

impact report 2024/25



A future without
homelessness.

SIFA
fireside

chief executive's annual report

Here at SIFA Fireside, our commitment to supporting adults experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping across Birmingham remains as strong as ever.

Thanks to our dedicated staff, volunteers, trustees, and funders we continue to provide vital support, through our Support Centre, helping people find relief and hope every day.

This year, we've been excited to further expand our services beyond emergency support. We kicked off the year by launching two new initiatives: our Peer Support service and the Exempt Accommodation Navigator team. These additions help us better assist rough sleepers

and those transitioning into housing, allowing us to prevent the recurrence of homelessness wherever possible.

Later in the year, we partnered with Trident Reach to deliver Birmingham's Adult Lead Worker service — a collaboration that brings our support directly into communities, meeting people where they need it most.

Growing our reach in this way has been a key ambition for us and it's inspiring to see these efforts come to life.

At SIFA Fireside, we also recognise the importance of being a courageous voice for change. We've been working hard to ensure that our experience and insights help to

shape local services, as well as inform policy and commissioning at both local and national levels. This will continue to be a focus as we welcome new partnerships and opportunities to influence positive change throughout the year ahead.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us. Together, we're making a real difference for people facing homelessness in Birmingham.



Natalie Allen
Chief Executive

mission visionvalues



We are SIFA Fireside, the support centre for any adult in Birmingham that faces homelessness.

Our Vision? That every adult in Birmingham can live a future without homelessness.

Our mission? To challenge and address the systemic causes and the effects of homelessness in collaboration with our partners.

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.

We prevent homelessness

together



Peer Support Services

During 2024 we mobilised our Peer Support Worker service, which supports people who are rough sleeping and experiencing multiple barriers to engage with services. This team is built on Lived Experience – all of our Peer Mentors bring their own personal experience and insights into the role. This gives us a fresh understanding of the barriers that prevent people from engaging with support services

and accommodation providers and therefore enable us to work in a more trauma-informed manner. This service places an emphasis on befriending, building trust and adopting a person-centred approach to moving away from rough sleeping.

“When you found me rough sleeping on the canal, it showed me you cared and I felt seen. It instilled my hope in services again.” “H”

Exempt Accommodation Navigator Service

During 2024, eviction from supported exempt accommodation emerged as the most common reason for homelessness among single adults over the age of 25, according to figures from Birmingham City Council. To address this we have further developed our Exempt Accommodation Navigator Service. During the first 12 months of the service, 93% of people engaging have sustained their accommodation, 64% have engaged with recovery services and 59% have reduced their substance use, with 3 achieving complete abstinence.

In a city with a growing and unregulated Exempt Accommodation sector (made up of over 30,000 units of accommodation), our navigator service offers people support to sustain their accommodation and provides additional advocacy and resources to enable them to move away from homelessness.

*Thx for everything.
(I'm keeping well) because
of you". Thx." "M"*

No Recourse to Public Funds

Over the past 12 months, we have identified an upturn in the number of people presenting who have no recourse to public funds, and as a result, are excluded from accessing housing assistance via the Local Authority. Our Restricted Eligibility Team continues to signpost clients to specialist advice through the Refugee and Migrant Centre, Brushstrokes and Migrant Help wherever possible. The team has worked with 249 people, assisting with rights awareness, providing information and offering support to engage with the Home Office, accommodation providers and other specialist services.

"I'm very grateful for the support – SIFA is my family in the UK." "A"

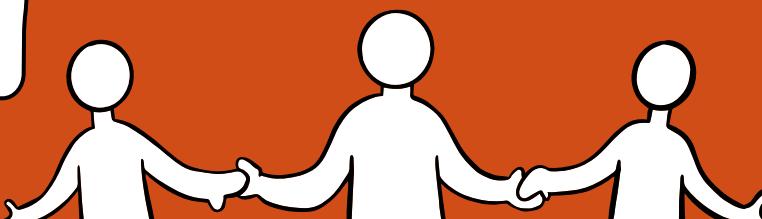
Adult Support Hub

On the final year of its contract, our Adult Support Hub (ASH) service, in partnership with Birmingham Mind, supported 961 clients and was effective in delivering meaningful outcomes. 451 out of 469 clients reported successful health and wellbeing outcomes, 315 out of 332 achieved positive financial outcomes, 259 out of 269 achieved successful community outcomes, and 287 out of 306 achieved positive accommodation-related outcomes.

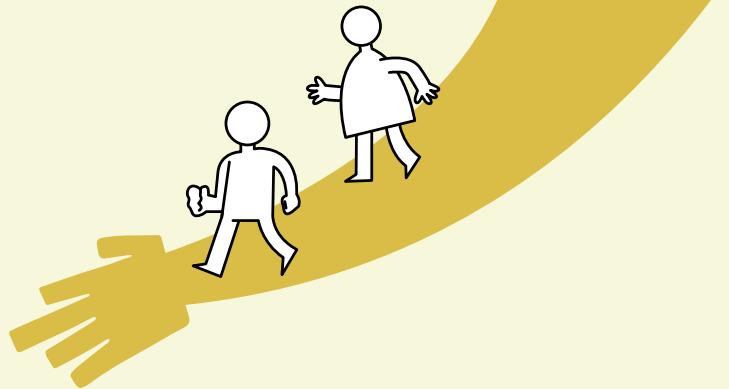
With an average length in service of just 6.7 days and typically three points of contact, our outcomes were impressive given the brief intervention period. Hence, our service demonstrated strong efficiency in supporting individuals to stabilise and transition towards longer term support services.

By providing supporting actions at the point where issues such as rent arrears, energy debt, or unstable housing were threatening the clients' wellbeing, our ASH team prevented escalation to statutory services. This was both cost-effective for the system and impactful for clients, as financial stability often unlocked improvements in health, wellbeing, and independence.

"...you actually make me feel like a person, not another addict." "B"



our story



“Carly”, a 47-year old female, was referred to our service by a Social Prescribing Link Worker from Compass, as her mental health was declining due to her current housing situation. The client was currently housed in a shared flat with 4 other women in a refuge, after fleeing from domestic violence. The client stated that there was no living room in the property due to the lounge area being utilised as another bedroom to accommodate more people. As a result, she felt forced to stay in her bedroom.

We supported Carly by referring her to a housing agency, Big Mommas Housing, that specialises in housing vulnerable women to support and mentor them as well as house them. The agency aims to build people's hope to believe that everyone has a chance to succeed in life, to value themselves and each other, help build their confidence, reduce isolation and support them to participate in activities such as employment and education.

The agency also provides self-contained flats so, as a result of our referral, Carly will have the sense of independence that she wants, as well as being able to feel safe and secure.

together and we provide emergency support

Our Support Centre continues to offer an open door to any adult over 25 who is experiencing homelessness in Birmingham. As the centre is not commissioned by an external funder, we are able to maintain a high degree of flexibility and offer an impactful service to people who may be excluded from other support offers within the city.

Our Homeless Intervention Team continues to engage with sector partners on a weekly basis via the Rough Sleeper Tasking Group, sharing updates on individuals and participating in plans to assist them in moving on from rough sleeping into safe, sustainable accommodation.

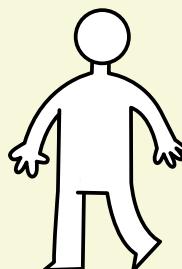
The team also engages with other services that may have a role to play in enabling rough sleeping individuals to access and maintain accommodation.

Organisations that retain a regular presence at SIFA Fireside include DWP, Health Exchange, Opticians, Hep C Trust and Chiropodists. We have retained strong working links with Change Grow Live (CGL), Adult Social Care, Rough Sleeper Outreach and the Domestic Abuse Hub.

Birmingham City Council's Housing Team also maintains a daily presence on site, enabling people attending the Support Centre to access housing assistance on site. Our Exempt Accommodation Navigators also engage with the Housing Team to ensure anyone placed in Exempt Accommodation by the Local Authority is offered the opportunity to access additional support where necessary.

"The team were outstanding with the patient, putting him in control with dignity, compassion, respect, understanding... going above and beyond any service I've encountered under these circumstances."

Partner agency



Harry's story

"Harry" presented at our Support Centre in need of emergency support, seemingly confused and delayed in his responses. He told us that he was in full-time employment but that he was recently evicted from his accommodation, and as a result, had been rough sleeping at New Street station.

We knew that Harry's accommodation options were limited as he was employed. We supported him to contact Newtown Housing Options, who provided him with a list of options. Together, we contacted several of these providers, to no avail.

Upon investigating further, we questioned the fact that Harry was working due to his mental condition. We contacted his place of work, who confirmed that he was in employment but would soon be let go due to his worsening health condition, for which he was not seeking help.

After consulting our Safeguarding Lead and with concern about his vulnerability, we submitted an Adult Safeguarding form before again referring him to Birmingham City Council's Housing Options Team, now with the knowledge that Harry would soon be unemployed and that SIFA Fireside could support him to claim benefits. This assessment was successful and Harry was given an emergency bed at Helen Dixon House for 2 weeks whilst we were able to support him with access to benefits.

We are continuing to support Harry with his Universal Credit claim, which is a key step towards accessing accommodation long term.



During the last 12 months, our Recovery team has worked with over 500 people to provide support with their recovery from homelessness and towards independent living, providing assistance with development of digital skills, access to bank accounts, budgeting training and basic life skills. 194 people have also accessed support to manage their finances via our Recovery team.

Our Recovery team has built a number of partnerships with specialist services, including the PURE Project and Standing Tall, which offer people opportunities to engage with training and employment opportunities.

The Recovery Team has also continued to provide opportunities for people accessing SIFA Fireside to engage with social and wellbeing activities ranging from music and theatre groups to cookery classes and life skills development.

Members of the music therapy group participated in a homelessness memorial event held at the Birmingham Peace Gardens in November 2024, while members of the theatre group have taken part in productions with Geese Theatre Company in local theatres.

"I will never forget my experience at SIFA. Caseworker Mrs E. T. (is) the best forever. I do appreciate all support I got from all SIFA staff. "A"

Adult Lead Worker Service

The mobilisation of the Adult Lead Worker service provided an opportunity for the SIFA Fireside team to grow again, with 8 Lead Worker roles, plus Team Leader and Service Manager roles created.

Our Adult Lead Worker service represents a fresh move into community-based working, and engages people who have already obtained settled accommodation, and are making the final steps in their recovery from homelessness and unsettled accommodation.

This service prioritises engagement with local community assets, ranging from healthcare and other statutory services to volunteering and creative activities.

The new Adult Lead Worker service is commissioned for 5 years and is being delivered in partnership with Trident. This represents a new partnership for SIFA Fireside, and going forward, is an opportunity for us to implement the learning and approaches we have identified across our existing services into a new area of housing related support.

**together
we
enable recovery
from homelessness**

Recovery Story

“Tay” is a former rough sleeper who first came to SIFA Fireside with a diagnosis of personality disorder and body dysmorphic disorder. When first engaging with the Recovery Team, Tay told the team that they felt isolated and regularly relied on cannabis to manage their mental health.

Through consistent involvement in Recovery activities such as Music Therapy and Geese Theatre sessions at our Support Centre, Tay discovered a blossoming passion for singing and acting.

Their confidence grew to the point where they were able to perform solo pieces through these groups, and they later delivered a remarkable performance before an audience at a SIFA Fireside event.

Since then, Tay has gone on to perform in local venues and community gigs, secure a regular slot on a local radio show, and has built positive relationships through widening their social network.

Tay’s journey demonstrates the transformative role and positive impact of creative therapies in recovery, wellbeing, and social integration.



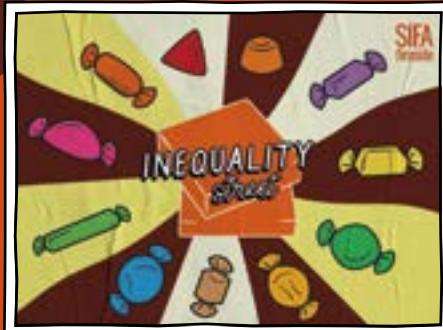
new work dynamically



Our programme of fundraising campaigns expanded further with the continuation of the 'Homelessness Doesn't Take a Holiday' Summer Campaign in partnership with One Black Bear and Ocean Outdoor, as well as the award-winning "Inequality Street" Christmas Campaign, which was supported by Leopard PR.

Fundraising

SIFA Fireside embarked on a bold strategic journey guided by newly-defined priorities for 2024–2026. Fundraising efforts have been aligned with these strategic goals, emphasising diversification of income sources beyond government funding. A newly-formed fundraising committee now supports these efforts, ensuring key areas of income generation are identified, monitored, and achieved.



Fundraising events were also a highlight of our year, with thanks to new supporters and long-standing corporate partners alike. The year saw our involvement in the Birmingham 24 Hour Run Against Homelessness, Surgeon's Techno Birmingham event at the Hare and Hounds, Squire Patton Bogg's Inflatable Challenge and Cricket Tournament as well as BAM's Charity Golf Day.

what we achieve

Amongst other valuable grants, we successfully secured the following:

- Heart Zurich Community Trust – **£22,000** for Support Centre Costs
- Heart Hortons Estates – **£7,000** for the refurbishment of the female's shower room
- Heart Garfield Weston Foundation – **£10,000** towards Support Centre Costs
- Heart The Eveson Trust – **£10,000** towards the running of the Support Centre
- Heart Stavros Niarchos – **£45,000** of Support Centre/Homeless Intervention Team funding
- Heart The Souter Charitable Trust – **£2,000** towards the running of the Support Centre

- Heart The Montal Charitable Trust – **£5,000** towards Support Centre Costs

- Heart Richard Kilcuppes – **£1,500** of Support Centre/Homeless Intervention Team funding

- Heart Albert Hunt – **£10,000** towards Support Centre Costs

- Heart Grimmit Trust – **£3,500** towards the running of the Support Centre

- Heart 29-May-61 – **£10,000** of Support Centre/Homeless Intervention Team funding

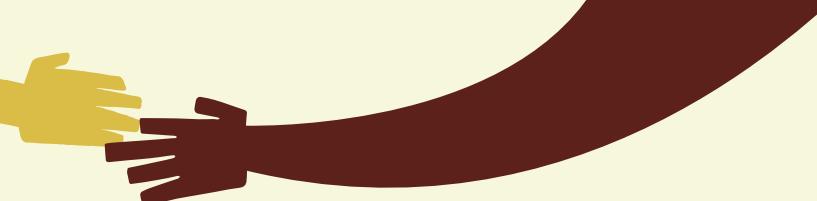
- Heart Rodger and Douglas Turner Charitable Trust – **£3,000** towards Support Centre Costs

SIFA Fireside reached well over **half a million** people across social media.

The SIFA Fireside website attracted **185,000** user interactions.

We achieved press coverage in **The Canary, BBC Online, BBC Midlands Today, Express and Star, What's On, and Birmingham Live** amongst others.

Our volunteering programme has flourished, with **43** regular volunteers in place and over **400** corporate teams contributing a total of **7,982** hours of support.



together we look to the future

SIFA Fireside will continue to evolve our services into places where people feel safe and supported, and where meaningful and lasting change is enabled. We can't do this alone though, and we will further develop our links with experts in Trauma Informed and Person-centred Practice to apply principles and procedures that enable us to deliver services in the right way.

Our Exempt Accommodation Navigators have identified emerging themes regarding the barriers faced by people living in Exempt Accommodation and have undertaken the process of training to better resource themselves when providing support. Drug and Alcohol awareness, Naloxone administration and Hoarding awareness training will continue, to enable us to better respond to the presenting needs of people engaging with the service.

The Lead Worker service also represents a major change in how SIFA Fireside delivers its services. Lead Worker delivery takes place within local communities, away from the Support Centre, and many Lead Worker clients may have no (recent) experience of rough sleeping. With the roll out of this service, combined with Peer Support and Exempt Accommodation services, a considerable degree of SIFA Fireside's face to face work with clients now takes place away from the Support Centre in a significant step for the organisation.

Annual summary

In summary, our total income of **£1,897,203** (2024: £1,546,664) was applied to fund total expenditure of **£1,759,155** (2024: £1,406,756) which resulted in a surplus for the year of **£138,048** (2024: £139,908).

Of this **£1,626,413** (2024: £1,300,424) was expended in furtherance of our charitable activities meaning that out of every **£1** given to the charity, **85p** is used in furtherance of our charitable objectives.





a future

without
homelessness





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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 3094905.

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