

The Gingerbread Centre

Annual Review 2017-18

The
Gingerbread
Centre



'Supporting Vulnerable People'



'Gingerbread helped me change my life'

Gingerbread – A History

On 5th December 1977, the Stoke on Trent and District Gingerbread Centre Limited, also known as The Gingerbread Centre, began its life as a support group for single parent families. However, it soon became apparent that there was a need for accommodation and we opened our very first flat in a terraced house in Hanley, Stoke on Trent.

As the need for the service grew, so did the facilities and support that we offered. The Gingerbread Centre today, is much different to the support group and single flat we started with. In our 40th year, we are proud to say that we now provide a fantastic 33 units of accommodation for families in need.

As well as an increase in the amount of accommodation we provide, we have also increased the range of support we offer. We employ a Mental Health Project Worker, provide Resettlement Support (Rothsay Court) and Floating Support (Catherine Court), provide a range of trips and activities through our Play Today Project, and much more.

Our staff possess a wide range of skills, experience and qualifications which means we are able to provide a variety of support, which is tailored to suit the needs of each family we accommodate.

We liaise with other agencies and professionals who provide help and advice to the families we champion. These include; Changes, Citizens Advice, Health Visitors, Midwives, Police, Stoke Drug and Alcohol Service and many more. Furthermore, we are currently the only agency in the area to provide supported accommodation to single dads.

In 2014, we were excited to extend our service to include couples with children. This was a big change for us and enabled us to offer our service to a wider range of homeless and vulnerable people.

Future Goals

Our main goal for the coming year is to raise enough money to fund the invaluable role of our Mental Health Project Worker. To read about our 'Mental Health Matters' Campaign, please visit our website.



On 5th December 2017,
The Gingerbread Centre celebrated
40 years of serving the community
by supporting homeless and
vulnerable families.
Gingerbread is now a key provider
of supported accommodation to
the families of Stoke on Trent
and the surrounding area.

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Chairman's Report

The Gingerbread Centre continues to provide a high standard of support for vulnerable families. Our facilities at Catherine Court and Rothesay Court are regularly inspected by Stoke-on-Trent City Council and are judged to provide excellent service standards for our residents. This is testament to the hard work and dedication of our staff and, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, I'd like to thank them for their work.

The support we provide in our accommodation based services is of paramount importance, and makes a real difference to the families we support, who come to see The Gingerbread Centre as their home.

One of the challenges we faced last year, is the loss of funding for our charity's Mental Health Project Worker. The Project Worker has been funded by the Henry Smith Charity and has proved vital to the wellbeing of many of our residents. Sadly, when this funding ended, we were unable to locate a similar grant, therefore, the Board agreed to back the service by funding it from charity reserves for 12 months. Our staff are working hard to find additional funding and we have launched the campaign, 'Mental Health Matters', to raise awareness and support to keep our Mental Health Project Worker.

The Board is keen to raise the profile of the charity and has encouraged new fundraising initiatives, which led to a successful Charity Ball in autumn 2017.

Finally, this is my last report as Chair as I have decided to step down, to concentrate on other activities supporting the homeless. I would like to thank Adele Bryant for taking on the Chair's role and I am confident that she will be a great success.

Nigel Howle
Chairman

Board of Trustees

Chairman
Nigel Howle

Treasurer
Anne-Marie Tierney

Secretary
Alex Herbert

Voting Members

Alex Herbert, Adele Bryant, Ele Morrissey, Nigel Howle, Peter Thorpe, Anne-Marie Tierney and Claire McQuillan.

Chief Executive Report

What a year! Funding, as always, caused us difficulties. The Government advised that the Local Housing Allowance Cap was to be introduced for supported housing providers, which would have impacted on The Gingerbread Centre. Many specialists and Housing Associations advised the Government of the detrimental impact this would have on our residents and potentially was such an issue that our residents would not be able to stay in any form of supported housing. After many months of uncertainty, I am pleased to say, our Supported Housing services are here to stay! 😊

Stoke on Trent City Council, who fund part of our service, were also unsure of their future funding and this impacted on our services, giving an uncertain future to Rothesay Court and Catherine Court, only confirming to us at a very late stage that they were extending the contracts and the services would continue.

That said, we have also received fantastic support through various events, including; the Snowdon Challenge, and through group events such as those held by Keele University Women's Rugby Team. This support has brought much needed sponsorship and donations from many different people and a variety of companies which has enabled us to provide the extra support that our families' and their children need during their stay with us.

Through all of this funding uncertainty, we ensured our residents and beneficiaries remained untouched by these stresses, as they continued to be supported by our skilled team of conscientious staff, who genuinely care about our residents who always do their utmost to help them deal with their sometimes complex lives and circumstances, helping them make the best of their time with us, in order that they can have a better, safer future.

Wendy Hocking
Chief Executive

Financial Report

Our income for the financial year ending 31st March 2018 was £850,016 which was an increase of £26,335 on the previous year. This increase was assisted by an increase of donations. The breakdown of income for the financial year 2017-18 is shown in *Figure 1.1*.

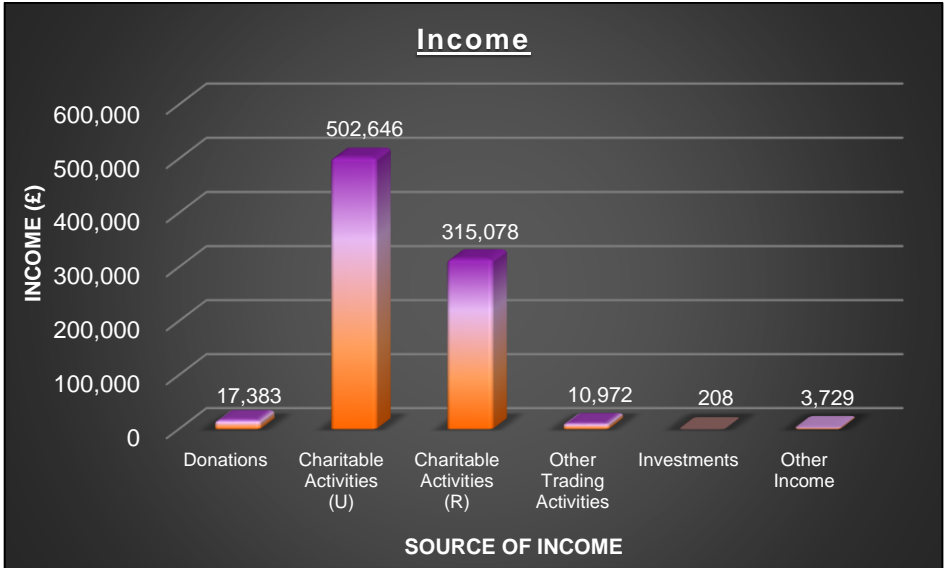


Figure 1.1

Expenditure was £828,084, a reduction of £27,449 on the previous year, (2017 - £855,533). With the full support of the staff we hope to continue to review costs and make savings where possible, whilst continuing to provide an excellent service.

Our reserves continue to remain healthy enabling us to continue the excellent work of The Gingerbread Centre for the foreseeable future.

Staff and trustees have worked hard fundraising throughout the year, and we have been fortunate to receive unexpected donations. The kindness of everyone is very much appreciated by all at The Gingerbread Centre.

A full report of the accounts is available for inspection if required.

Anne Marie Tierney

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 support focuses on the skills needed for independent living, for example; managing money, establishing networks of support, accessing training and obtaining move ons into settled accommodation.

The team of staff work in partnership with Social Care, Health Visitors, Midwives, local housing providers and other specialist services.

From April 2017 to the end of March 2018, 68 families were given support. On admission 84% had one or more of these identified support needs: mental health, drug and alcohol, learning disabilities and complex needs. 27% identified with Domestic Violence as a need with a combination of the above. 16% of families who came to Gingerbread were living in a Bed and Breakfast.

In March 2018 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

'The support I have received from my key worker has helped me to get back in the community. Going into Gingerbread was a positive experience.'

'Staff at Gingerbread looked after my wellbeing through good and bad. Staff even sat with me through the night when things were bad.'

'Without the support of staff I would not be here today. They were considerate and always around in my time of need.'

Catherine Court

Catherine Court is an accommodation based service that provides housing related support specifically for expectant teenage mothers, vulnerable teenage couples with children and 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 32 young people during this year; 51% referred by Young Persons Support Service, 25% by Social Services and 24% consisting of self – referrals, Health, Housing and referrals from other Voluntary Agencies.

In May 2018 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; redesigning the mural on the first floor, Cook and Eat Sessions in the kitchen and crafts including; making frames for the wall.

Residents have been able to access the laptop and complete Child Protection Level 1 courses, look for housing and apply for benefits. Several residents are accessing further education.

Quotes from the young parents at Catherine Court:

‘Gingerbread has done me the world of good. If I didn’t come I don’t know what I would have done, it’s helped me to build a family and we have such a good bond.’

‘Gingerbread have given me a home, a two bedroom house to start a better life for me and my family and I am so grateful for that. No one has ever given me a chance in life but they believe in me and it feels amazing.’

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 2017-18, 73 children and young people aged 0-18 years have benefitted from our project.

The children and young people at Play Today have enjoyed trips to Gladstone Potteries Museum and Hanley Museum. This was a great opportunity for families to explore the history of the local area and inspired more creative activities in Play Today.



Families have also attended trips to Trentham Monkey Forest, Fenton Fun Factory and Bowling where they got to spend quality, fun time together.

Quotes

Fun Factory:

'My favourite part was the big big slide!'

Gladstone Potteries Museum:

'I really enjoyed it as I got to learn new things about the area.'

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 and now in its final year, 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.

Service users experience a great deal of change and emotional turmoil when moving into Gingerbread. They can feel isolated, feel alone, stress levels can increase which can be unsettling for the whole family and more significantly when there is a mental health issue. The post has given service users the opportunity to have a dedicated worker who is able to give time to the family's needs to ensure the best outcomes are reached for service users to continue with their journey to live independently.

Since the start of the project, approximately 83% of the families who have resided at both Rothesay Court and Catherine Court have had some involvement with the Project Worker. In one year the project worker can support 70 families to better their well being.

Case Studies

Case Study 1

Background

I came to Gingerbread to give me a chance to keep my baby. I had already had two children gone to adoption and a baby who had passed away. I was homeless and suffering with very poor mental health. I could not get a property because I was in lots of debt with the council. I had been sofa-surfing and had no support from family.

Actions taken by the service

- Gingerbread supported me to get a DRO with CAB.
- Gingerbread supported me to do work around money and how not to get into any more debt.
- I did parenting work until I ended my pregnancy.
- I was helped to get back in touch with Lyme Brook to get help with my Mental Health.
- I was given help to learn about living on my own and helped to register with the council.

Outcomes achieved for the service user

- I have been offered a property that is nearly ready.
- I take my medication every day for my mental health and go to all of my appointments with them.
- I am debt free and can budget better, I can save up for things.
- I have post box contact with my children who were adopted.

How does the service user feel that the service has impacted on their wellbeing?

Staff at Gingerbread looked after my wellbeing through the good and the bad. I have struggled with relationships and ending my pregnancy, but have always had help. Staff even sat with me through the night when things were bad. I still have bad days but am feeling more positive than ever.

Service User

Case Study 2

Background

The service user referred herself into the service, she had been living with her father at the time who was a heavy drinker and this was beginning to have an impact on the way she was able to parent her daughter. The service user felt that she was unable to continue living in her father's property because she was receiving very little support. The service user's child had previously been the subject to a CIN plan, but at the time of the referral had no social care involvement. The service user had no contact with her mother who was considered to be unsuitable to be around children. The service user was 16 when she had her daughter and was attending school.

How does the customer feel that the service has impacted on their wellbeing?

'I am confident now, before I admit my parenting was to the best of my abilities. Now I am doing a lot better, I do things with my daughter so she can learn new things. Gingerbread has done me the world of good if I didn't come I don't know what I would have done, it's helped me to build a family and we have such a good bond, I am doing so well I have education and I am looking for a job. It makes me feel better about myself I have self-confidence. I feel stronger as a person.'

Service User

There are many ways that you can help The Gingerbread Centre and the families we support.

To Donate

Cash / Cheque

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



Water Plus Staff with Christmas Gifts

easyfundraising

To help us without putting your hand in your pocket, you can sign up to use easyfundraising and raise money each time you shop online.

www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/sotgingerbread

easyfundraising is free and easy to use. Once you have signed up, simply log in to shop with your favourite retailers and shop as you usually would. The Gingerbread Centre will receive a percentage of what you spend at no additional cost to you.

Gifts

We accept donations of new gifts such as home ware, and seasonal gifts such as Christmas Toys and Easter Eggs. We also accept donations of tinned and dried food all year round. To make a gift donation, please call **Michaela** on **01782 344740**.



Events

We hold a series of events each year to raise the essential funds which enable us to carry out our valuable work. If you would like to attend one of our events, such as our annual ball, please contact our Fundraiser, **Paul Deakin**, on the details below:

Telephone: 01782 973491

Email: fundraising@gingerbreadcentre.co.uk

Volunteer Your Time

If you would like to volunteer at one of our events or hold your own event to raise money for The Gingerbread Centre, please contact **Paul** on: **01782 973491**.

Charity of the Year

Nominate us as your Charity of the Year!

Nominating The Gingerbread Centre as your Charity of the Year is a great way to support us. It is a great opportunity to unite your staff behind a worthwhile cause that they can feel passionate about. We have our Fundraiser, Paul, on hand to advise and help your staff get involved with fundraising activities, events, challenges and more.

Making us your Charity of the Year is also a great way to generate PR opportunities for your company whilst helping homeless and vulnerable families.

Supporters and Funders

We would like to thank everyone who has donated to Gingerbread over the last year and supported us in any other way. We are grateful for the support and contributions that each of you have provided.

Without your support, we would not be able to continue our work helping homeless and vulnerable families.

Abi & Lewis Williams

Adecco

Aldi – Kingsmead

Alfie's Gang

Andrea Daniels

Asmir Begovic & Mary Howard

Aspire Housing

Berrymans Lace Mawer Solicitors

Bob & Margaret Carrington

Booker Cash & Carry

Boots – Festival Park

Boots – Newcastle under Lyme

Breakfast at the Brewery

KMF

Longton Police Station

Moore Stephens

Mr & Mrs Breen

Mr & Mrs Bryan

Mr Hacker

Mrs Jean Gleave

Netbiz

Noah Fry

Novus

Paula Ibraimo

Period Power

Peter O'Connell

Catenian Association Stoke-on-Trent Circle 13
Chris Steele
Christina Jukes
Cindy Shaw
Councillor Chetwynd
Councillor Hamer
Danielle Fitzgerald
David & Lesley Johnson
Diane Thomas
Dionne Daniel
Elizabeth Steele
Emma Carter
First Steps Nursery
Forest Park Oatcakes
FWB
Gallagher Bassett
Gemma Kharchenko
Giovanna Lancaster
Grace Church
iForce
Howden's Joinery Co.
Howle Communications
Isabelle Tomblin
Jade Mattocks
Jane Sutton
Janette Adams and Lily Roberts
Joanne Knowles
Jody Perry
John Gould
Kate Ellis
KDM Events
Keele University Women's Rugby Club
Kelly Morris
Kieran Perry

Portmeirion Group UK Ltd.
Port Vale FC
Primark – Hanley
Queenspark Partnership
Rebecca Turner
Ryan Yates & Family
Sam Kensett & Friends
Sarah Dodd
Scartoons
Skin Jase Tattoo Studio
Sonia Suckling
Sophie & Jason Ward
Staffordshire Property & Construction Network
Steve Morgan Foundation
Stoke City FC Community Programme Team
Stoke on Trent Lions Club
Stone Rural Parish Council
Strategi Solutions Group Ltd
St. Wulstan's Primary School
SVP @ St. Gregory's Church
Tesco – Hanley
Tesco – Longton
Tesco – Meir Park
The Rowley Trust
The Swan Inn - Bignall End
Tiny Toez
TK Maxx
Trentham Estate
Vodafone
Waterplus - Application & Test Team
Weight Watchers Group - Tollgate
Woolcool

We would also like to thank our donors who supported us or provided funding over the last year who chose to remain anonymous. We are truly thankful for your contributions to our charity.

**Supporting Homeless and
Vulnerable People in
Stoke on Trent Since 1977**



The Gingerbread Centre Head Office

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