



# IMPACT REPORT 2022-23



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“Gingerbread has  
been my lifeline  
so thank you”

## The Gingerbread Centre

... giving hope and opportunities to  
vulnerable families and young people

# A Remarkable Journey:

## THE EVOLUTION OF LONE PARENTS SUPPORT GROUP



In 1977, three passionate visionaries, Barbara Fox, Paul Koumi, and Christine Koumi, embarked on a remarkable mission that would change countless lives. Their journey began with a humble terrace house in Hanley, housing a 1-bed flat, and a dream to make a difference. Little did they know, their tireless dedication would lead to a legacy of support and community empowerment.

### The Pioneering Years

Their first endeavour was the creation of the Lone Parents Support Group, a beacon of hope for single parents. They managed "The Family Corner" at 291 Waterloo Road, Cobridge, offering 8 bedsits and leasing another property from Touchstone Housing. Their commitment knew no bounds.

### A Blossoming Dream

From 1995 to 2002, they nurtured the Gingerbread Playgroup/Nursery at 291 Waterloo Road, growing their team to include 1 manager, 1 senior, and 8 staff. Collaborating with LA, Bromford, and Gingerbread, they successfully managed Catherine Court, a haven comprising 7 x 2-bed flats and 4 x 2-bed houses, all funded by Supporting People.

### A Decade of Transformation

In 2004, with 1 manager, 1 senior, and 9 staff, they sold Family Corner, a chapter that marked their unwavering commitment to growth. Simultaneously, they took the reins of Rothesay Court, a refurbished sanctuary boasting 17 x 1-bed flats, 4 x 3-bed flats, and 1 x 2-bed flat, generously funded by Supporting People.

### Extending Their Reach

Their passion knew no bounds, and in 2009, they partnered with Willow Bank Health Centre, Longton, to develop crucial health services for the community, with funding from S.O.T PCT. The same year, they initiated

a ground-breaking community pilot project in Stoke on Trent, aiming to empower long-term unemployed individuals through job training and enterprise.

### Building Stronger Communities

From 2009 to 2015, they spearheaded the Smartmoves community project in collaboration with Brighter Futures and YMCA, a mission aimed at preventing homelessness. They played a pivotal role in the Family Support Network and introduced a dedicated family support worker program in partnership with Brighter Futures and CAB.

### A Legacy of Leadership

As the years passed, Lone Parents Support Group saw transitions in leadership. Barbara Fox retired in September 2012, and Andy Bush took the reins as CEO until February 2014. Wendy Hocking assumed the role of CEO from July 2014 to July 2020. The head office was established at The Dudson Centre from August/September 2013 to August 2018.

### The Future Unveiled

Between 2012 and 2017, the Empowered Families Community Project emerged, addressing social exclusion among vulnerable families, generously funded by the Big Lottery. In 2020 Gingerbread successfully tendered for the Homeless Families Service at Rothesay Court and Young Person's Service at Catherine Court.

In September 2020, Adele Bryant served as Interim CEO until July 2021, followed by Ann Ewans, who held the CEO position from July 2021 to May 2022. The legacy continues with Trevor Cottam, the current CEO, who took the helm in July 2022.

**Lone Parents Support Group:**  
Where Vision Meets Transformation



# The Gingerbread Centre



## Discover a Place of Hope and Support at The Gingerbread Centre

At The Gingerbread Centre, we don't just provide accommodation; we create lifelines of hope, nurturing families in need with compassion and unwavering dedication. Our two remarkable sanctuaries, Rothesay Court in Normacot and Catherine Court in Hanley, stand as beacons of support for those yearning for a brighter future.

## Rothesay Court: A Safe Harbor for Families

Nestled in the heart of Normacot, Rothesay Court offers more than just shelter – it provides 22 self-contained flats, each a cocoon of safety and warmth. Here, families in their most challenging moments find solace, knowing that 24-hour support is just a heartbeat away. Single parents, expecting mothers, and couples with children all find refuge under our caring wing.

But that's not all; we've crafted an Activity Club where children's laughter fills the air. It's a place where dreams take flight, where day trips become cherished memories, where creativity knows no bounds. Our dedication extends beyond roofs and walls; it's about creating futures filled with promise.

## Catherine Court: Empowering Teenage Parents

Since 2002, Catherine Court has been a haven for teenage mothers, vulnerable couples with little ones, and lone teenage parents, igniting their journey towards independence. We don't just provide accommodation; we offer a tailored path towards self-sufficiency. Our dedicated staff, available around the clock, walk hand in hand with our young families, equipping them with essential life skills.

Together with partner agencies, we craft a tapestry of support that's as diverse as it is profound. We nurture parenting skills, offer engaging activities, and host craft sessions that inspire creativity and growth. At Catherine Court, we transform dreams into reality.

## Beyond Shelter: Building Futures

Our commitment doesn't end at our doorstep. We empower residents to face the world with newfound confidence, arming them with skills that light the path to independence. From online training courses to cook-and-eat sessions and imaginative workshops, the seeds we plant at The Gingerbread Centre bloom long after families move on.

## Join Us on This Journey

At The Gingerbread Centre, we're not just providing housing; we're fostering hope, building futures, and empowering families to thrive. Our mission is simple: to transform lives. Whether you're in need or eager to support our cause, we invite you to join hands with us in this incredible journey of compassion, resilience, and empowerment. Together, we can create a brighter tomorrow.



# Unlocking Hope:

## Paving the Path to a Home for All



Navigating the labyrinth of homelessness in the UK is no simple task, for it's a puzzle woven with myriad threads. When we dare to dream of a future where no family is without a place they can call home, we must acknowledge the intricate tapestry that is homelessness and the multifaceted approach required to mend it. From the key to affordable housing to the beacon of enhanced support services, we must not overlook the societal and economic factors that steer families down the path of homelessness. Only by addressing each piece of this intricate puzzle can we unlock the door to a brighter, more secure future for all.

### Some of the key issues we see at The Gingerbread Centre in the families we support:

**Housing Costs:** High rents and a shortage of affordable housing can make it difficult for low-income families to secure and maintain stable housing.

**Economic Factors:** Job loss, reduced income, or financial instability can lead to eviction or difficulty in paying rent, pushing families into homelessness.

**Family Breakdown:** Relationship breakdowns, domestic violence, or family disputes can force individuals, including children, to leave their homes.

**Lack of Social Support:** A lack of social support networks, such as family or friends who can provide temporary accommodation, can leave families with nowhere to turn in times of crisis.

**Welfare Reforms:** Changes in government welfare policies, including reductions in benefits and stricter eligibility criteria, have had a significant impact on the ability of low-income families to maintain stable housing.

**Mental Health and Addiction Issues:** Individuals experiencing mental health challenges or substance abuse problems may find it difficult to maintain stable housing, contributing to family homelessness.

**Youth Homelessness:** Young people leaving the care system or those facing difficulties at home may become homeless due to a lack of support and resources.

**Immigration and Asylum:** Migrants and asylum seekers may experience homelessness due to uncertain legal statuses, difficulties accessing support, and limited housing options.

**Housing Insecurity:** Families living in overcrowded or unsuitable accommodations may be at risk of homelessness due to the unstable nature of their housing situation.

**Institutional Factors:** Flaws in the social support system, including bureaucratic delays, can prevent families from accessing the assistance they need to avoid homelessness.

**Discrimination:** Discrimination, including racism and discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals, prison leavers, can make it harder for some families to secure housing and employment, contributing to homelessness.





# The Socio-Economic Impact of Being Homeless

Quantifying the socio-economic impact of homeless families in England is a complex task and depends on various factors such as the scale of homelessness, the duration of homelessness, and the specific metrics used for assessment. Below are some key aspects of homelessness:

## Direct Costs to Government:

**Emergency shelter costs:** This includes expenses related to providing emergency accommodation for homeless families, such as shelters and temporary housing.

**Healthcare costs:** Homeless individuals and families often have higher healthcare utilization rates. This includes hospitalizations, emergency room visits, and mental health services.

**Social services:** Expenses for providing social services like welfare benefits, food assistance, and counselling to homeless families.

## Loss of Productivity:

When adults in homeless families are unable to work due to their housing situation, there is a direct loss of productivity. This includes lost income and taxes that would have been paid if they were employed.

## Educational Impact:

Homelessness can have a significant impact on children's education. Frequent school changes, lack of stable study environments, and emotional stress can lead to lower educational attainment. The long-term economic impact of lower educational attainment can be substantial.

## Criminal Justice Costs:

Homeless individuals are often at higher risk of involvement in the criminal justice system, which results in additional costs for law enforcement, legal representation, and incarceration.

## Healthcare Expenses:

Homeless families may have higher healthcare expenses due to issues related to living conditions, substance abuse, mental health, and lack of access to preventive care.



## Lost Economic Potential:

Homelessness can trap families in a cycle of poverty, limiting their economic potential. When individuals and families are homeless, they may not be able to pursue education or employment opportunities, which impacts their long-term earning potential.

## Social Costs:

There are intangible social costs associated with homelessness, including the emotional toll on affected individuals and families, as well as the strain on social networks and community cohesion.

## Housing Market Impact:

The presence of a significant homeless population can impact property values and housing market dynamics in an area, affecting homeowners' wealth.

## Homelessness Prevention and Support Services:

The cost of running programs aimed at preventing homelessness and providing support services to homeless families is also a factor.

## Economic Benefits of Addressing Homelessness:

On the positive side, addressing homelessness can have economic benefits, such as reduced healthcare costs, increased productivity, and improved neighbourhood stability.



# "Unlocking Hope: Empowering Homeless Families in the UK with The Gingerbread Centre's Comprehensive Support Framework!"



Discover the holistic support system that The Gingerbread Centre provides, tailored to meet the unique needs of homeless families in the UK. We're here to make a difference, offering an array of signposting, services and direct support including:

**Emergency Shelter:** Immediate access to safe and stable accommodation, such as shelters or temporary but ultimately supported housing – with a support framework that The Gingerbread Centre provide

**Housing Assistance:** Help in securing long-term housing, which may involve finding affordable rental properties or social housing options.

**Financial Aid:** Financial assistance to cover housing costs, such as rent or deposits, through benefits like Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

**Social Services:** Access to social workers and support services to address any underlying issues, like mental health, substance abuse, or domestic violence.

**Education and Employment Support:** Assistance with job training, education, and employment opportunities to help families become self-sufficient.

**Healthcare:** Access to healthcare services, including mental health and addiction treatment.

**Legal Support:** Help with navigating the legal aspects of homelessness and housing, such as eviction prevention.

**Childcare and Education:** Support for children's education and access to childcare services. A programme of child centred activities organised by our Activity Club

**Food and Essentials:** Access to food banks, clothing, and other essential items.

**Case Management and Support Plans:** Ongoing support to address the unique needs of each family and help them regain stability.

Support often involves collaboration between local authorities, social services, children's services and specialist agencies to provide a comprehensive approach to tackling homelessness among families (parents and children).





# THE GINGERBREAD CENTRE'S 'TRAUMA INFORMED' FAMILY SUPPORT MODEL



## Rebuilding Lives with Compassion: A Trauma-Informed Support Model for Homeless Families at The Gingerbread Centre

Creating a trauma-informed support model for homeless families in the UK involves addressing both internal and external elements, with a focus on finding stable housing. This model should prioritize the well-being and recovery of families who have experienced trauma while experiencing homelessness. Here are some key components:

### Internal Elements:

#### **Leadership and Organizational Culture:**

The Gingerbread Centre has a leadership team committed to trauma-informed principles, and the organization's culture should prioritize safety, trust, and collaboration.

**Staff Training:** Ensure that all staff members are trained in trauma-informed care, which includes understanding the impact of trauma on families, recognizing signs of trauma, and implementing trauma-sensitive communication and practices.

**Crisis Intervention:** Establish a crisis intervention team or protocols to help families in immediate distress. This may include access to mental health professionals.

**Housing First Approach:** Prioritize securing safe and stable housing as the primary goal. Provide temporary accommodation while working to find permanent housing. Housing should be safe, clean, and supportive.

**Therapeutic Services:** Offer trauma-focused therapy and counselling for individuals and families, either on-site or through partnerships with mental health organizations.

**Case Management:** Assign dedicated case managers to each family to provide individualized support, including assessment of needs, goal setting, and creating a personalized support plan.

**Safeguarding:** Safeguarding is a core element that runs throughout everything we do at The Gingerbread Centre regarding our families and staff.



**Parenting Support:** Provide parenting classes and support groups to help parents cope with trauma, manage stress, and create stable environments for their children.

**Children's Support:** Offer services and programs specifically tailored to children, including counselling, tutoring, and recreational activities.

**Education and Employment Assistance:** Support adults in the family with education and employment opportunities, helping them achieve financial independence and housing stability.

#### **Substance Abuse and Addiction**

**Services:** Address substance abuse and addiction issues within the family, including access to treatment and recovery programs.

**Peer Support:** Establish peer support groups where families can connect with others who have experienced similar challenges.

## External Elements:

### **Collaboration with Housing Agencies:**

Partner with local housing agencies to access affordable and suitable housing options for homeless families. Advocate for policies that prioritize homeless families in housing allocation.

**Engage with Local Authorities:** Build relationships with local government and social service agencies to access resources, funding, and support for homeless families.

**Community Partnerships:** Collaborate with community organizations, schools, healthcare providers, and legal services to address a range of needs that families may have.

**Outreach and Engagement:** Conduct community outreach to identify homeless families and engage them with appropriate services – including Families on our waiting list, Families in temporary/other supported accommodation, families who have moved on from Gingerbread, vulnerable families and young people in the community

**Preventative Measures:** Develop programmes and outreach initiatives to prevent homelessness in the first place, including financial education, employment support, and eviction prevention.

**Prevention and Intervention:** Support packages and information aiming to prevent vulnerable families stay in their own home and experience homelessness

**Advocacy:** Engage in advocacy at local, regional, and national levels to raise awareness of the challenges faced by homeless families and to influence policies and funding decisions.

**Data and Evaluation:** Continuously collect data to evaluate the effectiveness of the support model and make necessary adjustments based on the outcomes.

**Cultural Competency:** Ensure that the support model is culturally sensitive and responsive to the diverse needs of homeless families.

**Accessible Services:** Make services easily accessible through multiple channels, including physical locations, hotlines, and online platforms.

**Community Engagement:** Involve the local community in supporting homeless families, such as through volunteer programs and donations.

**Long-term Support:** Continue providing support to families after they secure housing to ensure their ongoing stability and well-being.

Creating a comprehensive and trauma-informed support model for homeless families in the UK involves a multi-faceted approach that addresses both the internal needs of families and external collaborations to provide stable housing and a path toward healing and independence.





# The Gingerbread Centre's 'Trauma Informed' Family Support Model



# Gingerbread's Family Support Service

Welcome to our dedicated program aimed at providing comprehensive support to homeless families in need. At Gingerbread, we understand the challenges that homeless families face, and we are committed to offering a range of essential services and resources to help them regain stability and independence. From safe and secure supported housing to tailored dedicated support to each and every family member that empowers homeless families to rebuild their lives. Together, we can make a lasting impact on their journey towards a brighter future.

Family situation / Gingerbread staff involved	The Support we offer to our Gingerbread families
Join Our Family! Families on Our Waiting List	<p>At Gingerbread, we cherish every connection on our waiting list. While we can't welcome everyone immediately, we're dedicated to nurturing relationships with potential new families. Our goal is to provide a haven of safety and security, ensuring they feel confident about their upcoming life with us.</p> <p>We extend a warm invitation to visit Gingerbread, empowering them to make informed decisions about their future. Our support goes beyond shelter, as we assess the root causes of homelessness and connect them to valuable external resources.</p> <p>Rest assured, we'll be there every step of the way, staying in touch with families and coordinating with other agencies until moving day. Your journey to a brighter future starts with us!</p>
Introducing Our Family Wellbeing Practitioners	<p>Meet our team of 5 dedicated Family Wellbeing Practitioners, ready to make a positive impact across both our locations. Each practitioner is personally assigned to families as they enter our program. Their mission? To guide families in understanding the factors that led to their homelessness and to help them find tailored solutions for a successful transition to independent living.</p> <p>Our FWP experts empower families to uncover their aspirations and strengths. Together, they create a customized Support Plan with achievable, family-specific goals. The complexity of these plans varies based on individual circumstances. Regular plan reviews serve as a tangible gauge of progress.</p> <p>But that's not all. Our FWP professionals are committed to enhancing every aspect of your family's wellbeing. They address health, both physical and mental, facilitate access to education, boost confidence and resilience, and create a sense of safety within the Gingerbread community.</p>



### Unlocking New Horizons: Our Trusted Partnerships

At Gingerbread, we've nurtured powerful bonds with external agencies, handpicked to enhance every family's journey. From A to Z and beyond..."

- Local schools and nurseries
- Midwifery and Health Visiting Team
- Local GP surgeries
- Childrens Social Care
- Substance Misuse Services
- Housing
- Refuge
- Other supported accommodation
- Mental Health Services
- Police
- CAB
- Job Centre
- Other voluntary organisations
- Domestic Abuse Services
- Housing Benefit
- Churches
- Sexual Health Services

### Empower & Connect with Our Support Team!

Meet our 8 dedicated Support Practitioners at Gingerbread. They're your partners in family success! Our SPs collaborate closely with FWP's, tailoring Support Sessions to each family's unique needs. Whether it's cooking up healthy meals, mastering daily home tasks, taking control of finances, honing parenting skills, or discovering your strengths, we're here for you.

But that's not all. Our Support Practitioners foster a sense of community. Join our coffee mornings, cook & eat sessions, and celebration days. And, we don't stop there – we team up with external experts for specialized support like Yoga, journaling, PEGIS, Mental Health Services, and Sexual Health sessions. Together, we're stronger!

### Introducing Our Tenant Sustainment Officer

Meet our dedicated Tenant Sustainment Officer (TSO) at Gingerbread! The TSO is here to empower families in managing their homes, whether it's in our units or out in the community.

From day one, the TSO assesses each family's needs and builds their confidence in all things related to tenancy. This includes setting up utilities, applying for Housing Benefits, and handling address changes to ensure a smooth transition. The TSO continues to provide ongoing, low-level support throughout a family's stay at Gingerbread, equipping them with the skills needed to maintain a home once they move on.

As families get ready to transition from Gingerbread, the TSO ensures a seamless process. They've also established strong partnerships with local housing authorities, landlords, and housing associations, giving our families valuable insights to make informed decisions about their next tenancy.

Let our Tenant Sustainment Officer guide your journey to a secure and sustainable home!

**Introducing  
Our  
Dedicated  
Night Time  
Guardians!**

At the heart of our team, we have 6 vigilant night staff who go above and beyond. Their mission? To not only safeguard our cherished facility but also to be a beacon of support during those most vulnerable hours.

We understand that nights can be overwhelming, especially when you've just welcomed a new member to your family or find yourself in an unfamiliar place. That's why our night staff is here to provide comfort and reassurance. With their warm and nurturing approach, they are always just a visit away, ready to offer emotional and practical support when you need it most.

**Proud to  
introduce  
Gingerbread's  
Activity Club  
– a special  
program  
backed by  
Children In  
Need.**

Our dedicated team of three practitioners is on a mission to uplift the lives of kids and young adults at Gingerbread. We're all about fostering positive connections, enhancing well-being, and celebrating achievements.

At Activity Club, we tailor sessions to cater to the unique needs of our children and youth. Think creative activities, sensory play, cooking adventures, cultural festivities, farm visits, and more – all designed for fun learning.

But it doesn't stop there. Parents, this is for you too! While we focus on the kids, our sessions also help you rediscover your parenting abilities, make new friends, and boost your confidence, especially during challenging times like homelessness.

Join us at Activity Club and embark on a journey of growth and togetherness.

**Discover  
Floating  
Support**

Even after leaving Gingerbread, our support doesn't stop. Our Floating Support service offers a lifeline to families, with weekly visits gradually reducing to fortnightly and then monthly for up to 12 weeks. This ongoing support helps families settle into their new life and community.

We assist families in accessing essential local services, schools, nurseries, children's centres, and social activities, boosting their confidence and sense of belonging. Plus, we handle all the nitty-gritty details of moving, from changing addresses to setting up bills and utilities.

Floating Support continues until families feel confident and self-reliant. If they still need assistance, we'll connect them with external agencies. Our mission? Empower people to break free from the cycle of homelessness.



# Unveiling Our Data Insights

For the 12-month period April 2022 to March 2023



## Rothesay Court:

### *40 families moved in to RC*

- **8** have moved on to their own home
- **12** still remain
- **10** have moved in with family
- **10** have gone to places such as specialist supported accommodation to their needs, refuge, mother and baby units etc\*
- Age Range 16 – 40
- 44 children at RC
- MH Issues RC 16
- Domestic Abuse RC 15



## Catherine Court:

### *9 families moved in to CC*

- **2** have moved on to own home
- **6** still remain.
- **1** has moved to refuge
- 9 children at CC
- MH Issues CC 4
- Domestic Abuse CC 2



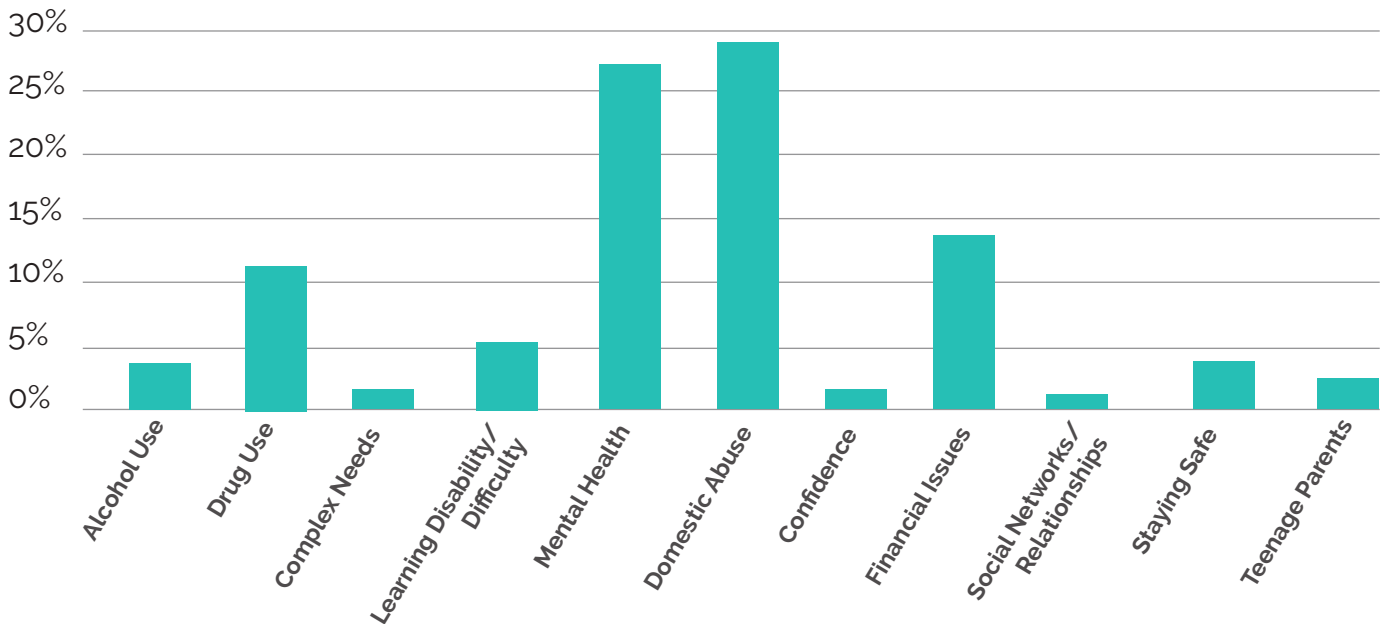
*\*At The Gingerbread Centre, we understand that every family comes to us with unique challenges, and our approach is designed to adapt to their evolving needs, particularly in the realm of mental health. We take a personalized approach to crafting Support Plans for each family, aiming to define their vision of 'success.' While independent living is a commendable goal, we recognize that it may not be the ideal path for every family. In such cases, we consider alternative options like specialized supported accommodation, ensuring that each family finds the best possible solution as they transition from The Gingerbread Centre.*

## Rothesay Court:

Rothesay Court is an accommodation-based service that provides housing related support to homeless families, including vulnerable couples with children, single parent families and expectant mothers over the age of 16.

The graph below shows the primary support needs of families as they moved into Rothesay Court over the last three years.

### Primary Support Needs: Rothesay Court - 2020 to 2023



Our Homeless Families Support Service at Rothesay Court was reviewed in November 2022 with the following outcomes.

#### The service achieved an average of:

- **97.3%** utilisation
- **97%** achieved independent living
- Service users – 47% were aged 18 to 24
- Service users – average age over 12 months was 26.5
- **92%** of service users are recorded as being female
- **89%** of service users are recorded as being White British
- The majority of service users, 34%, had been referred to the service by Children's Social Care
- This is closely followed with 30% being referred by the Housing Solutions service at the Local authority
- **34%** of service users are recorded as needing help with domestic abuse as their primary support need
- Followed by 26% needing assistance with their mental health
- **22%** of service users with a secondary support need, required assistance with their mental health
- **22%** are also recorded as needing help with social networks/ relationships.
- **78.6%** stated they were happy or very happy with the service provided
- **92.9%** stated they felt safe being in Rothesay Court



Outcome	Target	No. with an identified need	No. recording a positive change in score at departure	Overall % achieving positive progression whilst in service
Clients needing support to maximise their income and reduce overall debt	70%	24	24	100%
Clients needing support to better manage their mental health and emotional wellbeing	80%	24	24	100%
Clients needing support to make meaningful use of their time including training and education	80%	24	23	96%
Clients needing support to obtaining or securing settled accommodation / managing own home	80%	24	24	100%
Clients needing support to minimise harm / risk of harm from and to others	70%	24	23	96%
Clients needing support to establish contact with external groups and services	85%	24	24	100%
Clients needing support to develop confidence and ability to have greater choice, control and/or involvement?	80%	24	24	100%

### Additional comments from families:

- *I like how the staff are pretty much down to earth and have a laugh with us.*
- *I like the support that I'm getting, and the staff are amazing with me and my son and there if we need them.*
- *All staff are very helpful and respond quickly if needed, many thanks to you all.*
- *During my time at the Gingerbread centre, I am very pleased with everything! Staff are fab and make me feel very comfortable! Activity staff go above and beyond with my three children. Very grateful to have that! Thank you for everything so far!*
- *The staff are kind, funny and easy to talk to, keep up the good work guys.*
- *I like that if we need anything we only have to ask, the support is good.*
- *The friendliness of staff and being approachable.*
- *Nothing is too much trouble always happy to help*
- *Enjoy having food donations given to us.*
- *The amount of support that is here and just the staff are amazing.*
- *I like how there are staff here when needed.*
- *Activity club is a great place to take my son as he gets to be around other children playing.*
- *If I am ever struggling, I know I can ask for help e.g. milk, nappies etc.*
- *All staff are amazing, but Hanna is my main support, she is amazing!! Wouldn't be where I am without her. Gingerbread has been my lifeline so thank you!*

### The review summary for Rothesay Court states:

*"The service has performed well against its targets for utilisation and achieving independence, exceeding the contractual targets over the previous four quarters. The outcomes achieved all surpassed the annual targets."*



**My story about  
living at The  
Gingerbread Centre.**

## Sharon's Story

*"Well, before I came into The Gingerbread I was living in a hotel with my children. I had heard of The Gingerbread previously through friends and family and also my support worker at the time, who is the one who put in the referral for me to come and live there. The reasons that brought me to Gingerbread are that I was at the time living in a hotel because I could not be put on the Council waiting list because I was in debt.*

*"I have now been living at Gingerbread for 7 months and I can't thank them enough for what they have helped me to achieve in the amount of time I have lived here. When I first moved into Gingerbread, I was not in a good place mentally because of a previous relationship. I had no self confidence or anything. I was a very shy person who thought that I wasn't good for anyone/ anything. But with the help of Gingerbread, I soon started to better myself for me and my children. I sought help from the Doctors for me losing weight and also got put on anti-depressants to help me with my mental health and my sleeping.*

*"I am such a better person than I was when I first moved into Gingerbread and that is thanks to the staff for helping and supporting me through*

*everything. My Keyworker persuaded me to pursue my dream career of working with children and I did some online courses and now I am going to college and doing my Level 3 Early Years so that I can get back into work when I move out of Gingerbread and I am settled into my new home with my children.*

*"There is a lot of things to like about Gingerbread. My children especially like to play in the outside area and go down and interact with the other children at Activity Club. I like the social aspect of coffee mornings that they do as all the residents have a good chat to each other and you can make new friends and so can the children.*

*"Since I have lived in Gingerbread my mental health has gotten a lot better and now, I have a lot more confidence than when I first moved in. I appreciate everything that all the staff here at Gingerbread have done for me and my children in the past 7 months.*

*"I don't know if I could have done all this alone.*

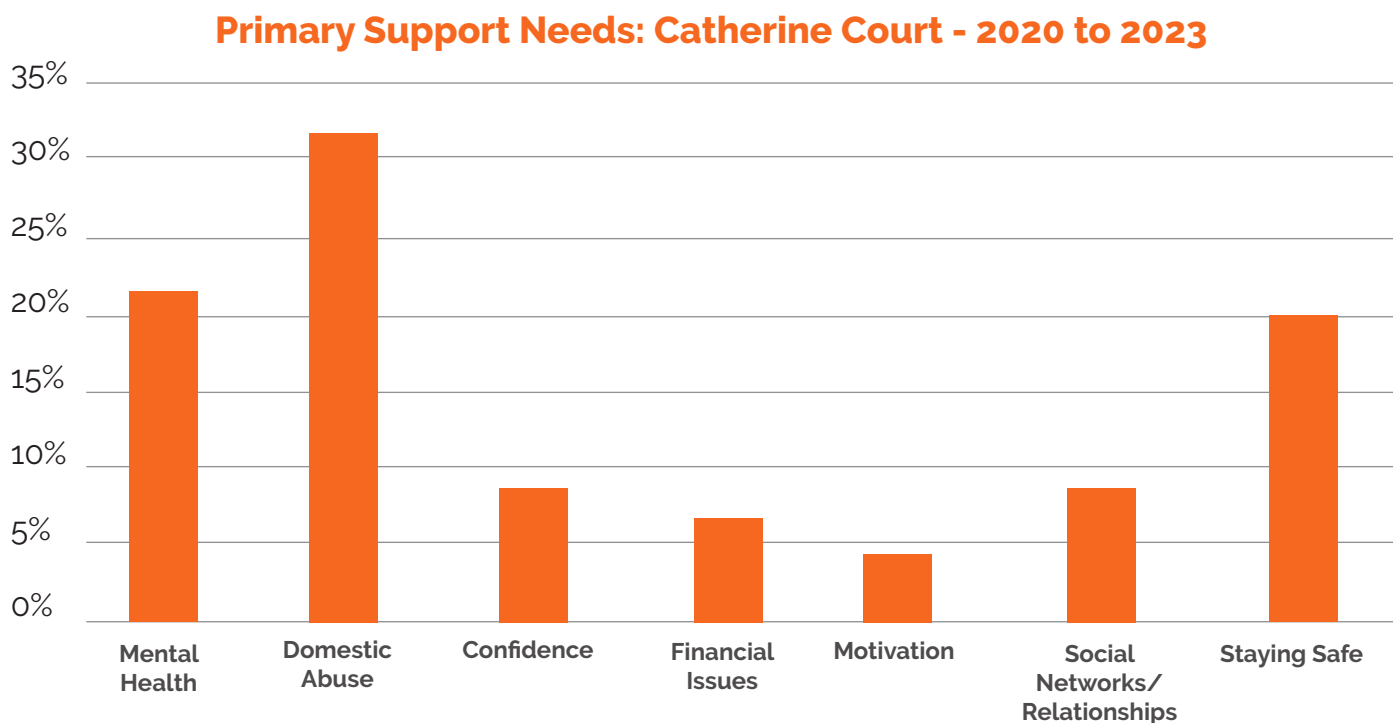
*"Thank you again".*



## Catherine Court:

The Catherine Court teenage parents support service forms one element of the wider Young Person's Support Service, which was commissioned in 2020.

The graph below shows the primary support needs of families as they moved into Catherine Court over the last three years.



Our Homeless Families Support Service at Catherine Court was reviewed in November 2022 with the following outcomes.

### The service achieved an average of:

- 101.3% utilisation
- The majority of service users, 79% were aged 16-17 years.
- The average age of service users over the four quarters was 17.2 years.
- 100% of service users are recorded as being female.
- 100% of service users are recorded as being White British
- The majority of service users, 49% had been referred to the service by Children's Social Care
- The majority of service users, 92% were from the Stoke-on-Trent area.
- The majority of service users, 32% stated their primary support need as domestic abuse.
- This is closely followed by staying safe (30%) and mental health (26%).
- The majority of service users, 28% listed their secondary support need as financial issues.
- 100% of service users were happy or very happy with the service and the support they received

Outcome	Annual Target	No. with an identified need	No. recording a positive change in score at departure	Overall % achieving positive progression whilst in service
Income is maximised and overall debt is reduced	80%	3	3	100%
Young people are skilled in budget management	80%	3	3	100%
Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing are well managed	80%	3	3	100%
Young people are actively involved in education and training	70%	1	1	100%
Young people are well prepared for adulthood	70%	3	3	100%
Young people are ready to manage their own home	75%	3	3	100%
Young people are confident and resilient with positive aspirations	80%	3	3	100%

### Additional comments from families:

- *I feel fully supported already*
- *I feel I get the right amount of support*
- *I like having my own space*
- *I get along with staff*
- *I like the activities*
- *I like everything can't say there is anything I don't like here*
- *Staff are easy to talk to, key worker approachable*
- *I like my weekly catch ups with key worker*
- *Enjoy activities when activities are on*
- *Staff are always available*



### The review summary for Catherine Court states:

*"The service has performed well against its target for achieving independence, exceeding the contractual target over the previous four quarters. Utilisation achieved was 101.3% against an annual target of 95%; this includes the community units. All outcomes achieved surpassed the annual targets."*



***My story about  
living at  
Catherine Court.***

## Billie and Bailey's Story

*"I moved into Catherine Court on 4th February, at first, I found it really hard, but all the staff made me feel dead welcome and they were always there for me no matter what time. They helped me get ready for my own house and basically helped me to know everything about being a mum. Social care wanted to put my baby on a social care plan because I was a care leaver and they thought I would not cope and I was young, I was really upset about it because I did not think that was fair. The staff at Catherine Court helped me by speaking to the social worker with me and it was agreed that if I agreed to do parenting work they would not do it, I did the work and they decided not to go ahead with any plan or involvement and I was really happy as I did not want it. I don't have any social care involved and Catherine Court think I'm a really good mum.*

*"They helped me set up my bills and know what I needed to pay. I had parenting sessions before I had my baby and I learnt stuff I did not know, and*

*they helped me after I had my baby. I had my little boy on 17 June, I have loved being a mum and I would not change it for the world.*

*"When I was ready to move out, they helped me to move back to near where my family is out of the area and they talked to housing on my behalf as they put me on the wrong housing band at first and Catherine Court gave me a reference for the house.*

*"I have now moved into a home that I'm going to stay in for a very long time and Catherine Court are giving me floating support, which will help me as I will know they are there if I need them. I rang them the other day when I was upset, and I was able to talk to them and they came to see me today. If I had not come to Catherine Court, I think I would have been in a shitty one bed house without support things could have been so different! I do wish we could have had candles in our flats though.*

*"Thank you, Catherine Court from B&B".*



A photograph of three children lying in a large pit filled with colorful plastic balls. One child is waving. In the top right corner, there is a circular logo for 'The Gingerbread Centre' featuring a gingerbread man and the text 'Supporting Vulnerable People'.

# Activity Club

**The project provides support for children and young people affected by homelessness. Support will enable children to increase their social skills and wellbeing whilst having fun.**

Children and Young People will build a memory box filled with items they have made to keep their memories together.

Craft sessions will include: Painting sessions of favourite things to encourage wellbeing. The older children can make models using recycled materials or produce a collage for their memory box or a display for the wall. Research the background of graffiti and produce a piece of work. Make kaleidoscopes, grow rainbows as a science experiment to support the NHS during Covid-19. In Autumn the children/young people collect leaves and conkers, they then use them in craft sessions, making collages and displays. Crafts encourage creative skills such as imagination and personal expression.

Messy play to help develop early motor skills and sensory play including the use of a sensory tent and toys for the younger babies and toddlers. Free play with the equipment specific for babies and toddlers.


We had a great response to the baking activities which went out to families during Covid, we will continue these as they are fun activities children and young people can do with parents in their own home.

To encourage well-being and physical activity there will be walks to the park these walks will include treasure and bug hunts, football and rounders. Music and Movements sessions where children can sing songs, learn action rhymes, play musical instruments, older children can learn simple dance routines working together as a team and to give a sense of belonging.

Outings to different places for example local discovery walks, a farm, the zoo, different museums, the library and to see a local pantomime.

Children will learn about celebrations of the world by tasting new food, learning simple words in different languages, making masks and costumes. For example on Earth Day, the children made and painted a globe.

Our Activity is mainly funded by Children-in-Need. As a result of our second year of funding report to them, this was the reply from Children-in-Need:

A photograph of a young child with blonde hair, wearing a white shirt, sitting on a green mat and playing with colorful plastic toys.

*"Thank you for submitting your year 2 report. I enjoyed reading about how Activity Club has made such a difference for so many children and their families during the second year of your project. The report contained a good case study and lots of examples of the changes you've seen in the children attending the club and their parents, it is clear that you have good systems in place to monitor the project differences. I particularly enjoyed seeing the photos you enclosed with the report, this really brought your project to life and it looked like the children have had a lot of fun over the year!"*



# Activity Club Statistics & Report Extracts

12 month period from  
01 06 2022 to 31 05 2023:  
65 children attended  
the Activity Club

ages are broken down as follows:

- 0 to 4: 42 (67%)
- 5 to 9: 8 (12%)
- 10 to 15: 2 (3%)
- 16 to 18: 13 (20%)
- 19 and over: 0



This is how the children have benefitted from attending the Activity Club and taking part in the many activities against the outcomes listed below:

Outcomes	Made Significant Progress	Started to Experience Progress	Yet to Experience Progress
Building Positive Networks	63	2	0
Increased Wellbeing	64	1	0
Have Greater Pride in Their Achievements	60	5	0



# What was it like for Ellan at the beginning of Activity Club?

Ellan is a little reluctant to accept praise for her pictures and took her picture back to the flat instead of it going on the wall. Ellan would say her work was not good when praised by Activity Club staff.



## What activities have helped Ellan to make changes?

**Sloth hanging planter** Ellan was given a sloth planter to paint as Activity Club staff knew that sloths were one of Ellan's favourite animals. Ellan was asking "Does it look good?". Ellan smiled when she was told it did look good.

**Ghost Cakes** Ellan painted a face with icing pen on to her cake and was happy to take it over and show to other Activity Club Assistant who was at the other side of the room.

**Splatter Art** Ellan was laughing as she did splatter art and the paint was flying everywhere. Ellan was laughing and saying "is that me, did I get it up the wall? Look mum it's all up my arms"

**Clip and Climb** Ellan was completing the challenges and shouting for mum, AC Assistants and other residents and their children to look at her.

**Just Dance** Ellan was reluctant to have a go at first as she said "I can't dance, I'm rubbish at it". With encouragement and AC Assistants joining in Ellan had a go, and continued to dance, challenging other AC Assistants to a dance.

**Free Drawing/Collage** Ellan made a Harry Potter poster, drawing the characters etc from the story. Ellan was happy to show the poster to AC Assistants, smiling as she explained what was on the poster. AC Assistant asked Ellan if her poster could go up on the proud wall. Ellan had a big smile and said "Yeah, yeah".

**Requested Clay Session** Ellan had asked for the clay to make a ring holder. Ellan made the ring holder and took it to show to her mum and AC Assistants. Ellan was smiling as she was showing it.

**Valentines Heart Fondants** – Ellan made fondant hearts and decorated them with swirling chocolate, saying "look what I'm doing". Ellan asked her mum to have a look at them and was smiling when AC assistant told Ellan how good they looked.

**Rock Steady Music** Ellan took turns to play different instruments and was looking and smiling as she played.

## What is it like for Ellan now?

Ellan likes to make items and will show them to staff and other residents and is willing to have photos with her items (mum says Ellan loves to look at her photos on Facebook each week). Ellan will make things for our displays and is happy to be complimented about her work.





# Introducing the Heart-warming Stories of Hope

At the Gingerbread Centre, we're not just a shelter; we're a haven of transformation, where dreams take root and families find their strength. Our mission is simple yet profound: to support homeless families in their journey towards brighter tomorrows.

Imagine a world where compassion knows no bounds, and where second chances are the norm. Here, we proudly present a collection of positive comments from the lives we've touched, the smiles we've kindled, and the futures we've ignited.

From stories of resilience to tales of triumph, these heartfelt accounts offer a glimpse into the lives of the homeless families we embrace as our own. Together, we're rewriting the narrative of homelessness, one uplifting story at a time.

Join us in celebrating the remarkable journeys of those we support, as we remind the world that compassion and kindness can change lives. Together, we are the Gingerbread Centre, and together, we are making hope a reality.

**18.08.2022**

You will always be in my heart I'll never forget u or what you have done for us and everyone else at Gingerbread. Look after yourselves and keep being the best versions of you!!! Even though I haven't seen eye to eye will all the staff I appreciate every second of my time there. I'll never forget the funny things some of you lot have come out with I hope the future treats you all well take care and always remember your life can go in a split second so cherish every single moment with the residents family and staff as a whole lots of love from your favourite crazy Rachel and princess Ria xx

**3.03.2023**

I was talking with Alex from flat 5 the other day. He wanted to say thanks for the work staff have done with him and Harley since they moved in nearly a year ago. Alex appreciates everything staff have done for him and Harley and knows he is ready to move on with Harley. He has sent some photos of their first family holiday including Sian. I know it was very busy last week for the whole team. I just wanted say me and Helen do really appreciate everything everyone does in the building to support the families moving forward with their lives.

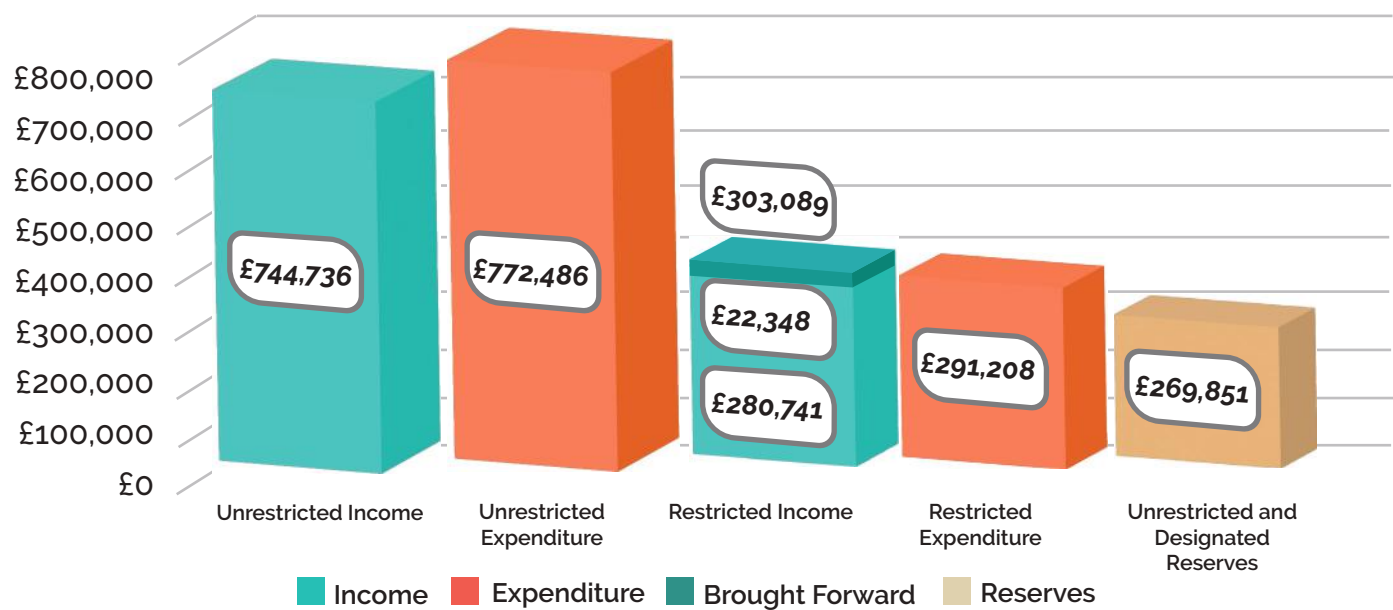
**2.09.2022**

Danielle came to Gingerbread pregnant with Joseph who was subject to a child protection plan. Initial discussions were that Joseph would be removed from Danielle's care. However, after a lot of hard work Danielle was able to keep Joseph in her care, not only this but Joseph was taken off a child protection plan. Danielle has continued to go from strength to strength and this week met her daughter for the first time since she was removed from her care 4 years ago and even had an overnight stay. Rose was extremely happy to have her Mum back in her life and Danielle was very emotional. Danielle thanks Gingerbread in every meeting for the support that they have given her and her family. She discusses that Gingerbread has made her feel safe and that the support she has received from all staff has been

amazing. Danielle often becomes emotional when she talks about this and you can see how much she genuinely appreciates the support she has received and how far she has come. Danielle has viewed a property today and is happy to announce that she taking it, she is so happy to of secured her and Joseph's forever home. While we were viewing it, she expressed that she couldn't have done it without the love and support of the staff at Gingerbread who she will never forget. The family have been on a long journey but have said they will never forget the impact and support we have given them. I know how hard we all work and how much we care about the families so I wanted to share the positive work we do and it makes it all worthwhile.

# Gingerbread Financial Position

2022/23 Income & Expenditure, Reserves



## Our Reserves Policy

- To ensure Trustees comply with current legislation and recommendations from the Charity Commission regarding reserves and their use.
- To maintain a sufficient level of reserves to allow the charity to continue to operate for a period of up to 2 months, should a shortfall of income occur.
- To maintain a sufficient level of reserves to allow the charity to wind down, should it be necessary.
- To take account of potential financial risks to the charity.
- To prepare for contingencies that may arise from time to time.
- To ensure the level of reserves is reviewed on an annual basis.
- To ensure reserves are used to generate income.
- To ensure the management of reserves is exercised in the best interest of the charity

## Trustees

- Mrs Eleanour Morrissey (Ch)
- Miss Fiona Miller
- Mrs Adele Wakefield (Sec)
- Mr Jack Brereton
- Mr Malcolm Joliffe (Tr)
- Mr Paul Willstead
- Mrs Emma-Jayne Williams
- Mrs Charlotte Smith
- Mr Richard Adams
- Mrs Christine Fearn (VCh)



Registered with  
**FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR**

# Financial Support to our Gingerbread Families

As the demand for our services continues to surge while statutory income diminishes, The Gingerbread Centre finds itself increasingly dependent on the generosity of individuals, thriving corporate partnerships, and the success of our remarkable events.

Moreover, the financial support from specialized trust funds and grant-awarding organizations has taken on greater significance and will remain vital in our journey ahead. It is paramount that all our revenue streams experience substantial growth in the coming years, as this will be the driving force behind our charity's expansion and the continued enhancement of our vital services.

Here's a taste of the support we have received over the year.

- 5-a-side football tournament - £2,353
- Christmas fundraising/appeal - £2,954
- Swansway Gingerbread Enterprise Challenge - £9,674
- Stoke City FC Big Sleep Out - £4,000
- St Modwen Homes Golf Day - £2,968
- Charity bucket collection – ASDA, Wolstanton - £621
- Chartered Insurers Institute Dinner - £2,373
- Jersey Boys Sit Down Event - £9,074





# Introducing the Pathway to Hope: Guiding the Future of The Gingerbread Centre

**At The Gingerbread Centre, our unwavering commitment is to extend a helping hand to vulnerable families and young people across Stoke-on-Trent and the surrounding districts. We are on a mission to be the guiding light for families and young people in crisis, helping them secure stable housing and embark on a journey to rebuild their lives.**

## **Our Pledge: Shelter, Support, and Transformation**

In our pursuit of making a real impact, we have crafted a comprehensive strategy document that maps out our path to a brighter future. Our ambitions are filled with the heart and soul of The Gingerbread Centre, showcasing our key priorities and action plans for the years ahead.

## **Unlocking New Horizons: Elevating Our Impact**

We have our dreams and ambitions for the future:

### **Developing an Additional Supported Accommodation Site and Service**

Imagine a future where our reach extends even further, embracing families without a home with open arms. In our unwavering commitment to aiding those families who seek solace, we're embarking on a bold journey to establish an Additional Supported Accommodation Site and Service. This venture will serve as a beacon of hope, ensuring more homeless families find comfort and care when they need it most.

### **Diversify Our Funding Streams**

Sustainability is the heart of our mission. To ensure the longevity of our efforts, we're evolving our approach by diversifying our funding streams. By exploring new avenues of financial support, we'll not only protect our core programs but also guarantee that our assistance is always accessible to those who depend on it.

## **Broaden Our Fundraising Initiatives**

In the realm of compassion, our commitment knows no bounds. Our Fundraising Initiatives, the lifeblood of our mission, are evolving. We're introducing innovative and diverse ways for supporters to get involved and make a meaningful impact. These exciting endeavours will encourage philanthropy and drive our mission forward with greater vigour.

## **Amplify Our Awareness and Communication**

Visibility is key to change. We're embarking on a journey to not just communicate but to connect. Our commitment to the cause is unwavering, and we're expanding our efforts to increase Awareness and Communication. Through compelling storytelling, modern media, and community engagement, we aim to touch more hearts and bring our mission to the forefront of people's minds.

Join us as we set out on this incredible journey. Together, we can turn our ambitions into reality and turn the lives of countless vulnerable families and young people around. Let's build a future where hope thrives, families and young people flourish, and our community grows stronger with every step.

## **The Gingerbread Centre – Where Compassion Meets Action.**





### **Rothesay Court (Head Office)**

Rothesay Court  
Furnace Rd  
Normacot  
Stoke-on-Trent  
ST3 4LY

Tel: 01782 344740  
Email: [admin@gingerbreadcentre.co.uk](mailto:admin@gingerbreadcentre.co.uk)

### **Rothesay Court (Homeless Family Support Service)**

Providing accommodation for homeless families and single pregnant women.

Rothesay Court  
Furnace Rd  
Normacot  
Stoke-on-Trent  
ST3 4LY

### **Catherine Court (Young People's Support Service)**

Gingerbread's Teenage Parents supported accommodation unit.

Catherine Court  
30 Eastfield Drive  
Hanley  
Stoke-on-Trent  
ST1 3DJ

Tel: 01782 215656