



My Journey at Narthex – Nita Upadhyay

I think this quote above pretty much sums up the values of Narthex and why it was set up years ago, and why I was drawn to work here.

I joined Narthex in July 2016 when I started working as a Co-Ordinator for the Sparkbrook Hub of Ageing Better. Just months earlier I had moved from London where I'd lived and worked for 14 years within the fast-paced media and later charity sector.

Narthex was a big change. I was very much attracted by the values of the charity of compassion, kindness, and community, and the role looked interesting, and a new challenge. I knew it was based within a Church and I'm not a Christian myself, but that did not matter since I believe the heart of all religions and spirituality is love. I had also grown up down the road, in Springfield and Tyseley, in my teenage years and attended Moseley school, so I knew the area well and have seen it go through a lot of changes, since the 1990s. I wanted to make a difference, however cliché that may sound.

The project with Ageing Better was commissioned by BVSC and lasted 6 years. I really enjoyed the role, meeting many inspiring people and organisations in the community and helping them to set up activities and initiatives to reduce social isolation for people over 50. What struck me most was how much people cared about their community.

After Ageing Better finished due to funding, I did some fundraising for Narthex which I really enjoyed. It was great to be able to put my writing skills to use, after working in the media. But what I enjoyed most (as well as being successful with getting grants) was reading about other funds and charities that were set up to help people in need and charities like Narthex. It always warms my heart to see how giving and kind people can be, and how they want their own legacy to continue by helping others that come after them.

Almost 9 years later with a year off for maternity (twins!), I'm still at Narthex. I've seen a lot of change over the years. At our heart we still aim to have the same values, and this continues to drive us in all we do. We have our Foodbanks, Information, Advice and Guidance services, which do wonderful awe-inspiring work to help those people who need it most in our community. I'm lucky to work with lovely people who genuinely care about the people they are trying to help.

Due to the nature of the work, I'm now Wellbeing Lead at Narthex, which sits within the HR function of the charity. My role is primarily focused on making sure staff and volunteers feel safe and supported within their roles, which I enjoy, and I get to use my skills from my background in Psychology. When we give out to others, and hear traumatic stories about others, we can end up feeling compassion fatigue. So, it is important we look after each other. I see how hard the staff works and how much they give in both their personal and professional lives and can't help but feel touched. I think the biggest asset of Narthex is certainly its people.

Every small thing has a ripple effect on making the world a better place and it's important to not to underestimate your own power. We are all in it together.

A rectangular graphic with a blue background featuring a bokeh effect of light circles. The text is written in a black, cursive script.

*"Your legacy is every
life you've touched."*

-Maya Angelou