



BIRMINGHAM. *you're not alone.*

Impact Report 2022-23

SIFA
fireside

Chief Executive Officer's welcome

I joined SIFA Fireside back in October 2022 and felt privileged to have the opportunity to lead an organisation that is unique in its approach to supporting homeless and vulnerably housed adults in Birmingham that would have otherwise fallen through the net.

With the pandemic barely behind us, we found ourselves facing a cost-of-living crisis, rising energy bills and a possible recession on the horizon. All of these factors had a devastating effect, not only on those at risk of homelessness, but on the charities trying to support them.

The work we do here at SIFA Fireside has never been more important and we remain committed to supporting those who are rough sleeping or in need of emergency support, whilst also looking to prevent homelessness at every opportunity.

Each of these completely different challenges need a dedicated approach and as a result we decided to remodel the specialist services provided within our Support Centre to better meet the needs of our clients.

Throughout this time, our staff, volunteers, trustees, clients and supporters continue to be central to our success and help to shape our future.

Collectively, we are excited about what the next 12 months will hold for us, as we look to reset our vision and mission to focus on preventing homelessness and rough sleeping, with the unwavering belief that a future without homelessness is not only possible, but achievable.



Natalie Allen
Chief Executive Officer

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Our vision and mission

We are SIFA Fireside, Birmingham's main day centre and a leading charity empowering people facing homelessness to take control and pave the way for healthier and more 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



Our values

As staff, volunteers and trustees of SIFA Fireside, we live our values each and every day. They are:

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.



"Thank you so much for the support... I can't put into words how grateful I am!"

"The staff are all very down to Earth and treat all with compassion and dignity."



"No one else is helping me. You are the only ones that are actually helping me."



Together, we make an impact


Between October '22 and March '23, The ASH supported **694** individuals with multiple vulnerabilities which included precarious housing. This is a **362%** increase.

Our Support Centre welcomed **2,880** individual clients between April 2022 and March 2023.

In this period, SIFA Fireside carried out a total of **30,123** supportive interventions with people facing, or at risk of homelessness in Birmingham.

We supported **177** vulnerable clients at various stages of the Eastern European Settlement Scheme.

During this time, SIFA Fireside made **1,397** referrals to both internal and external additional support services.



"Oh gosh! I can't believe this is happening! I've been trying to get a bank account for 14 months, and then I come in to SIFA... and here I am."

"SIFA Fireside... is without doubt one of the most supportive and inclusive organisations that I have worked for in the last 30 years."

"Of all the places I've worked – the SIFA team have offered me the most support amidst my own mental health challenges..."

Together, we prevent homelessness

The Adult Support Hub (ASH) continued to support people with their health and wellbeing in conjunction with Shelter, providing early intervention support to prevent people falling into crisis. Towards the end of this period, the service underwent a transformation which meant the work shifted to being community-based via an outreach programme, in order to target people before they reached our other support services.

The service has increasingly focused on health and wellbeing outcomes and has incorporated our Financial Inclusion service to ensure that this support is available to those in precarious housing situations. Since October 2022 the numbers of people requiring this intervention has steadily risen, resulting in 694 people with a range of concerns being supported up until March 2023 which is a 362% increase on the previous period.

Our Housing Transitions Service continued to deliver a high-quality service to 221 individual clients placed in exempt accommodation within the city. This included individuals who presented in our support centre that already had an offer of accommodation but were opting to sleep out due to various reasons. The Housing Transitions Service are able to respond effectively to this and support clients back into their accommodation.

The team receives referrals from partners such as Birmingham City Council and Spring Housing and can provide an additional check, which clients find reassuring if they have been homeless for some time and are not sure about how to manage their new tenancy. We also encourage and support quality providers that we encounter to sign up and consider the Charter of Rights and Quality Standards.



Richard's story

'Richard' was referred by his mother, who came into contact with our Adult Support Hub workers during community outreach. She believed his physical and mental health was declining as a result of his precarious living conditions as well as limited contact and support from his social worker. As a result, Richard struggled with his mental health and had suicidal thoughts but didn't feel he could complain about the lack of support from his GP in case he lost his access to care. He felt that this, along with his housing situation contributed to his relapse into heroin use.

ASH-Shelter worked with a legal housing provider to further the conversation between the client and his landlord to resolve the accommodation issues. The ASH service referred the client to Change Grow Live (CGL) and signposted him to Talk to Frank for emotional support.

Richard felt able to make his voice heard by submitting a complaint about his GP after being referred to PohWER for advocacy support.

Despite previously experiencing social anxiety, he consequently felt empowered to attend face-to-face appointments and re-engage with the services within his local community, which reduced his sense of isolation.

Richard believed that without the support from the ASH, he would not have felt able to disclose his relapse and take actionable steps to address his declining physical and mental health.



Together, we provide emergency support

Between April 2022 and March 2023, we saw 2880 individual presentations, with clients coming in for a range of crisis support which was a significant increase on the previous year. This was due to the increasing after-effects of the pandemic as well as the beginning of the Cost-of-Living crisis, which meant many clients were presenting with a wide range of needs that we were struggling to meet.

Following a period of consultation with clients and staff that began in November, we underwent a remodel of our Support Centre delivery and functions which helped to shift the focus and improve the quality of the support on offer to our most vulnerable clients. This included focusing on clients who were rough sleeping and were historically reluctant to come into SIFA Fireside.

We also built on our partnerships with Health Exchange, the Department of Work and Pensions, BCC, CGL and the Hospice Charity to offer clients a wide range of onsite access to address their needs, which may include physical and mental health, benefit issues, substance use, accommodation and trauma

Our Homeless Intervention service continues to provide this safety net in the city as a first port of call for people who find themselves at crisis point.



Sidney's story

When 'Sidney' first presented at SIFA Fireside he had been rough sleeping on and off for around 10 years. His mental health was poor and he would often travel away from his problems and end up in places such as Carlisle or Scotland.

At the time, he was abusing alcohol, distancing himself from relationships and becoming more and more isolated. Additionally, he was having increasingly severe and regular bouts of schizophrenia.

Over the following 2 years, the team at SIFA Fireside built rapport with Sidney, supporting him with his immediate basic needs, whilst also looking towards his future with him. The team supported Sidney to get a copy of his birth certificate, enabled him to engage with his mental health surgery and personally supported him in filling in his online housing application.

After engaging with our Financial Inclusion team, Sidney built a working relationship with an HSBC bank worker to help him manage his money and she, in turn, regularly liaises with SIFA Fireside.

Now settled in his own self-contained flat, Sidney is in a relationship for first time in years with someone who supports him in attending his appointments.

He also meets his friends at the pub but declines a drink. With the support of the DWP worker at SIFA Fireside, Sidney managed to receive his back pay on his Personal Independent Payments to furnish his flat with lamps, curtains and other furniture.

Coming in every few months to check in with our team, Sidney told us;

"I can't thank you enough – I don't know where I'd be without you."



Together, we enable recovery from homelessness

Our Recovery services continued to support people to move away from services and develop the skills and networks to flourish in their communities.

This year was particularly challenging for our EU Settlement Scheme support service. We saw a steady stream of vulnerable clients who were unable to navigate the complex processes independently and often struggled to provide the necessary evidence to validate their status. As a result, we supported 177 clients at various stages of the process and this included 77 new applications. Without this provision, they would have been unable to access the process and would thereby be forced to continue rough sleeping.

Our dedicated Central Eastern European worker also provided additional case work for the many clients we see who present to us with language barriers, physical health, substance use, bereavement and other needs so that they can receive some targeted support while they engaged with the often lengthy EUSS process.

Our Step Ahead programme ran until December 2022 and provided clients with opportunities to access work, training and learning to support them in their move away from homelessness. Our Community Engagement worker supported clients to access and make use of community assets to build networks of support that were essential to improve their wellbeing and support them in independent living.

Our Modern Day Slavery Lead Worker continued to see a high level of presentations in our Support Centre, ranging from victims of modern day slavery, trafficking, labour exploitation and various other issues. Extensive training was delivered to the wider team to raise awareness and outline processes: as a result we have seen an increased disclosure and SIFA Fireside's staff are more confident in the processes required to adequately support these vulnerable individuals.

Over the last year we also delivered a wide variety of recovery and skills-based workshops including cooking, IT, music, art and Geese Theatre workshops, all of which were well received by clients. We are continuing to develop this programme and have more great activities lined up for next year.



Together, we work dynamically

Raising awareness of the work we do is hugely important to us. Being a small team, we're grateful for the offers of support we secure from our extensive pool of corporate partners which includes strategy planning, marketing, legal advice, printing, training, coaching, advertising space and other pro bono expertise.

The use of effective communication is key to ensure that we retain donors as well as engage with new ones so that our income streams remain varied to ensure financial sustainability for the organisation.

What we achieved

- ♥ Approximately **50** corporate teams and public sector groups have completed over **1,700** hours of volunteering at SIFA Fireside in the past year.
- ♥ **12** new volunteers joined SIFA Fireside including new business reception support and befriending roles.
- ♥ **Several volunteers** have been supported into staff roles in homelessness intervention work, community outreach and mental health navigation.
- ♥ The level of social media engagement increased by **38%** on the previous period.



- ♥ An increased press contact list and new relationships built lead to coverage in **The Guardian**, **BBC World Service**, **The Big Issue** and **The Independent** amongst others.
- ♥ The website has been optimised for both client and supporter use with **46,163** views during this period.
- ♥ Our **327** regular donors with active subscriptions raised a total of **£71,305** (with Gift Aid).
- ♥ Improved reporting and monitoring using the new **Beacon Customer Relationship Management programme** enables us to monitor and build on donor relationships.
- ♥ The implementation of **QR Codes** as an alternative to collection tins and cash donations.
- ♥ **Open Day invites** were regularly sent out for new and potential donors as well as corporate partners.
- ♥ **Our extended library of literature** resources now includes our Corporate Menu of Opportunity, Fundraising at Work pack, Impact Report, Educational Resources for Schools, Big Brummie campaign, QR code posters, pull-up banners and business cards.
- ♥ Implementation of volunteer conversion campaign via the CRM has helped to convert **44** corporate volunteers into supporters.
- ♥ Improved connections with Birmingham BIDs including **JQ Bid**, **Colmore Bid** and **Central Bid** improved communications with potential corporate partners.
- ♥ The Gifts in Kind received value for the year was **£63,505**.
- ♥ **£22,319** was raised by individuals' events and fundraisers (includes **£17.6k** from Scanlon's).
- ♥ **£6,540** was raised by Belly Laughs Comedy Festival.
- ♥ **£8,760** was awarded by National Lottery Awards for All which funded cooking classes.
- ♥ **£10,500** was awarded by a corporate partner to contribute to refurbishment of our shower rooms.

Together, we look to the future

During 2023/24, we will be growing our service delivery to focus on preventing homelessness and rough sleeping in Birmingham. Data collection and analysis will continue to be key to both improving and demonstrating our impact.

We will use our learning alongside the voice of lived experience to influence local and national policy, strategy and commissioning.

We will review our performance against our strategic aims and will work with all SIFA Fireside stakeholders to set a new three-year strategy including a refreshed vision and mission.



Financial summary

	2022 Impact Report	2022 Accounts	2023 Accounts
Total Income	£1,539,757	£1,476,135	£1,569,789
Total Expenditure	£1,548,123	£1,484,501	£1,667,277
Deficit	£8,366	£8,366	£97,488
Charitable Activities	£1,397,663	£1,334,041	£1,501,905
Raising Funds	£150,460	£150,460	£165,372
Out of every £1 the amount used in furtherance of charitable objectives was:	£0.90	£0.90	£0.90
Donations	34%	34%	32%
Contracts	44%	44%	45%
Grants	22%	22%	23%
Direct charitable expenditure	90%	90%	90%
Cost of raising funds	10%	10%	10%

SIFA fireside

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     SIFA Fireside

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