quarterly meetings we aim to tackle real life community





issues to work towards a future where everyone has a safe space to call home. We are delighted to see that businesses including Hinckley & Rugby Building Society, Loc8Me Foundation, and Jay Webb Consultancy Services have already decided to join us in our mission to involve the business community to help with developing sustainable housing solutions through partnership and good practice.

Community engagement has never been more important as we work together to support local individuals and families. Each day we are attracting more businesses to attend our networking groups that empower a strong community, and we look forward to seeing where the next year takes us as we build on this partnership working.

### **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

As a person-centred organisation, equality, diversity, and inclusion is at the core of who we are.

This year we completed in-depth analysis to identify areas where we can improve on our diverse community outreach as an organisation. In response, we have developed Core and Focus groups that meet regularly to develop and implement a strategy based on the direct promotion of our value of empowerment by being better involved in our diverse community.

In 2022-2023 we will focus on impacting three principal areas:

**Communications:** by ensuring all visuals are inclusive, that we are engaging in current affairs by advocating for our diverse community, and that we are accessible through our wording that responds to access needs.

**Community:** by engaging with diverse groups to spread awareness of our work and closing the gap of reach. That includes attending community events as well as building relationship with key representatives from the community.

**Service Delivery:** by reaching all members of the local community that need our support, and overcoming any barriers to do so. This fosters a stronger community where we are able to be authentic, empowered and celebrated for the individuals we are; and together work toward a future where we all thrive in safe and secure homes.



**Magda Korytkowska**

*Community Engagement Lead*

We will continue to  
be there, reaching  
out a helping hand to  
those who need us

*The Bridge  
(East Midlands)*

# The Year

What a year it has been. Our team continue to amaze me in the work that they do together with our clients. What we have here at The Bridge is a unique force of incredibly committed individuals that I am proud to represent. I hope this report has given you an insight into the life-changing work that they are doing every single day with our clients - as doesn't everybody deserve a place to call home?

I would also like to say a huge thanks to businesses and the community in the events they have completed to fundraise for us. Without you, we would not be able to do the work that we do. So, thank you from us all at The Bridge!

As we look onto the year ahead, we move on without some of our very dedicated Trustees. Our thanks go to Joanna Emmett, Helen Tighe and Karen Jewell who gave unstintingly of their time and expertise. I would like to extend a very warm welcome to Mark

# Ahead

Clements and David Simms who will join the Board this coming year.

We need to continue and build on this work together in partnership. We demonstrated this as a community in the pandemic, but we need this resilience to continue now more than ever.

The impact of the crisis we are now facing will continue to have a devastating effect on society's most vulnerable. So I implore you, if you can, to support our vital work: as our incredible team will continue to be there on the front line, reaching out a helping hand to those who need us. Please get in touch to support our work, today.



*Sue Langley*

*Chief Executive Officer*

Charity No: 1050596

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

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