

NARTHEX 2024 INTERIM IMPACT REPORT

WHAT DOES NARTHEX DO?

Narthex started out of the Church of St John's located in the centre of Sparkhill, Birmingham in 2002, and in response to high numbers of people coming to its doors for poverty relief. Through our services like welfare, money and debt advice, community pantry, food banks and immediate resources, we aim to empower individuals and families to overcome challenges and achieve their full potential.

Today, we operate a large food distribution hub supplying foodbank satellites across south and east Birmingham, a clothing and resource centre, and debt and generalist advice services for clients accessing the foodbanks.

To demonstrate the outcome and impact of our work, we have prepared this interim report covering our activities between July 2023 and June 2024. A full impact report will be released in early 2025

INFORMATION ADVICE & GUIDANCE SERVICE

Our free Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) service takes a holistic approach in supporting our clients. Through our IAG advisors, we offer a wider range of information, advice and guidance to address the causes of indebtedness. Working with their designated IAG advisor, clients can outline and discuss their required outcomes in greater depth, allowing the advisor to identify and propose potential pathways to meet needs.



Working with a robust network of peer agencies, community and faith-based groups, and civic and NHS agencies, we take a person-centred, strengths-based approach to support our clients to take proactive steps to break the debt cycle they are experiencing. We don't just solve problems; we help people become financially confident. We act as a coach, informed decisions and ultimately improve their overall well-being.



1,045

people were supported by our IAG advisors, with 84% from a minority ethnic community, 86% not in employment, 48% with dependent children and 38% with some form of disability or long-term health condition.



£757,585

worth of funding, benefits or financial relief were secured for 211 IAG clients.



Finance (41%), **physical and mental health** (14%) and **housing** (12%) were the three main areas where the IAG supported people the most.

“I was very lucky to get support from Narthex, it felt like a family to me, I was able to talk without any fear. Staff was very friendly and well trained they helped me in so many different issues. Without this help I would not be better off financially. If I didn’t have this help, I would have been very stressed.” – IAG client

“I came to the local drop-in centre, and they booked me an appointment for Narthex surgery. I am so grateful that they were able to support me with my financial situation and I received all the support I needed. I am so touched and grateful that my HSF has been awarded before Christmas.” – IAG client

FOOD BANKS AND NARTHEX PANTRY

OUR FOOD BANKS

Narthex Sparkhill Foodbank is one of the largest in the UK, operating six satellites from its central warehouse hub: Sparkhill, Tyseley, Balsall Heath, Stechford and Hall Green, as well as Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham. We’re a part of Trussell Trust, the anti-poverty charity and community of food banks providing practical support to people who can’t afford the essentials, and campaigning for a future where none of us needs to use emergency food to get by.



16,900

people were supported by our foodbanks, with a third of them being children.



We work with some **240** organisations and community partners who issue food vouchers that enable people to access our food banks across Birmingham and other food banks that we are connected to.

We want to make sure that no one in our local community has to go hungry, and we rely greatly on volunteers to help to make this happen. From donating food, volunteering at satellites, sorting and packing food parcels, talking to clients at foodbanks or Pantry's or supporting our fundraising, there are lots of ways people can support and get involved in our delivery and raising awareness of poverty and helping end UK hunger.

“Food banks are great places, but it's sad that we've had to get to this point. The support you get from food banks makes you feel that there's someone there, that you won't starve. I'm glad Narthex Foodbank helped me through a very tough time.”

LOCAL PANTRIES

To help our local neighbourhoods alleviate the effect of high living expenses, we also operate two local pantries - St John's and Tyseley.

For a small weekly subscription of £5, members of our pantries will be able to purchase approximately £15 worth of meat, fresh fruit and vegetables and supermarket favourites to stock up their cupboards and fridge on a weekly basis.



OUR CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY ONE

WHAT WAS THE STORY?

An elderly Pakistani couple attended Narthex who were very anxious, distressed and worried. They were advised to come to our office by a family friend, who told them they can get help and support if they came to us, as we had helped them too. They both have number of health issues with no other family members. They live in their own house. They are only getting State Pension, and not aware of what benefits they are entitled to due to language barrier issues and being computer illiterate.

They are struggling financially to pay their household bills and expenses with the income they got coming in. Both the couple have several health problems and are elderly so not fit for work. Their main issue was to see if they are eligible for any other welfare benefit or grants/funds, to manage their household expenses and bills.

WHAT DID WE DO TO HELP?

- We completed a welfare benefit check on Turn2Us online.
- We supported the couple to make PIP applications for both of them.
- We applied for Household Support Fund for them.
- We checked their energy bills to see if its actual bills or estimated and gave them energy saving tips and advice.

WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

We helped the couple secure over £11k worth of annual funding - one of the clients was awarded the PIP (Daily living element higher rate and Mobility standard rate) and the partner received Daily living standard rate and Mobility standard rate. They were also awarded the Household Support Fund.

Money Saving Measure	Annual Financial Gain
PIP Awarded	£6,588
PIP Awarded	£4,864.80
Household Support Fund Awarded	£200
Total	£11,652.80

Overall, they have become financially more stable, feeling less worried and stressed out.

“We were struggling to pay for our household shopping, bills and expenses as we were only getting State Pension. We don’t know English or how to use a computer and didn’t know if we can get any other benefits. The advisor at Narthex was very understanding, kind and gave us

lots of reassurance that she will do her best to help and support us. She informed us that we can get PIP and applied for Household Support Fund. We are very happy and very appreciative for all the help and support we received from Narthex. We really can't believe the difference the help has made to us; we had been very worried about how we were going to manage our expenses and bills and household shopping. We will recommend our friends and family to come to Narthex for any help and support they need."

CASE STUDY TWO

WHAT WAS THE STORY?

A single mother attended Narthex as she was struggling to manage her household financial expenses. She lives with her son and was only getting Universal Credit and child benefit. She has health issues which meant she was not fit for work. Due to the cost of living and energy prices that went up, she has been struggling to maintain her payments with her energy bills. She has also been billed using estimated meter readings because of the fact she doesn't know how to give her meter readings online.

She has language barrier issues which cause more stress and difficulties for her. The client had incurred arrears of £2,000 with her energy supplier. She had got her son to call the energy supplier and try to apply for the hardship grant, but she was told to complete it online. Her son wasn't able to do that as he didn't quite understand what to do.

WHAT DID WE DO TO HELP?

- We supported the client in doing a benefits check online.
- We supported the client with contacting their energy supplier, explained her situation to them and completed the hardship grant online.
- We advised the client the importance of providing energy meter readings to supplier to get accurate bills.
- We completed Household Support Funds application on her behalf.
- We issued her with a fuel and shopping voucher.
- We applied for Employment Support Allowance (ESA) on her behalf.

WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

We successfully helped secure £7k worth of annual financial gain for the client, including the energy hardship grant which was used to write off the client's energy bill arrears. She was also awarded the Household Support Fund, and ESA for £90.50 a week.

The client has successfully set up a payment plan for her future bills to pay £50 each month, which was manageable for her.

Money Saving Measure	Annual Financial Gain
Energy grant awarded	£2,000
Household Support Fund	£200
Employment Support Allowance	£4,706
Fuel Voucher	£100
Shopping Voucher	£70
Total	£ 7,076

"I was struggling to pay my energy bills and this was making me very depressed and stressed out. The advisor at Narthex was very helpful, understanding, empathetic and explained everything and completed all the applications for me, I feel ever so grateful and less mentally stressed out. I had been very worried about how I was going to manage my bills with the amount of money I was getting, which was barely enough to manage my shopping and maintenance of the household."

THANK YOU TO OUR FOUNDERS AND PARTNERS

As a destitute charity, we rely on funders, people's donations and support from community partners to enable us to help others through their journey to change. We thank them from the bottom of our hearts.



Trusts and Foundations

- The ASDA Foundation
- The Alfred Haines Ch.Trust
- The Keith and Joan Mindelsohn Charitable Trust
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Faith Centres

- Knowle Parish Church Council
- Shirley Parish Church

Individuals and Businesses

- Alan Veitch
- EH Smith
- IMI Kynoch Ltd
- Johnson LC, Analytical
- Prosperity Law LLP
- Sainsburys Grant
- Shirley Lions Club
- The Wilkes Partnership

Partnership and contract delivery with other organisations

- Ashiana Community Project
- Small Health Community Forum
- BVSC
- Thrive Together Birmingham