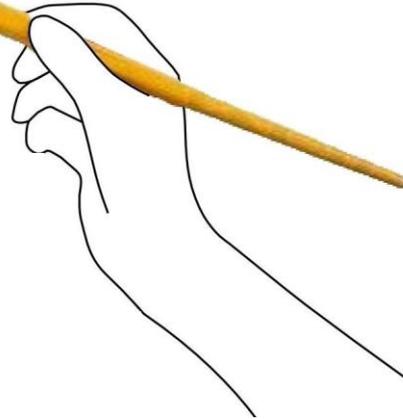
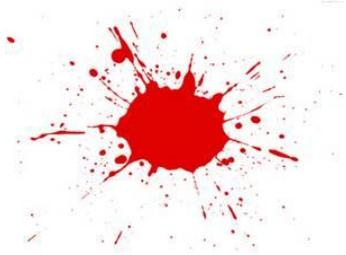


"We must be in the hands of God like a brush in the hands of the painter" Nicholas Barré"

BRUSHSTROKES

ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16



Brushstrokes is a joint project

Foundation Partners

Infant Jesus Sisters

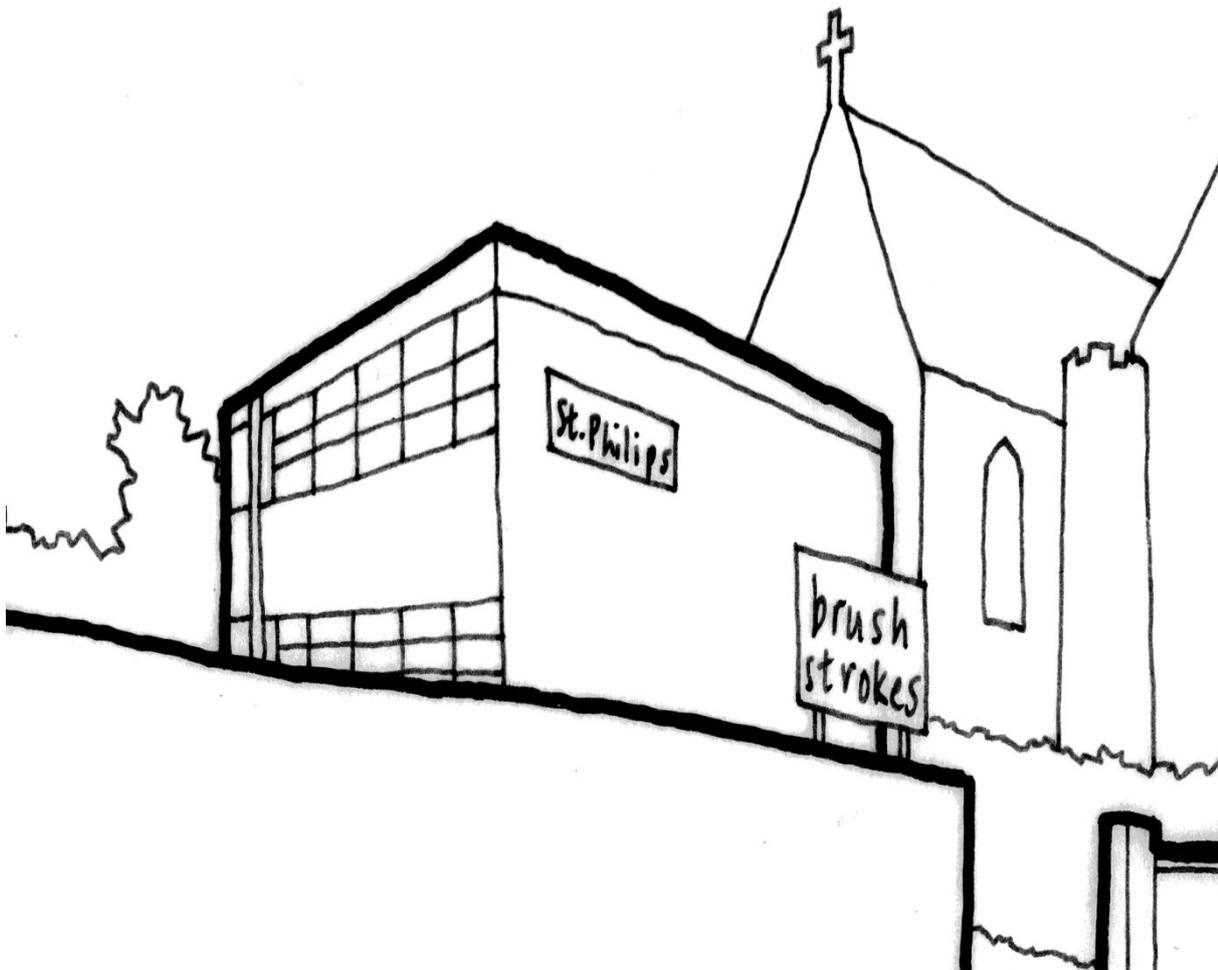
Father
Hudson's
Care

St Philip's Parish

Charity number 234216

Charity number 512992

Charity number 272581



Management Committee 2015/2016

Andrew Quinn – Chairperson (Part of the year)
Joanne Watters (Chair)
Fr. Erasmus Egenonu C.S.Sp.
Sister Margaret Walsh IJS
Keith Athaide
Julie Shields
Bhavna Solanki
Leighton Padotan
Roy Gardiner
Shqipe Cela
Debbie Madden
Mary Tomlinson

Brushstrokes Staff



Teresa Clements - Project Manager

Jane Alsop - ESOL Co-ordinator

Martin McNally - Volunteer Co-ordinator

Sandra Tittel - Outreach Co-ordinator & Deputising Manager

Loreta Braha - Monitoring Assistant

Fatmire Braha - Resources Assistant

Arjana Osmani - Domestic Assistant/Outreach Support Worker

3 **Melonie Barnaby** - Cape Hill Cooking Champions Volunteer coordinator

Megan Sieprawska - Migrant Support Worker (PRS)

Volunteers & Helpers

ESOL

Maureen Alecock
Hawar Amin
Hazera Begum
Barbara Eastgate
Keith Collier
Charlotte Davies
Mwanga Givashi
Vivien Heenan
Breege Lavin
Anne Maher
Arjana Osmani
Narin Rashid
Lakshmi Sukumaran
Melanie Steadman
Martin Taylor
Rebecca Tegaleka
Michael Weir
Patricia Weir
Helen Westlake
Joan Wilde

Jesuit Novice

Thomas Klien

Student Placements

Amy Choudhury
Emma Squires
Dominiko Ndou
Daniel N'Kallo
Jason Norgrove
Paula Malecka
Nhg Chi Ho
Rae Davis
Joseph Cramphorn
Natassia Bryan

Outreach

Kathy Fryatt
Ann Gregory
Mohsen Hajihosseinali
Barbara Jones
Breege Lavin
Arjana Osmani
Dreda Tonkin
Lorraine Cruckshank
Ella Woodhull

Administration

Hawar Amin
Shareena Begum
Loreta Braha
Ellen Crooks
Gurjit Dhariwal
Kathy Fryatt
Hajar Nejad

Oscott College Trainee Priests

Andrew Crompton

Robert Hayes

Resources & Catering

Parveen Akhtar
Shimaa Asker
Anwara Bari
Mary Geach
Ahmad Hammami
Mimoza Kingjl
Arjana Osmani
Mahtaj Shirazi
Mary Tomlinson

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International Voices Pictures and Summer Activities

Jo Watters, Chair of Brushstrokes Management Committee



I have been in post as the Head of Community Projects for Father Hudson's Care since September 2015 and I am delighted to be the new Chair of the Management Committee for Brushstrokes community project. Brushstrokes provide a wealth of support to newcomers through - activities and services at the centre, our partners and outreach in the community. It is this open-door and holistic approach which ensures we reach and help those most in need.

The numbers of people accessing Brushstroke's services has continued to grow; our dedicated Project manager, staff team and volunteers have been working hard to meet this increasing demand. The vast numbers of people the project has reached over the last year is a huge achievement: 2796 people have received our food parcels and 1031 people received other resources such as clothing and baby packs. Without our support many individuals and family would not have the food and other resources they need on a day to day basis. The Outreach team visited 2524 people in Sandwell and West Birmingham, reaching out to areas not previously targeted such as Tipton. In addition we have carried out casework with refugees in the private housing sector.

We have recruited additional ESOL tutors and volunteers. This positively means we have been able to offer more student places (200 students since September 2015) than ever before, however as more colleges close their ESOL courses there will continue to be a greater demand than there is classes. Reading the case studies in the ESOL section of this report really shows the different learning English can make to individuals.

The Community Café is going from strength to strength, it has been wonderful to see people from different cultures coming together and sharing new foods.

Volunteering remains key to the work of Brushstrokes and it is so pleasing that we currently have 34 active volunteers, 2 of whom were nominated for the Smethwick Community Awards. These volunteers are supporting the project in so many different ways including fundraising, events, ESOL, the Community Café, reception, groups, befriending and practical resources.

This year an external evaluation was commissioned and we were delighted with the excellent feedback Brushstrokes received from clients, volunteers and other stakeholders. We will be using the report to support future funding bids. Due to our highly committed Project Manager, in 15/16 new pots of funding have been secured to expand Brushstrokes services to support more people in diverse ways including funding for: workshops on understanding refugee issues across the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham, counselling and family budgeting services, increasing volunteering opportunities, an asylum seekers refugee fund, a new Advice Worker and an Employment Worker. In addition Brushstrokes are now partnering with Sandwell Council to support new refugees, since September 164 refugees have been supported through this pathway.

It has been wonderful to see that Brushstrokes has been recognised nationally and in a number of awards. This has included a Brushstrokes case study being referenced in the House of Lords, receiving an NHS award for reducing infant mortality through the new mother and baby pack and receiving a national award for community engagement.

Brushstrokes Managers Annual Report

The Year 2015 /16 has been the year when Brushstrokes has experienced the most growth in demand for our services. This has been driven by the growing experience of many people experiencing war and persecution in their homelands.

The crisis has heralded unprecedented national and international debates about migration. We all listen to the media stories of anguish and terror experienced by so many thousands of desperate people from afar and also witness its reality etched on the faces of the individuals who come to Brushstrokes. The dedicated staff at Brushstrokes and volunteers have more than risen to the challenge of meeting their diverse needs and have been able to provide a welcoming environment consistently throughout the year.

For the staff and volunteers at Brushstrokes, our focus has been on how we can keep responding to each and every individual request for support in the caring way that we always have done.

The external evaluator of our Big Lottery project has verified the impact of our caring ethos towards the people we work with;

'Brushstrokes is one of the rare projects we have evaluated that receives universally positive feedback from beneficiaries, staff, volunteers and stakeholders'

The growth in numbers and services that Brushstrokes has delivered in 2015/16 tell the story of how we are rising to the challenge of increased demand for our services across the board. What we are most proud of is that supporting over 8000 people has been achieved with no loss of compassion for everyone helped by Brushstrokes.

This is in no small part due to the uplifting effect of the outpouring of support from individuals and organisations previously unknown to us. Individuals and donations just appear with donations given from the heart saying there is no need for a thank you from us.

The positive external evaluation of our Big Lottery funded work was also reflected in Brushstrokes gaining two awards this year.

The first was from the Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group for our work in preventing infant mortality. This long standing aspect of our work supports destitute and vulnerable mothers with baby packs and equipment coupled with additional nutritional support for breast feeding mothers and befriending.

Brushstrokes is continuing to contribute to research into the causes of infant mortality with the organisation Brap in Birmingham and supporting Action for Children Children's' Centres in Sandwell we provide information in our baby

packs about how to prevent infant deaths through adopting safe sleeping measures.

The other award was from Premier Christian Radio, which gave Brushstrokes a national award for its work in community building bridges between people of different cultures and faiths

Both of the awards are a source of pride for everyone at Brushstrokes, demonstrating the positive impact of our work.

Achieving our aims 2015/16

Aim- To apply for significant Big Lottery funding to keep providing our core services of delivering ESOL and Outreach services supported by volunteering.

Outcomes

- Brushstrokes was invited to join the pilot fast track process of the Big Lottery and the application was submitted with support from Father Hudson's Care staff Joanne Watters, Head of Community Projects and Ginny Cullen, from Father Hudson Care's fundraising department. The outcome is not yet known.

Other funding:

Ginny has also supported Brushstrokes with successful small applications to grant making trusts throughout the year and Joanne Watters has also supported Brushstrokes with fundraising applications

- The support for resources work was sustained through a successful application for the Resources Assistant to Harborne Parish Lands, a long term funder of Brushstrokes work.
- Advice work in the centre has been sustained through funding from Sandwell Consortium and other funders.

Responding to new Funding opportunities

Outcomes

- We received further funding from a grant making trust to develop a Caritas project within the Archdiocese of Birmingham encouraging parishes and schools to respond positively to the refugee crisis during the Year of Mercy. We have delivered workshops to parishes about understanding refugee issues and practical ways to support refugees and asylum seekers. The funding also helps Brushstrokes provide additional ESOL and advice in response to the growing requests for help.
- Brushstrokes was successful in applying for funding from Sandwell Council through its Sandwell Early Help programme. It enables Brushstrokes to provide counselling services and emotional

support linked to ESOL and budgeting family support at the local food bank

- During the year we have received funding from the Birmingham Diocese Church Urban Fund to undertake interfaith work in our area.
- Caritas Archdiocese of Birmingham awarded Brushstrokes funding to support destitute asylum seekers.
- Brushstrokes has been allocated funding from the Building Better Opportunities Fund through Sandwell Consortium for three years for an employment adviser to support people into work. We also plan to benefit from additional funding from Sandwell Council for a part time employment adviser worker specifically to target Soho and Victoria ward residents.
- Brushstrokes have received funding recently through the New Beginnings Fund administered by the Heart of England Community Foundation. The funding will increase volunteering opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees who use Brushstrokes services, engage them in community volunteering and help them feel more integrated and connected with their local communities.
- Brushstrokes received funding from Sandwell Public Health through the Consortium STEP network for delivering health activities including ESOL for health. This funding will continue in 2016/17
- In 2015 we appointed a Community Café Volunteer Co-ordinator funded by the Peoples Health Trust to create new bonds of friendship between local people and share food and recipes. In July 2016 the Brushstrokes recipe book will be launched featuring recipes from service users, particularly our ESOL learners.

Aim - Networking with Big Lottery and Barrow Cadbury projects.

Outcomes

- The outcome relating to networking with Big Lottery projects has not yet developed as this initiative proposed by the Big Lottery has not yet been rolled out in our area with other local partners.
- Brushstrokes networks with local Big Lottery funded projects including the Community Connect Foundation in Smethwick.

We received support in our work club from their current employment adviser and have well advanced plans to increase working together to jointly benefit from an employment adviser for the Soho and Victoria ward, employed by Community Connect Foundation during 2016/17

- We are working with St Albans Community Association, a Big Lottery funded project, looking at jointly funding a shared volunteer co-ordinator for the Smethwick area.

- Brushstrokes received advice from the Brasshouse Centre in Smethwick, rebuilt with Big Lottery funding, on how to approach a Capital Lottery Fund application for community centres.
- We have undertaken work With a Barrow Cadbury funded project in London, the Movement Against Xenophobia, sharing information on the impact of new government legislation relating to the Right to Rent

It was feared the new requirements would lead to discrimination against migrants seeking tenancies. We shared information on what was happening on the ground in our respective areas and contributed to a national debate on human rights.

Aim- Other networking challenging poverty, inequality and discrimination

- Brushstrokes has contributed to Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) enquiries and reports including one on asylum seekers and the right to work and the future of Jobcentreplus. Our experience of working with volunteer asylum seekers was cited as good practice in the House of Lords.

CSAN visited Brushstrokes during the year on a fact finding visit looking at social action in practice and praised our work

- Locally we have worked with ACORNS Community Organisation jointly raising the issues of poor accommodation and discrimination in the private rented sector
- We are members of the Birmingham Christian Homelessness forum and Standing in the Gaps forum advocating on homelessness issues
- We have worked with Sandwell Council and Near Neighbours to promote Places of Welcome across the borough and provided information packs on welcoming isolated and marginalised asylum seekers and refugees into community spaces
- Contributed to a regional forum on the development of Places of Welcome for isolated people across Birmingham and the Black Country
- Brushstrokes is part of Smethwick Church Action Network and has received funding for cooking workshops for those on a budget and is supporting joint initiatives to tackle poverty and poor health and provide community activities including a community choir
- Links have been developed with Ashram Housing in Birmingham to provide a holiday club for families in poverty and experiencing poor health in the summer 2016

- ESOL learners have undertaken Financial Capability training through Citizens Advice supporting them with budgeting techniques and combating exploitation from companies offering loans bearing huge interest rates.
- Citizens Advice will train volunteers in Smethwick Food Banks to support people in financial crisis through our Early Help funding
- Brushstrokes has continued to support the Somali Women's group tackle the issues of FGM in their community and apply for funding to take action and enabled an excluded women's Kurdish group to set up a number of activities in the centre.

Aim- To build on networking with partners to support newcomers on the asylum and refugee pathways

- Brushstrokes has worked with key partners from Sandwell Homes, Sandwell Council and Public Health as a network of support for asylum seekers and refugees in Sandwell. The key outcome has been the evidence that Brushstrokes work has directly resulted in preventing new refugees from becoming homeless.
- Over the year we have populated the refugee and asylum pathways with new agencies to support the initiative and improve integration, health and employment and training routes. They have included: Ashley Housing Association, Spring Housing, NHS TB prevention services, STEP network funded migrant health workshops, Sandwell College employability courses and the National Careers Service support with CVs and guidance.
- Tesco FareshareFoodCloud and Greggs provide weekly donations of food to support the health and wellbeing of asylum seekers and people with no recourse to public funds in addition to the weekly resources support we receive from the St Vincent de Paul Society
- Brushstrokes has continued to be supported with funding through Creative Black Country to provide creative opportunities including launching our photography and creative writing project and setting up singing workshops during the year, bringing people together newcomers from diverse backgrounds
- Brushstrokes is a member of the Rights Equality Sandwell Forum on migrant issues and is leading on front line training on asylum torture issues and mental health awareness raising for asylum seekers and refugees. We are working with Sandwell

Council to address issues of interpreting and translating barriers and training to support refugees and asylum seekers

- Outreach links were developed this year to the Recovery College, Oldbury and Birmingham Mind for mental health support and to Freedom from Torture who trained an outreach volunteer in befriending traumatised refugees and asylum seekers.

Brushstrokes Plans for 2016/17

- To sustain the current staffing levels for four years and increase paid staff funded by the Big Lottery
- To acquire suitable space for Brushstrokes to provide advice in a confidential setting and identify suitable accommodation for the project's resources and activities. The work in 2016/17 will build on the plans already developed with support from Father Hudson's Care, Daniel Hurd and Peter Deeley in 2015. With local support from a member of the parish, we have created additional confidential space in our creche room.
- To deliver quality outcomes for all our current and future funded projects during 2016/17
- To develop further links and partnerships with organisations providing services for newcomers including the Fatima House planned support service for destitute asylum seekers in Birmingham
- To work with local partners to improve the employability prospects of refugees linked in to the development of the new hospital in Smethwick.

Brushstrokes is grateful for both the immense support and inspiration it receives from its Foundation Partners, Father Hudson's Care, The Infant Jesus Sisters and the parish of St Philip Neri to sustain the distinctiveness of our work.

We appreciate the time and commitment given to the project by the dedicated members of the Brushstrokes Management Committee throughout the year.

Brushstrokes ESOL

During the reporting period, July 2015 – June 2016, we have had more people learning ESOL at Brushstrokes than ever and it's been a busy year.

In July 2015, we ran two summer courses as an introduction to ESOL with the focus on health. These informal courses were funded through the STEP Network and 20 learners completed 16 hours learning each. Two additional STEP Network courses were run in the Autumn with a further 11 students completing an informal ESOL for health course and 8 students completing an accredited course.

In September, Councillor Barbara Price, the Mayor of Sandwell presented certificates at the awards presentation which was enjoyed by students and their families. Two students spoke eloquently on what learning English at Brushstrokes meant to them and Souad Anzid read a poem she had written about her English class.

“From year on year in Brushstrokes life is easier in England for me. Thanks!”
Michal from Poland

In the first week of September, Halesowen College informed us they were no longer able to provide community ESOL due to funding cuts. This left us having to find additional places in Brushstrokes classes. Sandwell College continue to provide one ESOL class and one Functional Skills maths class per week.

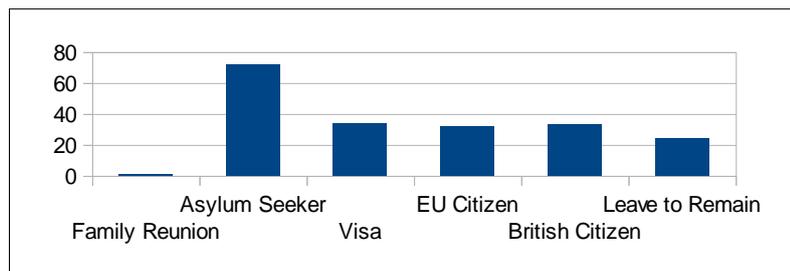
Since September 2015, we have had **200** students in learning at Brushstrokes, 60% female; 40% male. The percentage of male students has

| | | | | | |
|-------------|----|---------------|----|--------------|----|
| Afghanistan | 30 | Guinea | 6 | Romania | 7 |
| Albania | 7 | Guinea-Bissau | 1 | Russia | 2 |
| Angola | 1 | India | 1 | Saudi Arabia | 3 |
| Bangladesh | 2 | Iran | 7 | Slovakia | 1 |
| Brazil | 1 | Iraq | 26 | Somalia | 4 |
| Dagestan | 1 | Kuwait | 2 | Sri Lanka | 1 |
| DRC | 4 | Mexico | 2 | Sudan | 24 |
| Ecuador | 2 | Morocco | 1 | Syria | 9 |
| Egypt | 1 | Nigeria | 1 | Turkey | 2 |
| Eritrea | 14 | Pakistan | 16 | Yemen | 5 |
| Gambia | 1 | Poland | 7 | | |

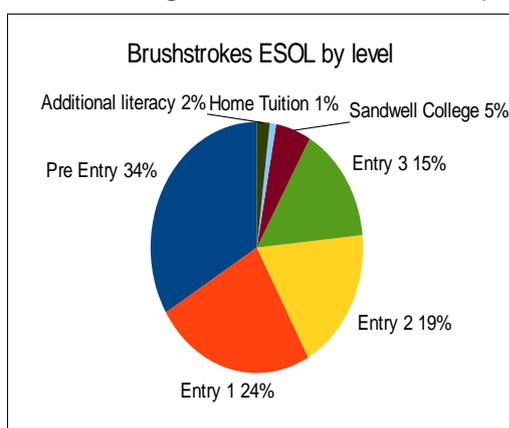
risen over the past three years due to increasing numbers of single male asylum seekers mainly from Sudan and Eritrea. Numbers in learning fluctuate, largely due to movement of people to and from the area. In June 2016, we still have **145** students in learning.

Students this year have come from 32 different countries. The largest percentages are asylum seekers.

The highest percentages of learners are at Pre Entry and Entry 1. Numbers of students in classes range from 7 in the family learning class to 16 in an Entry 1 class. Space in the centre is at a premium but we run 19 classes per week



taught by the ESOL Coordinator, 1 seasonal paid teacher, 10 volunteer teachers and 8 classroom assistants. Two volunteer teachers are doing their teacher training through Worcester University, with the ESOL Coordinator acting as workplace mentor. The need for ESOL continues to far outweigh provision, increasingly so with the cuts in adult education. We have links with volunteer led ESOL classes at Bearwood Chapel and one of our tutors runs classes on a Saturday morning in Victoria Park. We also have strong links with NAVTE (National Association of Volunteer Teachers of ESOL) and hosted a meeting for tutors from other parts of the country in May 2016.



In October and November classes took part in a faith project which culminated in visits to Holy Trinity Church and the Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Smethwick. In class students talked about what their faith means to them and looked at the similarities and differences between Islam, Sikhism and Christianity. The project produced a display which people were able to look at over the Christmas period.

November and December saw another successful creative writing project in partnership with Creative Black Country. Poet, Heather Wastie and photographer, Geoff Broadway worked with participants to create visual and written work based on a series of stimuli such as home, beauty and family. The results were published in a book and the book launch was held in April 2016. A beautiful and moving film produced by Geoff with one of the participants of the first creative writing course can be found at: www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-impact/break-your-silence.

In January and February Jacqui Nation, TB nurse from the NHS, ran TB awareness sessions in all classes. A number of people were screened and were followed up with home visits. Once again, the West Midlands Fire Service delivered their Welcome to the West Midlands training to all the classes. Also this year Janet Mylchrest from the Citizen's Advice Bureau ran a series of Financial Management workshops. These included topics from savvy shopping to budgetting on a low income. Janet also delivered a training session to staff and volunteers which included how to access CAB training materials for use in our own training/advice sessions.



In April 2016, Brushstrokes ESOL was invited to become the featured project on the ESB website *In the Spotlight – Success First*. This can be found at: <http://esbuk.org/news/in-the-spotlight-brushstrokes-community-project>.

This year, for the first time, students are able to take reading exams through ESB and 38 students will be taking taking their reading exams on 25th May. Speaking exams are on 21st and 22nd June, the number of candidates is yet to be confirmed. In February 19 students passed their Pre Entry speaking and

listening.

Family Learning continues to be very popular and we regularly have 5 mums and 6 children per session. We also provide a small literacy group as a direct result of student requests for additional help with reading and writing.

“I have learnt some useful information about being in the hospital that really help me to take my husband to the hospital.”

Data and numbers don't tell the whole story. Learning English makes a huge difference to people's lives. In 2012, a Pakistani lady (N), who had been the victim of domestic violence, was living with her two children in one room in a hostel. Her spoken English was limited, she had no schooling so had never learnt to read and write in her own language. Initially, we

provided one to one tuition in the hostel. N was anxious and lacked confidence but began learning how to hold a pen and understand the English alphabet. N was granted leave to remain in the UK and moved into her own home with the children. By now she was attending classes at Brushstrokes, her speaking was improving considerably and so was her confidence. She continued additional one to one tuition to help with her reading and writing. In 2014, she enrolled at Sandwell College. N keeps in touch with Brushstrokes and is gaining confidence all the time. She is looking for work, has passed her driving theory test and is taking her driving test next month.

In September 2015 we had a new student from Kurdistan (J), again, she had no schooling, on top of that, she had been a victim of Saddam Hussien's gas attacks in the 1980s which resulted in health problems including a poor memory. Along with several other pre literate learners, J, was struggling in class. With a restructuring of classes, and a dedicated Kurdish speaking volunteer, we are able to teach J in a smaller group where the lesson is pace is much slower with a lot of repetition to help her remember. She is now starting to identify letter sounds and read simple two letter words – at, an, on. Through her interpreter she has said how happy she is to be learning for the first time in her life. She is in her 40s.

“In the past I spoke with my husband just Farsi but now I speak with my teacher and all of my classmates in English. I feel happy.” *Banan from Afghanistan*

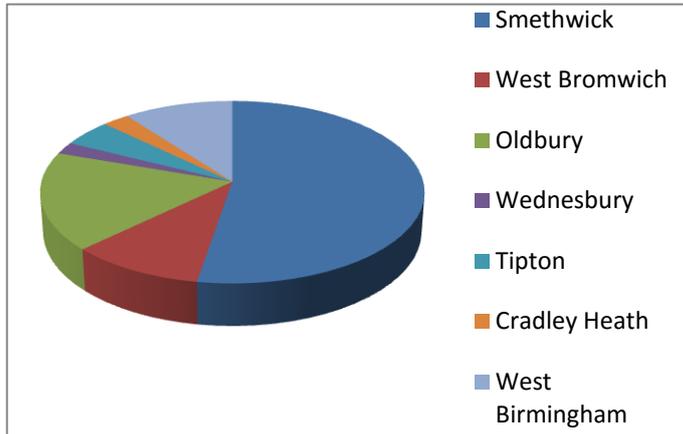


Clockwise from left: Brushstrokes creative writing book launch; Entry 1 lesson with volunteer teacher, Helen Westlake; Jadwiga, Asma and Zakra with their exam certificates in February; Family Learning class in ASDA cafe as part of International Women's Day.

Jane Alsop
ESOL Coordinator

Outreach and Homeless Pathway Report 2015/16

Since last July we have conducted 1218 home visits, which is an increase of 30% compared to the previous year. We have seen 2524 people in Sandwell and West Birmingham. Just over half, 55 percent of all visits still occur in the Smethwick area as it still has most of the NASS properties and it is still the locality we have received most referrals for. Many long term service users still request help from us.



However, there is a gradual shift towards Oldbury and West Bromwich in terms of asylum dispersals. Tipton, an area that still has relatively low numbers has become of special interest to us. Asylum seekers in the area have asked for regular home visits as they feel

very isolated due to the lack of services and support agencies nearby. One resident said: "Apart from our G4S housing officer you are the only visitors we get. Thank you for helping us."

The pie chart above shows the number of asylum seekers known to us by town.

Compared to the same time last year the number of asylum seekers in Sandwell has risen by 30 percent. We have seen a particular increase in dispersal of young men and single mothers. The largest asylum seeking community is still of Pakistani origin closely followed by Iranians, Nigerians and Eritreans (52 countries in total). Out of the 950 asylum seekers currently know to us, 98 are from West Birmingham (Edgbaston, Handsworth, Ladywood and Winson Green). However, the majority of 500 are still living in NASS accommodation in Smethwick.

Befriending Service



In 2015/16 there were 11 outreach volunteers/befrienders who gave an average of 39 hours to the department. This time last year we had 12 volunteers. However, the actual volunteer hours were lower.

Pictured on the left are Ann Gregory (left). She is a long standing outreach volunteer. On the right you can see Shaima, an asylum seeker we have befriended and who now volunteers for Brushstrokes.

Some families we meet have very complex needs and the support we provide can be very time intensive. For the first time ever we had to keep a waiting list for our befriending service that we compensated for by offering telephone befriending in 11 cases throughout the year. Since July 2015 we matched 23 one-to-one befriending relationships (21 asylum seekers, 6 local residents, 2 refugees and 4 European migrants). Some of them were short term but others are still ongoing. Recently we have also noticed an increase in demand for this service as referrals from local agencies, mainly Children's Centres, are steadily increasing and are currently averaging at one per week.

Petra referred herself to us when she asked for a home visit in September 2015. Originally she only wanted some practical support. She lives very locally in a three bedroom maisonette with her seven children; the youngest is one year old. When we first arrived at the house we noticed that there was hardly any furniture in the living room and we made a referral to Harborne Parish Lands who did provide some necessary items. Petra then disclosed to us that her husband left recently and took many household items with him. We offered her weekly home visits as she seemed very low and was glad for the offer. We also stayed in touch with the learning mentor from the school the children were attending as there was some concern about mum's well-being. She withdrew from the service in December and was very hard to contact, would not answer the phone or open the door. One day in March 2016 we met her at home and she was glad to see us. Petra said that her depression had gotten worse and requested help with debt issues and was struggling to feed her family. We are currently working on improving her general situation by providing budgeting advice, befriending and she has recently started to attend counselling sessions at Brushstrokes.

Advice delivery on Outreach

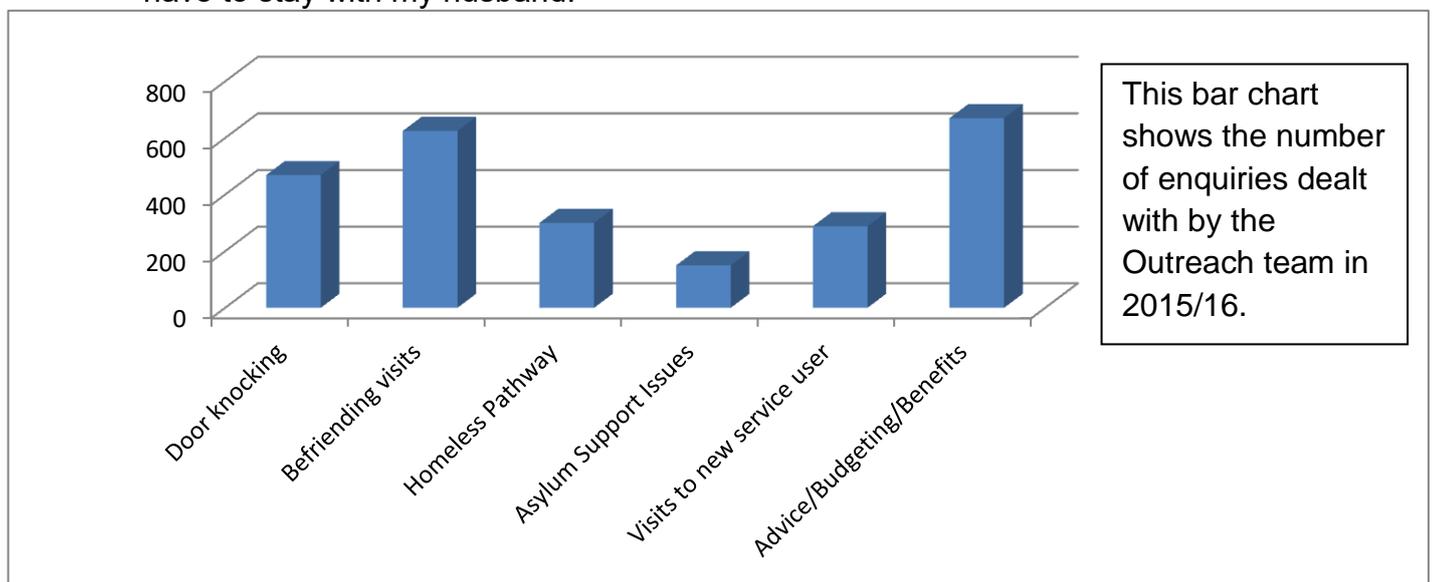
The general advice and signposting we deliver in people's homes and in the centre has been very varied in the past 12 months. We have provided budgeting support to over 80 service users and are on target to achieve our Lottery outputs of 100 by the end of August. We have noticed that there are huge variations in the uptake of this service throughout the year. For example, in September many service users came back from visiting their families and therefore failed to deal with important letters that meant their benefits being suspended, other had gotten in debt. Another surge in uptake was just after Christmas and in the winter months. We are expecting another increase in June/July when annual Tax Credit



renewals are happening. The picture on the left shows Arjana Osmani, our Outreach Support Worker (left) and Sister Breege Lavin (right). She helps with ESOL and Outreach.

We have seen a total of 299 service users through 574 appointments and drop in's at the centre. In addition to this Parvinder from the Sandwell Advice Providers Network has given more in depth advice to 68 people providing 74 appointments.

One service user we helped advice at Brushstrokes and in the home was Saidyo. She was struggling with her bills and is her husband's carer who had a stroke in 2008. The couple also has five children. We helped her to get a reduction in her water bills and assisted her in dealing with letters she could not read. She said: "Who else just comes to your home and helps you on such short notice? It's is a great help as I cannot go out much and always have to stay with my husband."



Homeless Pathway

In September 2015 we officially started work on the Homeless Pathway for new Refugees in partnership with Sandwell Council. The aim of this pathway is to support new refugees immediately upon receipt of their immigration documents to avoid homelessness and destitution caused by the gap at the end of NASS support and start-up of Welfare Benefits.

We receive daily notifications via email from G4S that tell us whose NASS support will cease when and why. Upon receipt of those we make contact with the service user and offer our support in applying for National Insurance numbers, benefits, housing and advice regarding education and employment.

Thus far we received 180 positive notifications for those who got refugee status or humanitarian protection. Out of those we have supported 164

people consisting of 26 families and 82 singles. Since the beginning of our work on the pathway we have helped by:

- 151 refugees about their housing choices
- 42 applications for National Insurance Numbers
- 114 applications for Welfare Benefits
- Obtained furniture for 31 households.

We have achieved that 50 percent of those we have helped did not need to access temporary accommodation and were able to avoid a gap in benefits in over 65 percent of cases.

Many new refugees still insist on moving into a council property as this is perceived as very secure housing. To achieve this goal some families are willing to spend time in a hostel room even if they have small children. However, after having been accommodated in such conditions for a couple of weeks 2 families did change their minds and were willing to accept private tenancies.

Another development has been that many areas in Sandwell, especially Smethwick, are getting saturated in terms of housing, school places and primary healthcare provision. This has made it very hard to obtain either type of tenure. New refugees will have to be more flexible in terms of suitable locations to move to. As a result many new refugees are leaving the borough and are moving to London and Manchester. In February 2016 the number of newcomers moving away was 33 percent, by April this had increased to 42.6 percent.

In June we are planning to meet with the steering group to plan an event where some of the homeless pathway beneficiaries will meet with representative from Sandwell Council and other organisation to talk about the benefits of this programmed and the difference it has made to them.

Sandra Tittel

Outreach Coordinator

Resources

Food:

The total number of people we have helped by giving out food since July 2015 to May 2016 is 2796. People who have come to collect food from us every week, during this period 384 were new people who have come to collect food at our centre. The breakdown of each month is shown below;

| 2015/2016 | Number of People | Number of Bags | Number of New People |
|----------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| July 2015 | 316 Without Repeat | 234 | 27 |
| August 2015 | 237 Without Repeat | 230 | 37 |
| September 2015 | 259 without repeat | 228 | 29 |
| October 2015 | 339 without repeat | 287 | 29 |
| November 2015 | 317 Without repeat | 287 | 60 |
| December 2015 | 291 without repeat | 271 | 54 |
| January 2016 | 279 without repeat | 258 | 51 |
| February 2016 | 235 without repeat | 236 | 48 |
| March 2016 | 238 without repeat | 243 | 25 |
| April 2016 | 285 without repeat | 258 | 24 |
| Total | 2796 | 2304 | 384 |

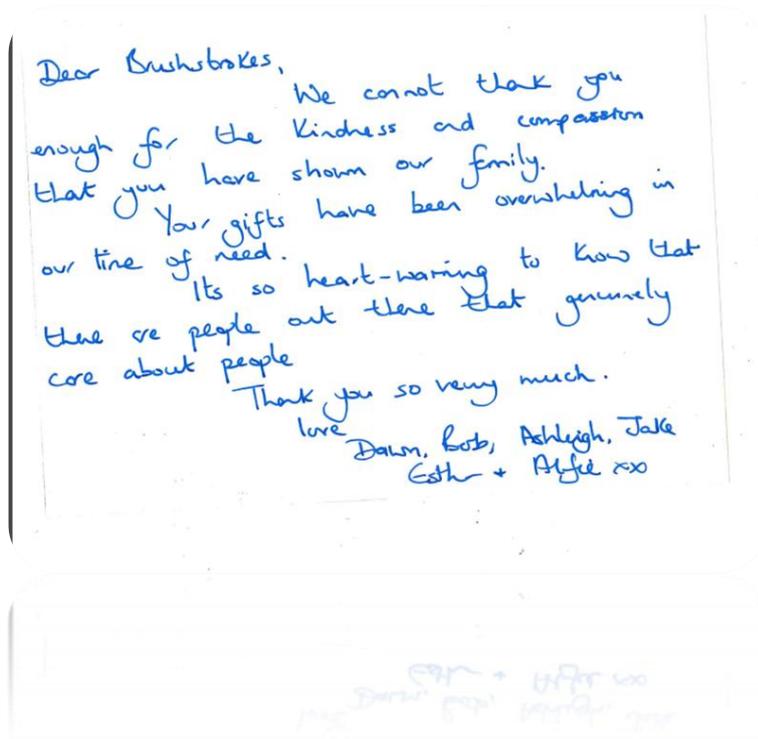


In May 2016 there were 386 people repeated that came for food and we have given out 161 bags. 12 of those were new people who have been registered with us for food.



The diagram on the left shows a chart of the growth in the number of people

who have come to collect food at Brushstrokes.



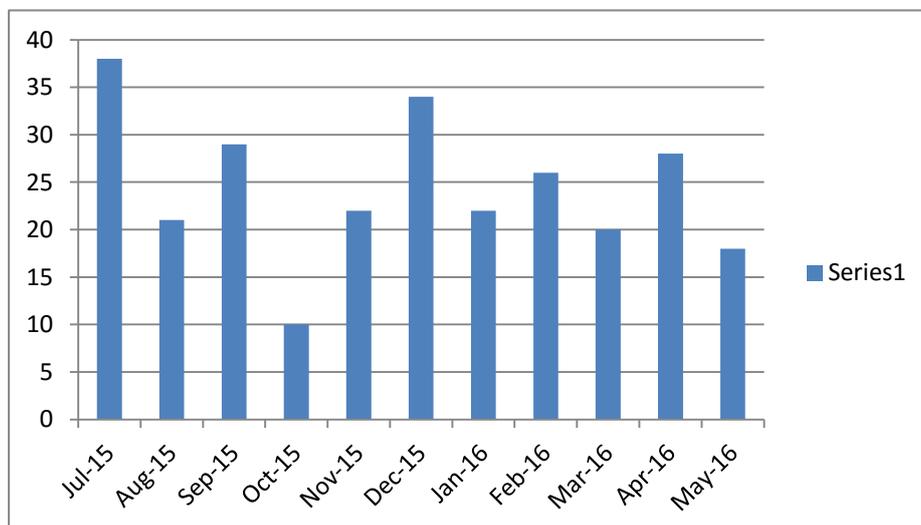
This card shows how some of our service users feel about our help. It gives Brushstrokes courage to continue helping people in desperate need.

Food Voucher:

The total people that Brushstrokes have helped with food vouchers since July 2015 - May 2016 is 168 from 645 people registered within July 2015 – May 2016.

The highest number of food vouchers we have given out was in July 2015 and December 2015. This was due to benefit delays and low income.

This bar chart shows the amount of food vouchers that has been given out during those months.

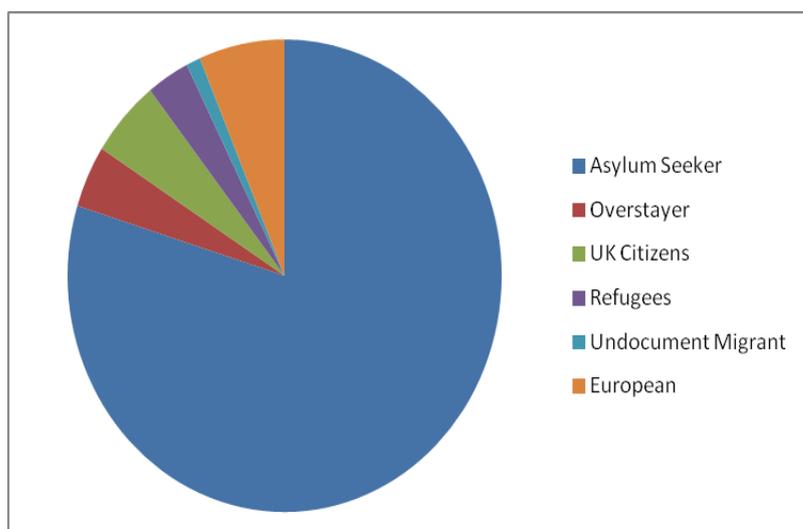


Resources:

Non –food

From 645 people registered from July 2015 to May 2016 there were a total of 1091(repeat) people who required clothes and other resources. Brushstrokes have helped those people who were in desperate need of clothes to vulnerable families.

| | People | Clothes | Household Essentials | Baby Equipment | Baby Pack | Toys |
|----------------|-------------|------------|----------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------|
| July 2015 | 120 | 40 | 17 | 13 | 6 | 4 |
| August 2015 | 115 | 30 | 16 | 20 | 4 | 3 |
| September 2015 | 37 | 51 | 25 | 17 | 9 | 6 |
| October 2015 | 112 | 42 | 18 | 16 | 13 | 11 |
| November 2015 | 126 | 52 | 28 | 15 | 9 | 6 |
| December 2015 | 67 | 27 | 19 | 10 | 6 | 9 |
| January 2016 | 81 | 32 | 9 | 13 | 2 | 7 |
| February 2016 | 115 | 45 | 22 | 18 | 5 | 5 |
| March 2016 | 81 | 25 | 16 | 14 | 1 | 7 |
| April 2016 | 111 | 42 | 19 | 11 | 2 | 4 |
| May 2016 | 126 | 40 | 21 | 18 | 1 | 17 |
| Total: | 1091 | 426 | 210 | 164 | 58+40=98 | 79 |



This pie chart shows that there have been mostly asylum seekers who Brushstrokes has helped with resources for clothes and other essentials.

268 toys were delivered to children in December 2015 as part of our annual Christmas Party distribution. In addition we gave out toys to another 25 children during those months.

The table below shows the breakdown of the toys we have given out during that period.

Toys

| Age | Male | Female |
|---------------|------------|------------|
| 1 | 21 | 29 |
| 2 | 11 | 19 |
| 3 | 18 | 12 |
| 4 | 6 | 11 |
| 5 | 11 | 8 |
| 6 | 18 | 14 |
| 7 | 16 | 7 |
| 8 | 11 | 14 |
| 9 | 8 | 1 |
| 10 | 5 | 3 |
| 11 | 3 | 7 |
| 12 | 1 | 4 |
| 13 | 4 | 8 |
| 14 | 4 | 3 |
| 15 | 8 | 4 |
| Total: | 124 | 144 |

Below there is the Launch of Tesco FareshareFoodcloud and some of their donations.



Loreta Braha - Monitoring Assistant

Work Club

Brushstrokes work club takes place every Wednesday from 3pm – 5pm. We receive no funding for work club and work in partnership with the National Careers Service. Dalveer Kaur, careers advisor from NCS, helps people prepare and update CVs and supports them to plan their job search. We are also grateful to Gaganpreet Kaur Basra, Volunteer Coordinator with Action for Children, for attending work club and helping with job search and applications.

Weekly attendance at work club ranges from 5 to 17 and with only 8 computers this can sometimes be a challenge!

The majority of people who attend need a lot of help using the computer to search and apply for work. Often, people have poor English and literacy with little or no IT skills so need a great deal of one to one support to navigate the system to search for work. People are often worried and anxious that if they don't apply for the required number of jobs they will have their benefit suspended.

Services offered through work club include:

- Creating and updating CVs
- Creating email accounts
- Registering for, and teaching people how to use, Universal Jobmatch
- Registering for online recruitment agencies
- Assisting with phone enquiries and applications
- Online job search and application
- Filling in application forms
- Supporting people to use a computer to look for work and how to attach and send a CV via email
- Cover letters and emails

We are also part of the WorkWise Online Travel Assistance Programme which is sponsored by Centro. We are able to provide bus passes for people to attend interviews and can apply for travel assistance for people who get a job and need help travelling to and from work until they receive their first wage.

“Brushstrokes job club is more than helpful. You helped me do my CV. Normally I come for job search and you help me using the computer. You help me fill in application forms for jobs and my security card and for my driving theory test. I have found work as a security guard through job club.”

Siraj



Volunteer Coordinator Annual Report 2016

It has been a very busy year for volunteering at Brushstrokes. With the development of links with local agencies, such as the Sandwell Volunteer Centre, our local library, attending school assemblies and making volunteer appeals at the 'Soho and Victoria In The Know Road Shows' we have generated many enquiries. One of the other main sources for volunteers are from our own services users.

Smethwick Community Awards 2016

Two of our volunteers, Mahtaj Shirazi and Hawar Amin were nominated for their volunteer efforts within the local community of Smethwick. Hawar is a volunteer who helps with office and reception duties and has been supported by Brushstrokes previously. Hawar not only provides a warm welcome to visitors and responds to everyone needing help in a kind and caring way but, recognising that there are a number of ladies from Kurdistan, has also been instrumental in setting up a Kurdish women's group. In recognition of her efforts Hawar was a finalist in the recent Smethwick Community Awards 2016 and received a trophy and a certificate.



“Volunteering at Brushstrokes has helped with my confidence and English and I am now looking forward to applying for work.” (Hawar Amin)



Volunteer General Meeting

Team meetings for volunteers have occurred for those involved with ESOL, outreach, resources and catering. In addition to these team meetings we have had a general volunteer meeting which was a great opportunity for volunteers to meet others who they would never normally see. This was followed by a buffet lunch.

Training

Through volunteer reviews and development of services training needs have been identified. Ten of our staff and volunteers have successfully completed their training

in **Level 2 Food Safety in Catering**. Other volunteers and staff have completed a six week Mentoring and Befriending course while others have also completed training days in 'Mental Health First Aid Training' and 'Financial Skills Training'.

Appeals: Over the past year we have had excellent responses to our various appeals. These include food produce from a variety of local schools that collected parcels over the Easter and Harvest periods. Toy appeals for our Christmas party and general appeals for clothing and baby stuffs from a number of schools, churches and community groups. We have also developed links with Greggs, Tesco and Fareshare.



Activities: Nearly all the activities at Brushstrokes require volunteers and it was lovely to show our appreciation for all their support by holding a volunteer Christmas



Party.



Over the past year volunteers, staff and students have also been involved with organising a **Summer Migrant Health Day**, summer activities throughout the month of August, a **Trip to**



Llandudno and our main **Christmas party**.

Student and work Placements

We welcomed students and work placements from a number of organisations. These include:

- ARCHBISHOP ILSLEY CATHOLIC SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM
- St. Mary's College Oscott
- Sandwell College
- Wolverhampton University
- Oldbury Academy
- University of Birmingham

Stuart Bathurst Catholic High School
George Salter Academy.
Bristnall Hall Academy

"I have learnt a lot over the months...I have had an amazing experience...I have had a wonderful journey. Thank you for having me." Student from George Salter Academy

Achievements:

Big Lottery Fund. (BLF) *To provide support for up to 30 volunteers – this will include recruiting new volunteers, training and supervising existing volunteers. We presently have thirty four (34) active volunteers and are pleased to confirm that we have exceeded the BLF outcomes. All are supervised, are having regular meetings and training days have been organised.*

Overall Impact: Since beginning our volunteer registers, in January 2016, for the past five months we have benefitted from receiving over one thousand and sixty seven hours (1067) hours of volunteering assistance done in the centre. In addition to these hours we have also benefitted from over two hundred and sixty (260) hours of student involvement. Accounting for holiday closures this equates to an average of over fifty six (56) volunteering hours per week and thirteen (13) hours per week student involvement.

Fundraising: Volunteers are also involved in many fundraising activities. Every week there are donations regarding the food and volunteers will also put out a stall at our Friday Lunch. Monies are raised through toy sales, tombola stalls and raffles. Any unusable items of clothing and / or household goods do not go to waste as they are sorted and recycled for funds. Over the past year through of stalls, donations and recycling volunteers and staff have managed to raise over two thousand, two hundred pounds. (£2200) We also have volunteers who raise funds from their own events. **Pictured:** Mary Tomlinson presenting Teresa with a cheque for donations received at her 50th wedding anniversary celebrations.



Mary is also planning to raise funds from a local '**Summertime Celebration**' concert in June 2016.

Brushstrokes activities during the year and that included workshops, receiving donations, student placement, and interfaith meeting.



Brushstrokes Café
A Place Of Welcome

Over the past year our Community Café has continued to be a place of welcome for all. Brushstrokes Café offers a warm welcome, friendly conversation and a free lunch. This offers an opportunity for those who are isolated to come out and make new friends and there has been an excellent mix of people from service users and the local community. This lunch also offers opportunities for officers from Sandwell Housing to informally chat to people who may have issues with their accommodation.



Brushstrokes
Café



The Café has also received support from Victoria Park Academy, Primary School, where the children have completed a project called “Making a Difference”. This has involved them making their own soup and bread so that they can then donate their efforts to our

café thereby “**making a difference**” to the people Brushstrokes help. We were able to offer their soup and bread as a lovely starter.



Pictured: Teresa receiving soup and bread rolls made by the children from Victoria Park Academy

The Café is held every Friday and is open from 12 till 2pm. The Place Of welcome sign is placed outside the doors informing all that they are welcome. We have welcomed many people over the year and have served nearly seven hundred meals. We have been a place of welcome not only to people from the local community but also people from around the world and have recorded people from Pakistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Kenya, Albania, Eritrea and India.

“The Café is an ideal place for my family”. (Helen)

“Beautiful and friendly service and people. My first time but felt very welcomed”. (Visitor)

Café Events:

The Café also presents opportunities for other special events where we can involve more people in the community. These have included an Inter Faith lunch, Christmas Party and more recently a “Big Lunch”.

The inter faith lunch was attended by nearly sixty people from different faiths and was a great opportunity to sample and share food. The Christmas party attracted over eighty people and we were able to give out food and presents to those families who would otherwise not receive any.



Pictured: Somali woman’s group sharing their food.

The “Big Lunch” is a national initiative to bring local communities together and celebrate in a street party style party.



Training:

Food from the Café must be prepared and cooked safely. Staff and volunteers have also been trained in Food Safety Level 2. The Big Lunch was a great opportunity to present volunteers and staff who have successfully completed their training in Food Safety.



Pictured: Teresa presenting certificates to Mimoza, Mahtaj, Fatuma and Halima



Housing Report 2015/16
Migrant Voice
Migrant Housing Solutions
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC)

Current Project Outcomes:

- We have supported **41** eligible families with **115** beneficiaries in total. 26 are from EU migrant backgrounds, 16 are Refugees and 2 are irregular migrants. Total referrals to the project thus far: Outreach-19, Self-referrals 16, GP surgery 2, Sandwell Private Rented Sector (PRS)
- During the course of the project we have supported: 30 families into accommodation tenants; 3 Council accommodation families; 2 homeless families ,6 hostel families
- Total referrals made by Brushstrokes: 70 mainly to Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Birmingham City Council, Citizens Advice, Housing Associations, ESOL, Job Centers, Brushstrokes Resources and food banks
- We have **26** closed cases for the following reasons:
 - 9 extremely difficult tenants to contact and support due to chaotic lifestyles
 - 2 tenants moved in to council housing and able to manage their tenancy fully without any support
 - 6 PRS tenants are generally able to manage their tenancies only require bi-monthly follow ups
 - 8 are waiting for council property requiring one person moving out of the region.
 - 1 person relocated outside the West Midlands

Pre - tenancy support:

We have provided tenancy support to all 115 beneficiaries. The amount and depth of help we offer differs on a case by case basis. In general EU residents require more Welfare Rights and Employment support whereas new refugees need additional emotional support. We encourage all of our prospective tenants to use the new Homestamp app as it is a great tool to discover whether a property is suitable for them.

Post tenancy support:

Those who are settled in the PRS still require help and support during their tenancies especially with housing and other welfare benefits and form filling. PRS tenants also require help with energy efficiency and support with managing budgets. Some of the cases need support with resolving problems with landlords like repairs or rent in arrears. Sadly we have noticed an increase in illegal evictions where landlords are changing locks or threaten and harass tenants. We work closely with Sandwell Council and Birmingham City Council to tackle these issues.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Case study: Sonia, single mother of two came to Brushstrokes to ask for help with landlord who wanted to evict her out from house within 30 days. She said: “I just asked him to do some repairs which he promised to do year ago. Now he wants me to move out ASAP. I’m scared, where can I go with my two daughters?” The landlord was constantly harassing Sonia and her family, even forced entry to the property 3 times, took keys from Sonia’s daughter and switched off the boiler so family was without heating and hot water. He said: “You need to go; police will come and arrest you”. After many reports to Local Council and Police Sonia had to follow advice to stay at the property and brushstrokes informed the council. One day she came home and noticed that the locks had been changed. She said: “I didn't know what to do; all my stuff was in house and the landlord do not answer my calls”. Further to our advice Sonia made a homeless application and now she is staying in a hostel waiting for council accommodation while the Local Authority is dealing with the illegal eviction. Sonia says: “The entire situation cost me a lot of stress and caused depression, I was so scared of him but now I know everything will be better “.

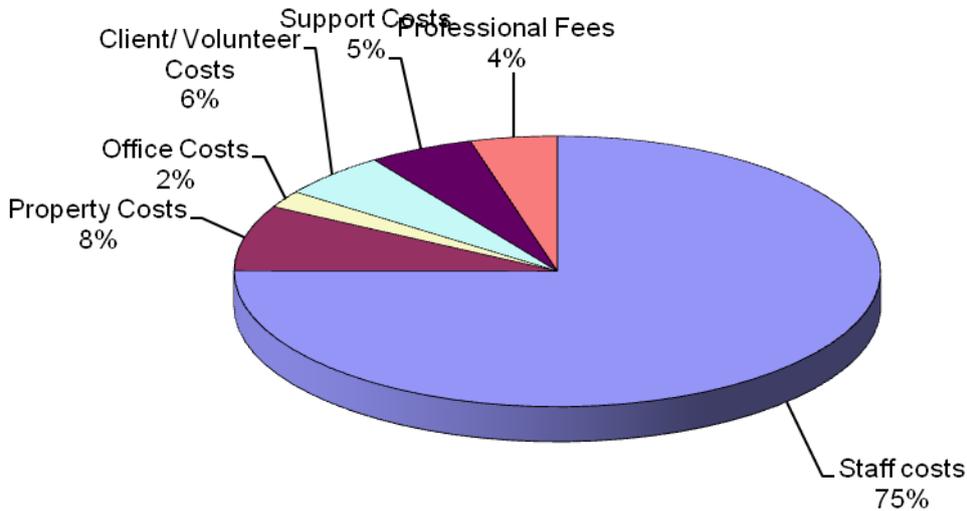
Evaluations done with our beneficiaries are generally very positive and all appreciate our flexibility and the fact they can always come to us if they need any help without an appointment if needed.

Below we have a picture of Dreda Tonkin visiting people in their home and Arjana Osmani who will be working with staff on Outreach and also supporting people with housing issues.



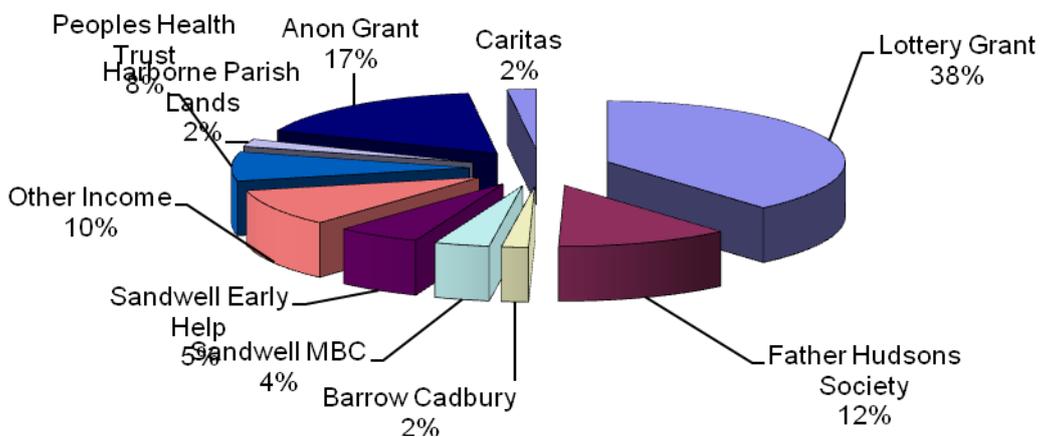
Brushstrokes Expenditure for the Year Ended 31st March 2016.

Total £191,264.00



Brushstrokes Income for the Year Ended 31st March 2016

Total £255,345.00



Brushstrokes Funding 2015/16

Brushstroke has received financial support during the year from:

The Big Lottery Fund- Reaching Communities Project Funding
Sandwell Consortium STEP Network- Health activities
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough - Refugee Homelessness Prevention Pathway
Peoples Health Trust – Cape Hill Cooking Champions Project
Sandwell Advice Network – Energy Efficiency advice
Harborne Parish Lands- Resources Assistant post (part)
Father Hudson’s Society – staffing and core services support
Infant Jesus Sisters
Barrow Cadbury Trust- Migrant Private Rented Sector Housing Support project
The Challenge- sponsored challenge funding
Creative Black Country- creative activities
Marbles Homemakers- recycling
Novo Nordisk
Church Urban Fund Near Neighbours
Early Help Innovation Fund SMBC
CARITAS (AOB)
Charlotte Marshall Fund

Donations from:

Parishes, religious orders, schools and organisations within the Archdiocese of Birmingham
Local foodbanks in Sandwell and the Black Country
ASDA Cape Hill
Greggs Foundation
Warburtons and Tesco FareshareFoodcould
St Vincent De Paul Society