

The Gingerbread Centre

Annual Review 2016-17

The
Gingerbread
Centre



'Supporting Vulnerable People'

40th Anniversary Edition



2016-2017

2017 is our 40th anniversary. After starting as a support group for single parents 40 years ago, The Gingerbread Centre has evolved over the last 4 decades to become a key provider of supported accommodation for people who are homeless and at risk of homelessness.



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Chairman's Report

It has been a busy year at The Gingerbread Centre, full of exciting developments and challenges.

With regret, and through circumstances beyond our charity's control, we saw the closure of the Empowered Families Project which was run by The Gingerbread Centre with the support of Big Lottery funding. The project ran for five years and analysis showed it provided great support for vulnerable families in Stoke-on-Trent and the surrounding areas.

The Board of Trustees would like to thank everyone who helped make the project a success.

Austerity has impacted charity funding across the UK and this led to The Gingerbread Centre's Board taking steps to raise the charity's profile and fundraising efforts. Having established a fundraising committee, we decided to organise our first Gingerbread Centre Dinner Dance in October 2016. This proved to be a great success and we redoubled our efforts to organise our 40th anniversary ball for autumn 2017.

I'd like to thank the Chief Executive and staff for all their hard work. In September 2016, I attended a full team meeting which was a great success and once again proved that we have a strong team.

I am particularly pleased to report that The Gingerbread Centre has taken on an apprentice painter and decorator with the help of PM Training.

It has been a time of change on The Gingerbread Centre Board, with Steve Culbert and Ann James stepping down after lengthy service. Thanks go to both of them for their tireless work to support The Gingerbread Centre.

Nigel Howle
Chairman

Board of Trustees

Chairman

Nigel Howle

Vice Chair

Steve Culbert

Treasurer

Sandra Beard

Secretary

Alex Herbert

Voting Members

Adele Bryant, Alex Herbert, Ann James, Ele Morrissey, Mervyn Ryan, Nigel Howle, Peter Thorpe, Sandra Beard, Steve Culbert.

Chief Executive's Report

Every year I seem to mention a change, something that has affected us and left us reeling. This time it is no different. We started the year in a settled position, with our Accommodation Manager, Jean Lawton, managing both of our accommodation units, Rothesay Court and Catherine Court, and we gained a new Finance Manager in Nikki Evans – welcome Nikki.

Due to changes within the Big Lottery funding, we were unable to gain continuation funding for our Empowered Families Project, which finally closed in March 2017.

We were happy to, once again, receive a good result in Stoke on Trent Councils' Service Review for both of our services, an independent review highlighting the quality of the services we provide at The Gingerbread Centre.

We held a full team meeting in September 2016, where together we developed a set of Values for Gingerbread;

Respect, Empowerment, Guidance, Stability and Success

They have been introduced into our emails and some of our documentation, and will shortly be introduced into everyday working life; via our supervisions and appraisals.

We held our very first Dinner Dance, in October 2016 supported by our friends and colleagues in our local area, who helped us hold a fun, enjoyable and successful night.

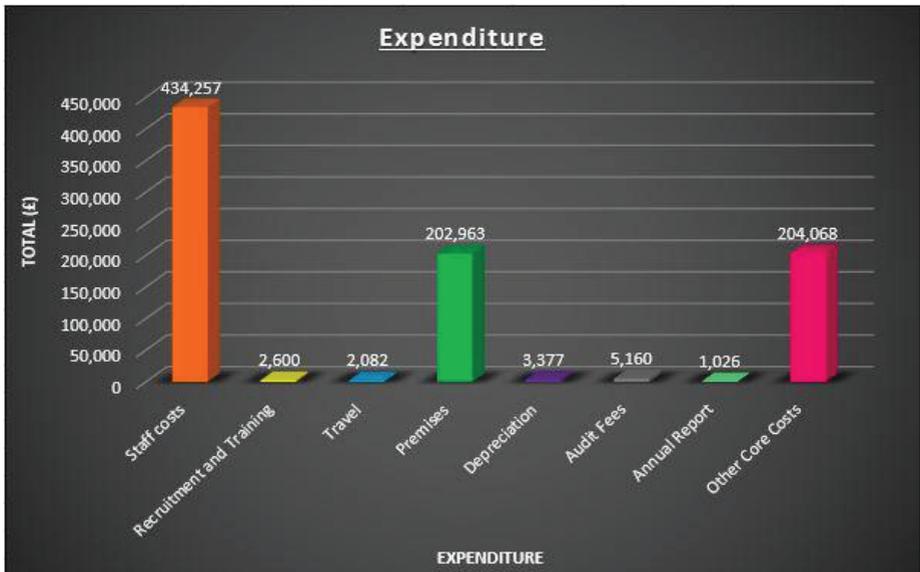
As always, I thank the senior management team for their support and assistance throughout the year, I also wish to thank all the staff who do such a wonderful job, in sometimes very emotive circumstances. It really is a pleasure to manage such a fabulous organisation.

Wendy Hocking
Chief Executive

Financial Report

The financial year ending 31 March 2017 saw a small loss of £29,108 resulting in a weakening of our overall funds from £276,729 down to £247,621. Our reserves however remain healthy and within the recommended level set and approved by the trustees. Our income was £826,425, a 17.9% decrease on the previous year. In the main this reduction in income was due to the loss of the Floating Support Service (Floating Support income for 2015/16 was £143,888).

Expenditure was £855,533, a reduction of 8.4% on last year. Again, this reduction relates, in the main, to the loss of the Floating Support Service. A full report of the accounts is available for inspection if required.



The financial environment in which we operate continues to be challenging. I would like to thank our management team and all our staff for their skill, dedication and commitment to our financial controls without compromising the quality of the services we deliver. The task for the future will continue to be difficult, but we face it with confidence.

In challenging times it is good that we have healthy cash reserves and through good financial control we will look to continuing the work of The Gingerbread Centre for the foreseeable future.

Sandra Beard
Treasurer

Rothesay Court

The model of support delivered at Rothesay Court assists families to address personal crisis, whilst achieving family stability and life-long independence.

The Learning and Communal Lounge has given service users the opportunity to build their skills and to use laptops where they have:

- Made new benefit claims
- Carried out job searches
- Written CV's
- Completed food hygiene training courses
- Completed Safeguarding Level 1 training

Rothesay Court supported 73 families during the year, of which 47% were referred by Housing and 32% by Social Services.

In February 2017 Rothesay Court underwent a service review and was assessed in the following areas:

Support Planning	Compliant
Health and Safety	Compliant
Safeguarding	Compliant
Service User and Staff Consultation	Compliant

Quotes:

'Gingerbread is the perfect place to get back on your feet from being in a rubbish situation. The friendly faces of the staff are just what you want!'

'The support has turned my life around. Thank you all for your positive encouragement.'

The Café is open in the Communal Lounge and has been used for Cook and Eat sessions for service users to learn about healthy eating, make practical meals and eat together. From April 2016 to the end of March 2017, three successful Cook and Eat programmes have been delivered with approximately 6 families attending each session. Each programme is ongoing for 6 sessions.

Catherine Court

Catherine Court is an accommodation based service that provides housing related support specifically for expectant teenage mothers, vulnerable teenage couples with children or lone teenage parents who need to develop the skills and ability to live independently. We work in partnership with a variety of agencies to provide the highest quality of support.

We have supported 25 young people during the year; 42% referred by Housing, 38% by Social Services and 20% consisting of self – referrals, and referrals from the Family Nurse Partnership and Young Parents Support Service.

In February 2017 Catherine Court underwent a service review and was assessed in the following areas:

Support Planning	Compliant
Health and Safety	Compliant
Safeguarding	Compliant
Service User and Staff Consultation	Compliant

Residents at Catherine Court have enjoyed taking part in a number of activities throughout the year such as glass making and other craft sessions, including making memory boxes. Residents can gather together to have Sunday Brunch and socialise, and to attend Cook and Eat sessions in the kitchen.

Residents have also been able to access the laptop and complete Child Protection Level 1 training, look for housing and apply for benefits.

External agencies have visited Catherine Court on a regular basis including; the sexual health team, the Fire Service and The Cultural Sisters. Approximately 5 residents at any one time attend sessions.

Quotes from the young parents at Catherine Court:

'Support is always there when you need it; staff will help you as much as they can. You can always speak to staff if you need something or are worried about your child.'

'The support I have received is brilliant. When I first moved into Catherine Court I was unsure and lost in my ways. Now, I am a brilliant mother and have come so far with the help of every staff member.'

Empowered Families Project Funded by Big Lottery

"Helping Families Take a
Step Forward In Life"



The project was a 5 year programme and is now completed. The Gingerbread Centre would like to express its thanks and appreciation to everyone who played a part in enabling the project to be delivered over the five year period across Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme and the surrounding areas of Staffordshire.

During the life of the project:

693 beneficiaries have registered on the project through attending courses, workshops or other initiatives.

157 courses, workshops and initiatives were delivered across the duration of the project within community settings, fitting into 20 different themes such as; healthy eating, budgeting, confidence and self-esteem building, employment skills workshops, drugs awareness workshops, project open day events and health walks.

Through attending courses, workshops and accessing initiatives, 693 beneficiaries have increased their confidence and self-esteem. This is as a result of reducing isolation, developing new friendships, learning new transferable skills, and linking into new opportunities. These new opportunities include; qualifications, training, volunteering and employment, and enable beneficiaries to move forward more positively.

We would like to say a massive thank you to everyone who was involved with the project from staff and stakeholders to service users, without your input, we wouldn't have been able to achieve our outcomes.

We would also like to thank the Big Lottery, without your funding and support the project would not have been possible.



Play Today

Play Today is funded by Children in Need for three years and works towards the following outcomes;



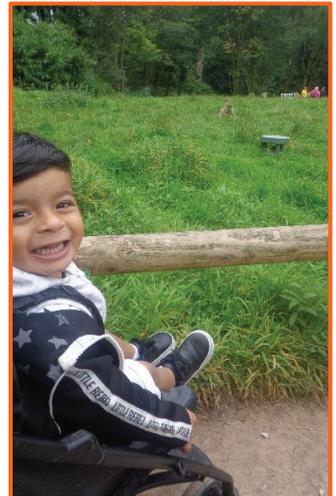
- Children and young people have a greater level of pride in their achievement.
- Children and young people increase their level of wellbeing.
- Children and young people increase their level of social integration.

During 2016-17, 63 children and young people aged 0-18 years have benefitted from our project and made significant progress.



The children and young people have enjoyed a visit to Chester Zoo, which was a first opportunity for many of them. At Gladstone Pottery Museum the children learnt about our local heritage, they were also able to explore the bottle kilns and decorate a tea cup.

The families have also enjoyed taking part in different celebrations, including Mardi Gras and Chinese New Year, as well as attending their first pantomime, Aladdin.



Quotes:

Chester Zoo Trip

'My son loved it, he wanted to climb in to the giraffes.'

Aladdin Pantomime

'The magic carpet bit was really funny, I couldn't stop laughing.'

Henry Smith Project



The Henry Smith Project aims to promote awareness of mental health issues to all families who reside at Rothesay Court and Catherine Court. Funded for three years, The Henry Smith Project enables the Project Worker to support the whole families' mental health and wellbeing by:

- Encouraging service users to attend internal and external activities, thus promoting confidence and reducing isolation.
- Supporting individuals to attend mental health appointments to promote attendance, which will subsequently improve a person's wellbeing.
- Seeking specialist mental health support from external agencies for parents and/or children, should it be required.
- Completing one-to-one visits with individuals, allowing them the opportunity to talk, and be listened to, reducing isolation and encouraging self-worth.

From April 2016 to March 2017, the Henry Smith Project Worker has supported approximately 67 families.

Thanks to the Henry Smith Project, families have had the opportunity to attend a number of groups internally, including; Mindfulness sessions, Cook and Eat activities, Arts and Craft sessions held by the Cultural Sisters, Changes Wellbeing groups, Sexual Health sessions and coffee mornings.

Case Studies

Case Study 1

Kimberley was referred to The Empowered Families Project for support and to help improve her confidence after separating from a controlling partner. In April 2014 she started attending an 8-week course on interpersonal skills and family relationships. This helped Kimberley to build confidence and learn new skills which lead to a Level 1 OCN West Midlands qualification.

Case Studies (continued)

'When I first attended the course I felt very isolated and didn't want to stay after the impact of becoming a single parent, but I then started to find my feet again, thanks to staff from Gingerbread. The support was amazing and led me to meeting new people and attending more courses.'

Over the next few months we discussed which areas Kimberley would like to study and volunteer in, and helped her do a 'Personal Pathway', she also stated that she'd like to join the Steering Group.

'I felt my confidence was improving really quickly which led me to go on and start distant learning in Dementia Awareness. I found it fitted around sorting the kids out and going to appointments. This was perfect as it wasn't even that long, it was over three months so I didn't have to commit to doing a two year course for example. When I qualified I was so happy, I was finally finding me as a person, I knew I could do this.'

Kimberley has continued on her Pathway and has attended a number of courses and workshops with the project and we have supported her going into further education at the local college. Her confidence has grown so much which, in turn, is making her two girls happy that Mummy is making a better life for them all, after going through so much. Kimberley now thrives and is volunteering at St Mark's Church Crèche in Shelton.

'I'm so very proud of myself! Thanks to the support and guidance from Gingerbread staff I've now qualified as a level 2 teaching assistant, I really enjoy being in a Year 1 class two days a week, the children and staff are wonderful. In January 2017 I will be doing level 3 as a teaching assistant and then maybe even going on to university. I can't thank Empowered Families enough, what started off as rocky has now turned into a much brighter future with my beautiful children and a career in teaching – and not forgetting passing my driving test!'

Kimberley B

Case Study 2

G moved into Gingerbread following a relationship breakdown and her struggles to safeguard her children. G was 3 months pregnant and had a daughter in Foster Care and a son who had been adopted. From the referral, G needed to provide stability for her daughter, whom she was having contact with weekly, to enable her to gain full custody as well as providing a stable place for her unborn baby.

Case Studies (continued)

G had a previous history of mental ill health and wellbeing visits were put into place immediately. G was initially cautious about disclosing her feelings through fear of the impact it may have on the future for herself, her unborn baby and her daughter. G became involved in all internal groups that were being delivered, including the healthy Cook and Eat sessions, Changes Mental Health groups, Sexual Health sessions and Arts and Craft sessions. G gained confidence and began helping to set up for group sessions and began to encourage other residents to attend. Although she had two other children, G wanted to get involved with the parenting sessions to give her more confidence when the baby was born.

During wellbeing visits, G was supported to write a post box letter to her son. G was supported with contacting her doctor to address issues, including her medication and a self-referral to Healthy Minds, enabling G to gain some control over what had been a chaotic lifestyle.

Although G's lifestyle was changing, she felt that she was still not at the right point in her life to care for two children. This was a difficult decision for G to make but she knew that she would need to make more changes in the long term if her daughter was to return to her care.

G continued to engage with the wellbeing visits, which focussed on G's future and wellbeing. Due to the progress G had made, she was offered a place on the OCN course to train as a facilitator of groups herself. G didn't complete the course because of her pregnancy and illness but she wants to return to it when her son is older.

G made changes to her life and said she *'feels happy the way it is going'*. G and her son have their own home and she keeps in contact with Changes and wants to work in mental health when the time is right.

Quotes:

'I am glad I came to Gingerbread. I was scared at first but everyone has helped me with my confidence and believed that I could look after my baby. The support I have had was always positive but staff were always honest and open with me when it was needed. I am much more settled now with my life and want to make a future for me and my baby. I know I can do it and I have been given that opportunity and want to make a success of it.'

Resident

If you would like to support The Gingerbread Centre, there are various ways you can help.

To Donate

If you would like to donate money to The Gingerbread Centre, you can donate through our website or directly to one of our centres.

If you would like to help without putting your hand in your pocket, you can sign up to easyfundraising and raise money while you shop online.

www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/sotgingerbread

It is free to sign up and free to use. It can be used by all of our supporters, whether it is for business purchases, such as office supplies, furniture or travel, for items you use at home or for booking holidays.

If you use easyfundraising each time you shop online, you could raise hundreds of pounds for Gingerbread each year. Don't forget to see if you can save money on your purchases with easyfundraising's special offers.



Gifts

You can donate new gifts such as home ware, to help us create move on packs to help our service users when they move in to their own property. You can donate new gifts at Christmas and chocolate eggs at Easter and tinned and dried food all year round.

Events



Each year we have a series of events to promote the work that we do at Gingerbread and to raise essential funds for our valuable work.

Why not come along to one of our events and join in the fun, or perhaps you would like to volunteer at one of our events!?

All of our events are promoted on our website and our Facebook Page. If you would like to attend one of our events, please contact Julie Levert on: **Telephone: 01782 973491**

Email: fundraising@gingerbreadcentre.co.uk

Volunteer Your Time

Is your business looking to support a local charity or arrange a team building exercise? Why not combine them and volunteer some of your business' time and resources to Gingerbread. Can you help us with the garden, or decorate a flat? There are many tasks that need to be carried out to keep Gingerbread ticking over. If you would like to offer your help, please contact **Julie** on: **01782 973491**.

If you would like to volunteer at one of our events, or you would be interested in arranging your own event to raise money for Gingerbread, please contact **Julie** on: **01782 973491**.

Charity of the Year

The Gingerbread Centre is a fantastic charity that provides 24/7 supported accommodation to homeless and vulnerable families. Why not support The Gingerbread Centre by nominating us as your Charity of the Year and help us to continue our valuable work.

Funders and Supporters

We would like to extend our thanks to everyone who has contributed to The Gingerbread Centre and supported us over the last 12 months. Without your support, we would not be able to continue our vital work providing supported accommodation to homeless and vulnerable people.

*1st Harriseahead Guides
Abzorbed IT Solutions
Airbags International
Amy Dawson
Andrea Birks
Andrew & Louise Wrench
Asmir Begovic & Family
Asmir Begovic Foundation
Big Lottery Fund
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Brighter Futures
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Cath Allsopp
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Cheryl Pritchard
Children in Need
City of Stoke-on-Trent
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Cllr. Philip Routledge
Community Fund @ Morrisons - Cheadle
Cooperative Bank
Corinne Humphreys
David & Lesley Johnson
Deborah Porter-Weston*

Funders and Supporters (Continued)

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 Val Byatt
 Vicky & Aimee Hopkins
 Warburtons
 Woolcool
 Young Carers Team
 Yvonne Jardine*

Some of our supporters and funders chose to remain anonymous. We would also like to thank them for their help and continued support.

As it is our 40th Anniversary, we would like to say an additional thank you to everyone who has supported us over the last 40 years. We wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for you. Thank you for enabling us to help thousands of homeless and vulnerable people.



The Gingerbread Centre

Unit 27, Dudson Centre, Hope Street, Hanley, Stoke on Trent, ST1 5DD

Telephone: 01782 973491

Registered Charity Number: 1088344 Limited Company Number: 2229357