

A stylized illustration of the Birmingham skyline in the background, featuring the Spire, the Bullring, and the Library of Birmingham. Overlaid on the skyline are two large hands, one light yellow and one dark brown, reaching across the top of the image. In the foreground, three white stick figures are shown: two standing and holding a heart, and one running towards the right. The background is a warm orange-red color with yellow and brown wavy lines.

# BIRMINGHAM *you're not alone.*

Impact Report 2021-22

**SIFA**  
fireside

# Interim Chief Executive's Welcome

We began 2021-2022 in another national lockdown as the impacts of the pandemic continued to be felt. Regardless of the circumstances, we were steadfast in our support of the most vulnerable people in Birmingham and our exceptional staff members continued to offer invaluable face-to-face services all throughout the pandemic.

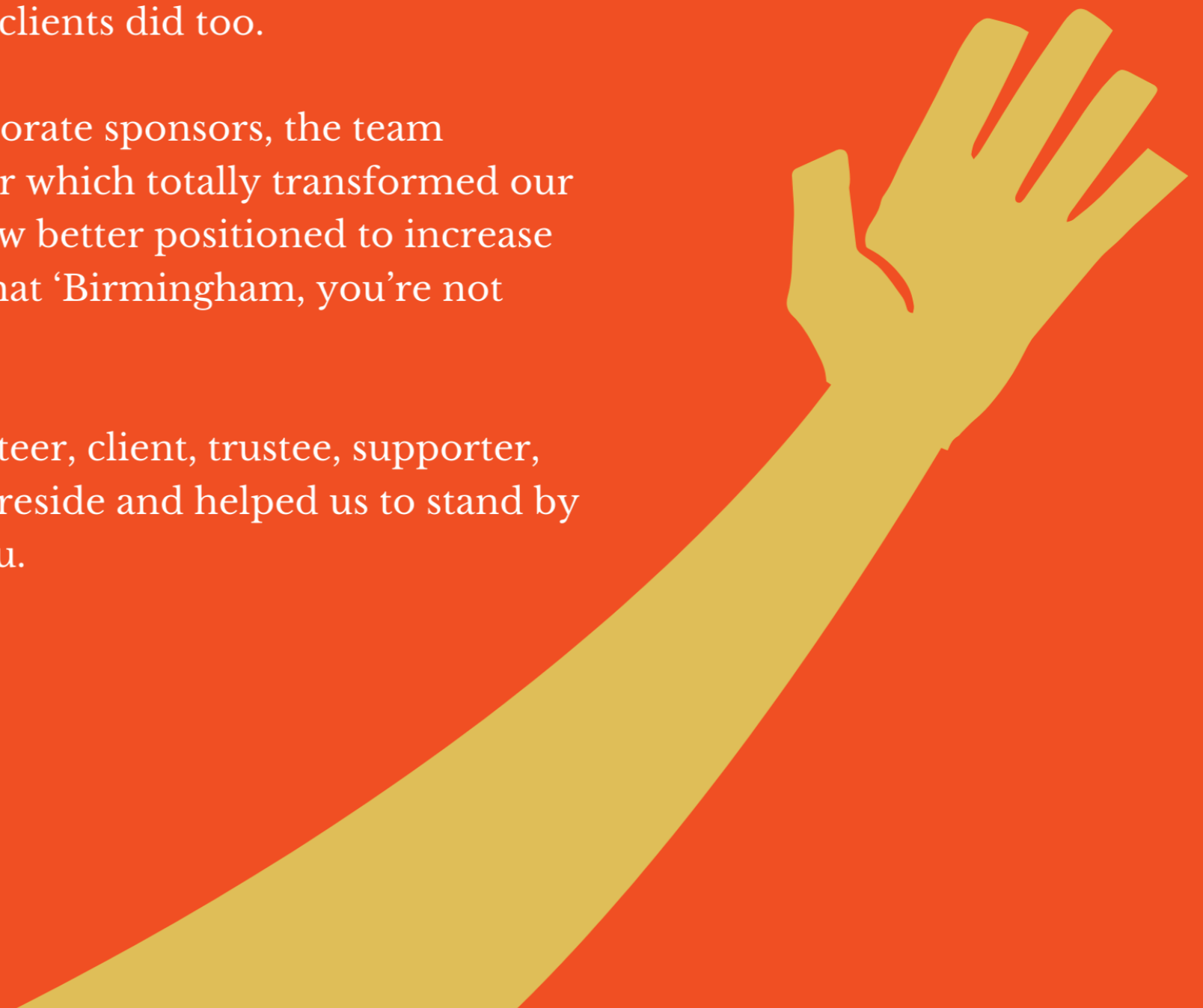
Following the easing of restrictions, the biggest highlight of the year has been the full return of our fantastic group of regular volunteers. They helped to bring our Drop-In service back to life and nearing maximum capacity again by the end of the year. Welcome back – we missed you and our clients did too.

With the help of these volunteers and several corporate sponsors, the team completed a much needed rebrand during the year which totally transformed our building, website and communications. We are now better positioned to increase our reach and impact and proudly tell the world that 'Birmingham, you're not alone'.

Thank you to each and every staff member, volunteer, client, trustee, supporter, funder and partner who has stood firm by SIFA Fireside and helped us to stand by our clients – this Impact Report is dedicated to you.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Dan Wakely', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Dan Wakely**  
Interim Chief Executive



## Our Vision and Mission

SIFA Fireside: a leading charity enabling homeless and vulnerable people to take control, paving the way for healthier fulfilling lives.

Our mission is to provide inclusion, engagement and equal access to services for those individuals who are disadvantaged or experiencing homelessness, and to influence the strategic development of the homelessness agenda in local and national arenas.

## Our aims

- ♥ Reduce homelessness
- ♥ Increase life skills
- ♥ Improve health
- ♥ Improve employment potential
- ♥ Increase social inclusion
- ♥ Reduce offending



# Together, we are SIFA fireside

Just as we have since 1982, we're striving to be the very best that we can be. We're growing our business and influence for increased reach and impact. We're supporting, developing and celebrating our increasingly diverse workforce and volunteers. We're pre-empting change and evolving our services accordingly.

We're affecting change and attitudes on both a local and national level. We're raising aspirations and creating opportunities with homeless and vulnerably housed adults in Birmingham. We're standing beside our clients whilst they rebuild their lives with safety and dignity.

Here at SIFA Fireside, we live our values each and every day.





## Inclusive

We respect diversity and equality and recognise people's individual needs.

## Dynamic

We believe in doing the right thing to make a difference for our clients.

## Courageous

We are a unique organisation and adapt our services to meet people's needs.

## Supportive

We provide holistic support to encourage people to learn and grow from their experiences.

# Together, we make an impact.



## DD's Story

In early 2022, 'DD' was unemployed, living in supported housing and eager to get back on his feet. DD attended SIFA Fireside's Job Club and requested support in seeking employment and he shared his passion for golf and his dream role of working on a golf course.

A member of the Step Ahead Employability Team supported DD in crafting his CV with an emphasis on greenkeeping and began to source potential employers from leisure centres, hotels and the like. After much searching, a local hotel and spa agreed to talk to SIFA Fireside and after rapport was built, agreed to interview DD for work experience.

DD was referred on to Suited for Success, where he was supplied with smart clothing that would make a good first impression on his interview, as well as interview advice and preparation. SIFA Fireside attended the interview alongside DD, who was offered two weeks' work experience, with the potential to be taken on full time if the two weeks worked well for all concerned.

Upon the successful completion of his work experience, DD was offered the opportunity to work full time and live on site at the hotel, whilst studying online for his Level 3 in Golf Management.

The Step Ahead Employability Worker believes there is a very high chance that 'DD' will maintain this role, as he understands the opportunity to work in such an amazing environment is very rare. He is extremely happy with this outcome.



# Together, we prevent homelessness

## The Adult Support Hub

The Adult Support Hub strives to ensure that individuals are able to access the essential services they need in order to lead happier, healthier lives. The support offered includes:

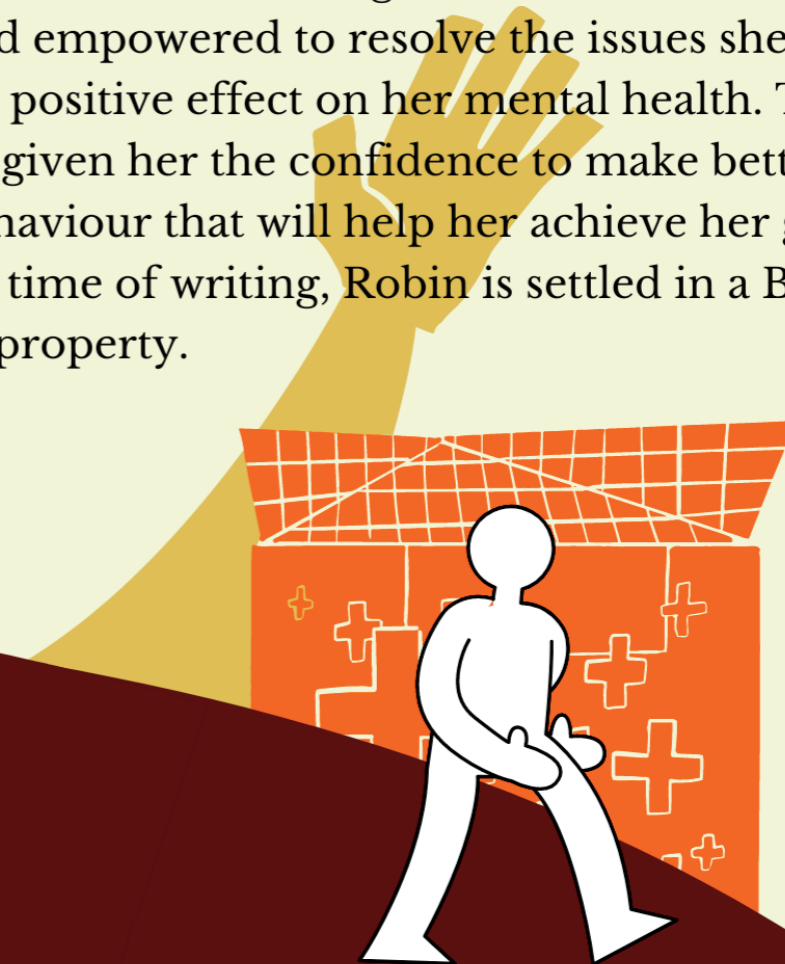
- Signposting clients to mental health services, addiction services and wellbeing assistance in their local community
- Providing information on activities available in individual clients' local areas
- Highlighting employment and training opportunities
- Providing welfare and benefits advice alongside budgeting and money management
- Supporting clients to maintain long-term, settled accommodation and independent living.

'Robin' has lived in her council flat for more than 20 years but faced increasing instances of antisocial behaviour from her neighbours over a period of several months. She reported the matter to both the police and the city council but felt let down as she believed no one was taking the allegations seriously.

When Robin reported these issues to the neighbour's landlord, he threatened her, causing her mental health to deteriorate. Robin felt her only option was to move if the issues weren't addressed.

The ASH team provided housing advice in partnership with Shelter, as well as referring her to a counselling service and an advocacy service as she felt that she was no longer in control of her life and was struggling with emotional issues including anxiety.

Robin stated that since accessing The ASH service, she feels more motivated and empowered to resolve the issues she faces and this has had a positive effect on her mental health. The support provided has given her the confidence to make better choices and adopt behaviour that will help her achieve her goals in the future. At the time of writing, Robin is settled in a Birmingham City Council property.



# Together, we work through crisis

## Drop-In

While many of SIFA Fireside's services focus on prevention and recovery, the support provided by the Crisis Team continues to be an integral ingredient of the holistic support on offer to our most vulnerable clients. This is essential in cultivating trust and rapport, particularly with those who are not immediately ready or able to engage in more formal support provision.

Since October 2021, we have been operating at full capacity following the pandemic, with 1182 unique individuals presenting. We have been reinstating health services such as opticians, chiropodists and a visiting dental bus, alongside face-to-face access to Birmingham City Council's Housing Options Team.

One such client is 'Martin', who presented at SIFA Fireside. He informed us that he was a victim of domestic abuse and had escaped from his home where he had suffered physical, financial, psychological, and emotional abuse.

After escaping, Martin slept rough for one night before being referred to SIFA Fireside by a member of the public. He was triaged by the Crisis Team and an appointment was arranged on the same day for emergency accommodation. Martin struggled with literacy, so was referred to SIFA Fireside's Financial Inclusion Team for specialist welfare benefit, money management and housing advice.

The Crisis Team worker liaised with the Department of Work and Pensions outreach worker who attends SIFA Fireside twice a week to ensure Martin's income was maximised through correct welfare claims. Through SIFA Fireside's collaborative work with HSBC, Martin was supported to apply for a No Fixed Address Bank Account where he now has access to his money and is attending money management sessions.

# Together, we enable recovery.

Our Housing Transition Worker Service (HTWS) provides targeted, short-term interventions for homeless adults and childless couples recently referred into non-commissioned supported accommodation. The team works to prevent failed tenancies by supporting clients to settle in by providing liaison between landlords, support workers and other agencies.

In the case of 'John', the isolation associated with the pandemic adversely affected his mental health and resulted in him giving up his independent tenancy and moving back in to supported accommodation. However, John struggled with the high turnover of tenants which escalated his anxiety. At this point his tenancy support worker referred him to SIFA Fireside's Housing Transition Worker Service, where he was supported with his housing application and his application for funding from Birmingham City Council for furniture.

With the support of the HTWS, John was able to move into sheltered accommodation for those aged 50 and over and is settled in a long-term tenancy which has greatly improved his mental health and reduced his anxiety. John now feels motivated and positive about his situation and is being supported to attend tenancy budgeting workshops. SIFA Fireside continues to keep in touch with John's support worker and Birmingham City Council.

In partnership with Birmingham City Council and the West Midlands Anti-Slavery Network, The Adult Modern Slavery pathway was launched in January 2022. This has involved training all staff and identifying and upskilling many Modern Slavery Champions throughout the project. As a result of this, we have been well placed to identify and support clients who have been at risk of Modern Slavery, in both internal and external steering groups.

Partnerships have been established across the city to ensure that SIFA Fireside recognise and respond appropriately to this increasingly significant concern.

Our Eastern European Settlement Status contract has been extended due to the success of the work being done. However, following the Eastern European Settlement Scheme deadline, the cases have become increasingly complex with some extremely vulnerable clients, but we continue to achieve consistently positive outcomes for these vulnerable clients.

£1,397,663 was expended in furtherance of our charitable activities with £150,460 used in raising funds.

Out of every £1 given to the charity, 90p is used in furtherance of our charitable objectives.

Our Financial Inclusion and Housing Team provided 326 clients with support and advice.

Our Anti-Slavery and Homelessness Development Officer dealt with 11 individuals that were entered into the National Referral Mechanism (NSM).


# Together, we achieve

In late 2021, The Drop-In Centre was rebranded to make the environment more welcoming for homeless and vulnerably housed people, with a Birmingham-centric focus to let our clients know that they truly belong in the city.

The rebrand was completed by Omar Budeiri and Steve Price, in collaboration with Stacey Barnfield of the Colour Palette Company, local illustrator Jim Rogers, photographer Tom Bird and a whole host of volunteers and corporate partners from both local and national businesses. The rebrand strives to make SIFA Fireside a safe and welcoming space. The influence of Birmingham is literally painted on our walls and lets clients know that they are a part of this city and that “Birmingham, you’re not alone”. Whilst looking forward, the rebrand also recognises SIFA Fireside’s roots through the honouring of our founder, Sister Sabina, by the faithful recreation of her handwriting.

# Gifts in kind received

- £15,183.02 was the value of clothing donated to SIFA Fireside
- £10,773.65 worth of food was donated for serving in our Drop-In, for rough sleeper’s packs and food parcels
- £67,500.50 was the value of pro bono services provided including IT support, client meals, cleaning, painting, marketing, printing and training
- We accepted £13,054.54 worth of donations of sleeping bags, wellbeing packs, rucksacks, plates, cups & cutlery
- SIFA Fireside’s reserves target for 2021/22 is £517k
- As of 31 March 2022, unrestricted and undesignated funds not represented by fixed assets were circa £735k



“... thanks. I would not know where I’d be without all of your help. I do appreciate everything you have done for me. Thank you.”

“Staff were extremely helpful and professional throughout my visit with a patient. Decent food also provided to those who simply want a meal.”

“Not only do I feel valued but I am grateful that I work with such colleagues who consider my mental health and are consciously making sure I am taking care of me before anything else.”  
SIFA Fireside team member

“Feeling important and valued by my management makes a massive difference.”  
SIFA Fireside team member.

# Together, we work dynamically

We're no strangers to facing fundraising challenges and this year has been no different. Regardless, we're continuing to diversify and venture into new and creative ways to generate income. As always, our primary focus is to ensure that our supporters, stakeholders and corporate partners are included, engaged and invested in SIFA Fireside.

In addition to quarterly newsletters, we've successfully hosted Open Days which provide an opportunity for individuals to see first-hand where their donations are being used, or where further support is needed.

We have also developed new materials to include educational resources for our school partners on the issues of homelessness, as well as our 'Corporate Menu of Opportunity' and 'Homelessness and Employment: A toolkit for corporate partners'. The Fundraising Team have continued to be creative in sourcing donations of food, clothing, furniture, printing costs, consultancy, training and maintenance support for which we're truly grateful.



Other highlights include:

- We welcomed our first post-pandemic in-person fundraiser, organised by our long-standing Irish Community supporters, who raised an impressive £18k
- New corporate partners Balfour Beatty kindly sponsored us £20k to cover the rebrand of the Drop-In
- Regular donors stand at: 335
- Number of new corporate partnerships developed: 77
- Regular and corporate volunteers spent 5, 540 hours of their time supporting our clients
- We welcomed 14 new volunteers to further support our weekday Drop-In and weekend volunteer team
- Our regular volunteer team, with support from corporate volunteers, created delicious and nutritious meals for over 70 clients each day on average.

# Other achievements include

The introduction of more post-Covid workshops included creative arts therapy which was funded by Birmingham Centre for Art Therapies with money raised by Stacey Barnfield's Draw My City initiative.

Our in-house Job Clubs have grown to 3 sessions per week and our ESOL course provision now caters for both Beginner and Intermediate speakers.

1060 individual clients were supported at our Drop-In Centre, with a range of essential services for rough sleepers and those in precarious housing situations.

We have reintroduced our Client Forum which is well attended on a monthly basis. The individuals involved continue to raise relevant issues and ensure that clients remain at the heart of what we do.

We welcomed back Anthony Luvera, a renowned photographer who has been working with clients since 2018 on a project called CONSTRUCT. The project involves facilitating assisted self-portraits of clients and will result in an exhibition at Snow Hill Square.

The Adult Support Hub saw a 50% increase in referrals and telephone enquiries in relation to mental health and wellbeing, accessing local services and advice around budgeting. In partnership with Birmingham City Council, housing officers based at SIFA Fireside supported over 2,370 individuals to access emergency housing advice.



# Together, we look to the future

SIFA Fireside looks to 2023, where we will forge ahead to not only meet clients' immediate needs and housing requirements, but to act swiftly to prevent homelessness, to raise aspirations and to increase opportunities for long-term, sustainable move-on.

Our project with acclaimed photographer Anthony Luvera and Grain Photography Hub will give our clients the opportunity to express themselves artistically and exhibit their work in the public space at Snow Hill Square. We'll also be continuing to expand what we can offer our clients through arts and crafts sessions, music therapy and theatre opportunities to support clients in pursuing their interests.

We will further evolve the Step Ahead Employability programme, which runs in tandem to fundraising's Building Employability initiative. Step Ahead was established and funded by the DWP to support homeless clients in successfully navigating the job market and increase socially responsible recruitment with employers.

SIFA Fireside will continue to support and invest in our staff team by introducing Wellbeing Wednesdays where, for one afternoon each month, staff will be able to join in planned recreational activities, be creative, or simply catch up with admin tasks if that feels of benefit to them. The aim is to improve the wellbeing of our team and is the first of a range of new initiatives.

We will also invest in our volunteers by extending volunteer roles and recruiting volunteer befrienders to support the Drop-In service. We will also be looking to recruit out-and-about befrienders who will accompany our Community Engagement Coordinator as they support clients to engage in activities within their community.

# Financial Summary

In summary our total income of £1,539,757 (2021: £1,646,840) was applied to fund total expenditure of £1,548,123 (2021: £1,166,302) which resulted in a deficit for the year of £8,366 (2021: surplus of £480,538).

Of this, £1,397,663 (2021: £1,054,064) was expended in furtherance of our charitable activities with £150,460 (2021: £112,238) used in raising funds. In other words, out of every £1 given to the charity, 90p is used in furtherance of our charitable objectives.



A stylized illustration on the left side of the page. It features a white silhouette of a person with a cane, set against a dark red background. To the left of the person is a large, stylized heart shape, and below it is a flame-like shape in orange and yellow. The person is holding a cane in their right hand and has their left hand raised in a gesture.

## Income 2021-22

Donations 34%

Contracts 44%

Grants 22%

## Expenditure 2021-22

Direct charitable expenditure 90%

Cost of raising funds 10%

# SIFA fireside

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     SIFA fireside

SIFA fireside is a registered charity in England and Wales registration number 1049728 and a company limited by guarantee 03094905.

