



The Springfield Project

Impact Report

empower enable enrich

Photo credit: © Rachel Gillies for Art Works

2021-22

Introduction

from the Chief Executive Officer

The past year has seen a gradual return to relative normality across the Project. It has been a real pleasure to welcome greater numbers back into the Centre and to be able to think about community-wide events again.

How we have missed this! Our staff have continued to give their all to support our children and families and to ensure that every request for support is responded to. We have welcomed back our volunteers who add so much to what we are able to achieve. I am deeply grateful to all our staff and volunteers for their effort and commitment. This year saw the launch of the Springfield Food Pantry, a new and exciting way for us to support families experiencing financial challenges by providing access to reduced cost food.

This year we had our first 'artist in residence' which helped to further develop and embed our strategic use of the arts across the Project. This included the commissioning of a new opera written with and for our children, which explored the topic of friendship and difference. Children are never too young to learn about how we have 'more in common than that which divides us'. In the coming year we will further develop

our activities for children and young people through our Child Friendly Neighbourhood strategy and also embrace the opportunities presented by the Commonwealth Games 2022. I am very much looking forward to another year of opportunities to empower, enable and enrich the Springfield community.

Stobbins



A Word From The Chair

Tim Boyes, on behalf of the Trustees

There is something about celebrity culture that fits with a world that focuses on heroes (and villains)! Along with this is the idea that “institutions” are slow, dull, impersonal and flawed.

I believe this report suggests we should reverse such lazy thinking! The evidence here points not to a single hero but rather to a wonderful team of people themselves benefitting from the solid foundations laid by lots of other less visible people who have gone before. Springfield benefits from the support of the Church, from volunteer trustees. It relies on the team of trustees and benefits from funders, and on partners like those in Spurgeons and Barnardo's pulling in the same direction. We are grateful to visiting artists and to all who participate as givers and receivers.

So thank you to everyone at our base in The Springfield Centre connected to St Christopher's Church, and at Park Road Nursery and our other outreach venues. Despite economic challenges and the long tail of the pandemic the power of love and community are celebrated here! Love wins.



The evidence here points not to a single hero but rather to a wonderful team of people themselves benefitting from the solid foundations laid by lots of other less visible people who have gone before.

Who We Are

The Springfield Project is a charity based in Sparkhill, Birmingham. Born out of St Christopher's Church, we believe that every child, young person, parent and adult in our community has the right to reach their full potential in life. Unfortunately, deprivation, social inequality and a lack of local provision often create significant barriers to achieving that potential, and many families in Sparkhill face hardship and isolation.

That is why we run a programme of community activities which empower, enable and enrich the lives of hundreds of local children, young people and families. At our base in The Springfield Centre connected to St Christopher's Church, and at Park Road Nursery and our other outreach venues, we provide a range of educational, welfare, and recreation services for local children and families to combat poverty and help people to lead happy and healthy lives.

This is how we fulfil our mission to show God's love in our community.

“I have come in order that you might have life, and have it to the full”

John 10:10

Our Values

We embrace our values and behaviours in our work, as well as in our professional relationships with colleagues, partners and those who use our services. We do this by always:



Being welcoming and inclusive



Listening



Serving



Being professional



Growing

“They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”

Jeremiah 17:8



Overview of Our Services

Nurseries

Mini Springers and Park Road Nursery are Ofsted registered nurseries which offer sessional places for children in receipt of the Early Educational Entitlement grants. This includes all three- and four-year-olds and eligible two-year-olds. Both are inclusive nurseries and provide places for children with special educational needs. The majority of children are grant funded and receive 15 hours in total each week.



Springfield Children's Centre

Delivering Early Years Health and Wellbeing for children aged 0-5 in Birmingham, Springfield Children's Centre is part of Birmingham Forward Steps (BFS), a pioneering Early Years, Health and Wellbeing initiative for all Birmingham children aged 0-5 and their families. It brings together health visiting and children's centre services, so that families can access the help they need from pregnancy until their child starts school.



Seedlings

Seedlings is a stay and play group aimed at 0-4 year-olds and their parents/carers. It is held three times a week on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays in St Christopher's Church and it is open to all. Seedlings is often the first experience of a shared play environment, and the child's first step towards being ready for school or nursery.

Community Services

Our Community Services comprise a range of free activities for adults living in our community which aim to bring improve mental health and wellbeing by reducing loneliness and isolation amongst adults in the Sparkhill community. These include a crafting group, a cooking group, Springfield Food Pantry and our flagship social group, Place of Welcome.

Holiday Playschemes

Since 2018 we have been running regular holiday playschemes for children aged 5-11 from the local community of Sparkhill. We have two playscheme sites: one at St Christopher's Church and one at Park Road Nursery. The children benefit from a multitude of active and creative play, with access to our garden, forest school, and lots of time outdoors.

Volunteering

We have a strong track record of working with volunteers at The Springfield Project. They bring enormous value to our team through their wealth of skills and talents, their energy and enthusiasm and the hard work they contribute by volunteering their time. We are proud to see the ways they gain and develop from their time volunteering for us, many going on into work or training.

Highlights of The Year

Arts Projects

This year we were thrilled to be able to deliver arts activities at The Springfield Project again.

Taking part in arts activities is proven to contribute enormously to many aspects of child development, as well as giving opportunities for self-expression and social interaction, and bringing joy to the whole family. Our commitment to arts and creativity in every aspect of our work helps us fulfil The Springfield Project's objectives of "empowering, enabling and enriching" the lives of the people of Springfield.

empower

Photo credit: © Rachel Gillies for Art Works

able enrich

Sounds of Play

We continued to lead the Birmingham Early Years Music consortium, which brings together partners from across the Early Years sector with professional music organisations.

This has included leading the Sounds of Play Project which ended in March 2022. This was a Youth Music funded project bringing the Early Years and Music workforces together to learn from each other, to develop high quality Early Years Music practice across the city and to deliver music activities to children under 5 and their families. We are enormously proud of this project and are leading the Consortium in its application for funding for a second phase.

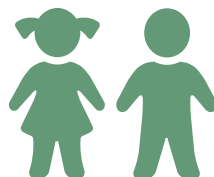


**YOUTH
MUSIC**



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Over the two years of the Sounds of Play project across Birmingham:



816

children and young people
took part in music making activities



88

group sessions for children and
families were delivered



59

professional
development sessions
for the workforce
were held

449

staff or volunteers
(EY and Music) took
part in professional
development sessions

“

The music workshops I have completed with Sounds of Play have been the most beneficial training I have received due to how practical they were. Knowing how music can help with learning and the different pathways it uses has shown me there is more to music in the early years than just learning colour or numbers. Music helps in all aspects of the EYFS.”



“

Having musicians into our sessions – the way children react, it was just wonderful. The parents were really pleased with it too.”



Artist in Residence

Zoë Challenor



This year we welcomed Zoë Challenor as our first 'artist in residence'.

Zoë is co-founder and director of B'Opera and has been a valued partner of The Springfield Project over recent years, performing at our Creative Families Festivals and being part of the Sounds of Play Early Years Music Project. Zoë and The Springfield Project have a shared passion for increasing access to the arts for our children, families and the wider community. We value the role that the arts can play in child development, emotional wellbeing, self-expression, confidence, family relationships and social cohesion. This exciting development has allowed us to develop this work further and bring some musical joy to everyone at The Springfield Project. Zoë has had a regular presence in both of our nurseries, in the Seedlings stay and play group and in Children's Centre groups. She has also joined us for community events and at staff away days, bringing music and creativity to the whole organisation.

enrich

Hello Bird, Hello Fish



Photo credit: © Rachel Gillies for Art Works

In partnership with ArtWorks Hall Green and B'Opera, and with support from Birmingham City Council's Next Generation arts funding, the foundations of a children's opera production were established.

In the autumn of 2021 Zoë from B'Opera worked with children and parents in our nurseries and our Children's Centre. Using music and song Zoë worked with children, parents and staff to explore ideas of friendship and difference and developed the story of the piece, around a bird and a fish – different in so many ways, but also the same.

In an amazingly short time Zoë and her B'Opera colleagues took these rich and moving contributions and turned them in to a complete opera: Hello Bird, Hello Fish. In February 2022 the work was performed for the first time to a specially invited audience made up of children and parents who had contributed to the creation of the work. What a powerful and moving experience for all involved.

The story of lost bird and her attempts to make friends and find some-where to belong was performed through a combination of opera, classical music, and specially composed pieces, including kazoos, beatboxing bees and a beautiful lullaby sung in Urdu. I know I wasn't the only one with tears in my eyes when lost bird and noisy fish recognised their connection and, using Makaton, expressed their friendship.

Children and parents shared that they had been able to recognise their contribution to the opera. Many adults, including parents and staff members, shared their own sense of connection with the story and spoke of times in their lives when they felt that they did not belong, they felt different, and they did not know how to reach out to create friendships and break down barriers. For many this was a moving experience which connected them to their own childhoods. Like lost bird and noisy fish, they may have found ways to connect with others and build friendships despite differences, learning that there is always some common ground on which to build.

This is what The Springfield Project is about. It is a very special place where children and adults of different backgrounds, beliefs and cultures come together to find common ground and to develop and grow as individuals and as a community. Whether through opera, bhangra, visual arts or other creative media, we come together as people who want to live and work together and want to empower, enable and enrich the lives of our children.



Hello Bird, Hello Fish illustrator: Emily Idowu



Food Pantry

In May 2021 we launched a community food pantry in our Park Road site in Sparkhill. The Food Pantry is part of the “Your Local Pantry” franchise. The Pantry is operated as a membership scheme designed to help people make their money go further.

Membership is open to anyone within the local neighbourhood, with no requirement to be referred by a professional or other third party, and they can remain members for as long as they wish. Members pay a weekly subscription fee of £4 and then select their choice of 10-12 items worth approximately £15. The pantry receives donations of surplus food from organisations such as FareShare, Let's Feed Brum and local grocery stores. Subscription fees plus donations and additional funds raised go towards running costs and buying more stock, especially toiletries and items not included in FareShare donations.

Unlike a food bank, the Pantry provides regular, ongoing support to people on a low income, not just those in crisis. It is a more sustainable option than a foodbank, maintaining the dignity of its users and maximising the use of food which would otherwise go to waste. The Pantry offers fresh and

nutritious food at affordable prices, encouraging members to improve their basic diet and try new things. By helping people with their food costs, they are better able to manage other debts and outgoings, working to prevent them from reaching crisis point.

The pantry is run by volunteers recruited from within the local community, and overseen by a member of staff. The model is local and community-led, with members and volunteers directly involved in running the Pantry, empowering themselves and their local communities, placing them at the heart of decision-making about food provision and choices.

Initially operating out of Park Road Nursery, and running twice weekly, the Pantry saw 91 people attend in its first three months. We moved premises on the 19 July due to changes in circumstances at Park Road, and went from opening it twice weekly to once a week at St Edmunds Church, Tyseley just a short distance away. We quickly saw an increase in attendances, and many new registrations.

Since moving to its new venue at St Edmund's Church, the Pantry has gone from strength to strength. Due to a strong volunteer presence the group has been able to continue running continuously during school holidays.

There was a total of **776 attendances** at the Springfield Food Pantry over the course of the year.



Hall Green
Communities



Key Numbers

Springfield Children's Centre

Total overall parents and children who were seen and benefitted from the Children's centre **between Apr 21 – Mar 22** were **2421 (Adults 1,145 and Children 1,276)**, this is a **74% increase** in the overall seen compared to the previous year.



Springfield Children's Centre

To support infants being breastfed at birth and ensure sustained engagement at 6-8 weeks

1,092
203

parents receiving targeted and 1 to 1
breastfeeding support/advice and

mothers were supported in Breastfeeding
Lounges/groups.



Some comments from parents:

I have been able to breastfeed successfully thanks to Hasmita. The breastfeeding lounges have been helpful too, speaking to other people and also getting advice."

Thanks for help I have sustained breastfeeding my baby is exclusively breastfeeding she is 14 months"

95



parents attended Domestic Violence Programme (Freedom Programme) and a package of Family support intervention was put in place. Feedback from the women has shown that women feel better about themselves, after completing the programme.

593



mothers attended and benefited from the Antenatal Group and Antenatal advice given

“I explained to my husband about the stages of birth which helped me and my husband during labour pain”.

64



parents attended an evidence-based parenting programme (Promoting Happier Parenting). Majority of the parents who attended the course stated in the pre and post questionnaires that the programme gave them more confidence in their parenting.

“Before attending the sessions, I was angrier and always frustrated, but now I am able to control my children and they are behaving well and screaming less; and as a parent I feel a lot more patient and confident”

204



parents attended basic skills courses or received employment & training support

553



parents and children received Oral Health Advice and Training and have increased knowledge and understanding of oral hygiene. Some of the comments received from parents:



617



parents actively engaged in Parental Emotional Wellbeing Support Group

“I was not aware that children’s teeth should be brushed once their first tooth erupts, after the oral health session, I gained this knowledge and I am so thankful for it.”

Springfield Children's Centre continued



1,268

parents and children attended targeted stay & plays and were supported in various areas such as baby matters, special needs, school readiness, language through play activity and support

- Children's Centres have made a significant improvement to the percentage of children who receive a 2-2.5-year review, after the implementation of integrated visits. The citywide target was **67%**, but **82%** of the children successfully received their reviews in Hall Green District.
- Family Support Team has worked closely with GreenSquare Accord to support families wanting to apply for the Household Support Fund. **800** applications were submitted by families in the Hall Green District as at March 2022.
- We delivered **6** HENRY programmes (Health, Exercise, Nutrition for The Really Young) with **230** participants including parents and children benefitting from them. It is a programme developed to help give parents their babies and young children a healthy start in life and encourage the whole family to adopt a healthier lifestyle. **100%** of parents that completed the questionnaires stated the programme had increased their confidence. Participants' comments emphasise how much they enjoyed the programme and how it supported them to make a wide range of positive changes to their families' lifestyle.
- The Children's Centre received **165** referrals for families and children requiring early intervention and family support from various agencies such as The Children's Trust, midwives, health visitors, schools and nurseries. All referrals were allocated family support workers and early help assessments were undertaken.

Nurseries

This year we have welcomed **85 children** to Mini Springers Nursery and **66 children** to Park Road Nursery.

Park Road Parent Quotes:

“Park Road Nursery in my opinion is a fresh, modern and welcoming setting. With plenty for the children to enjoy and learn”

“Since attending Park Road Nursery my child has grown in confidence, and her language has improved”

Mini Springers quotes from outside agencies:

“Amazing translating skills and showing how well you know the children”

“Staff are so friendly and helpful – only want to attend here for placement”



Case Study



Child Z first started Mini Springers during the pandemic, attending five mornings a week. He lacked confidence and understood very little English. Key workers observed and wrote up a play plan for him which targeted his specific needs. One-to-one activities and having a key person who spoke Child Z's home language made it easier for him to understand, and we referred him for speech and language support.

Thanks to some additional funding, key workers were able to visit Child Z at home and discuss his needs with his mum. We referred Child Z's mum to join English classes which increased her confidence and helped Child Z too. We were able to support Child Z's mum with his school application.

With support from the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, the speech and language therapist, the health visitor and the family support team, Child Z settled really well at Mini Springers. He became more confident and his communication skills developed. He became actively engaged in his learning and showed willingness to have a go at new activities.



Thank you for signposting me to ESOL classes and supporting me in my child's school application. I'm very happy".

Seedlings

Number of families in attendance on each day during the year 2021-22:



Each parent/carer brings at least one child with them, there are many that bring two or more.

"The highlight of our week is attending Seedlings. It is very well organised with a range of activities which promote my child's development. He has become so much more confident and the staff are absolutely lovely! I don't know who enjoys it more me or my child!"



Case Study

Mum H came to Seedlings feeling anxious about her son. Child S found it hard to interact with others in social situations. He struggled to follow simple boundaries and lacked awareness of his social surroundings and his own safety.

After attending Seedlings on a regular basis Child S was calmer and played happily on the climbing frame for long periods, enjoying the familiar routine. Mum H also seemed more at ease and grew in confidence when socialising with other parents. We were able to refer Child S to the SENCO for some additional support.

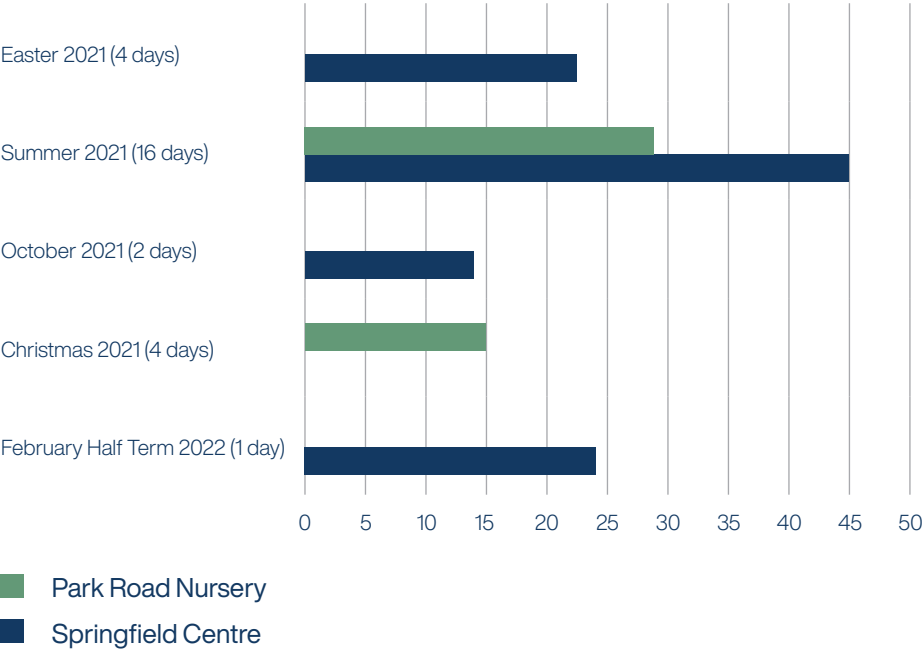


Due to the family attending Seedlings, I was able to get to know mum and Child S a little bit before he started Park Road Nursery so this enabled me to apply for Inclusion Support in Early Years Funding (ISEY) for him before he started nursery and to liaise with professionals involved.

Helen Cremins (inclusion lead – working with Seedlings due to funding from Birmingham’s Early Years Developing Local Provision project)

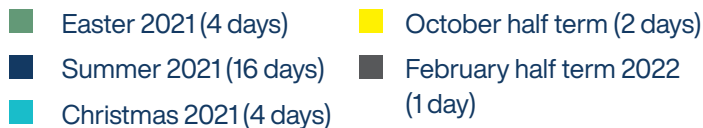
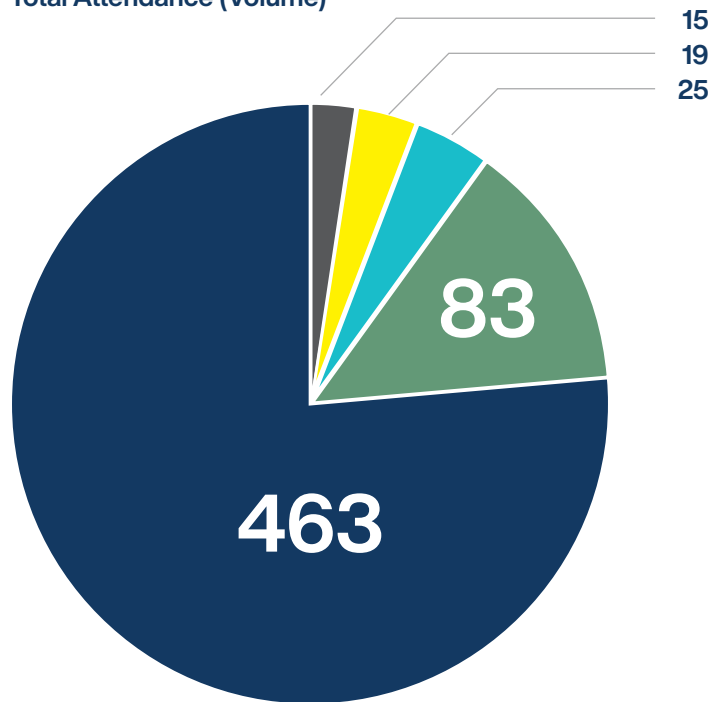
Playschemes

Over the year 2021-22, there were **181** individual attendances at playschemes as follows:



I just wanted to say that the holiday scheme helped us as a family so much and I appreciated all the time that K spent there. This allowed me to be able to manage my son at home. I was so grateful for K having some fun as every holiday she ends up being stuck at home. The activities were really well organised as well as the trips planned for the children.”

Total Attendance (Volume)



Case Study

Child F is 8 years old and has communication and interaction difficulties. She was a little shy at first, showing interest but not knowing how to insert herself into conversation with other children.

We were delighted to see Child F begin to gain in confidence and open up during her participation at the Playscheme, painting and playing with the Hama beads with a small group of girls. While she didn't necessarily engage in the large group, she was not anxious around them and engaged meaningfully with the small group she chose. She seemed confident and happy and was able to express herself well through creative work and speaking.

Volunteering



Five children's centre volunteers found employment in the year 2021-2021.



Two volunteers started access courses with a view to going to university.

In addition, three people who had started the application process found employment and one went on to a teacher training course at university. It is often the case that the application process and interviews helps people to realise their strengths and to take further steps in self-development.

Total number of individual volunteers
as at 31 March 2022 –
an increase of 10 on March 2020.



new volunteers received an induction to volunteering during the year to 31 March 2022.

Case Study

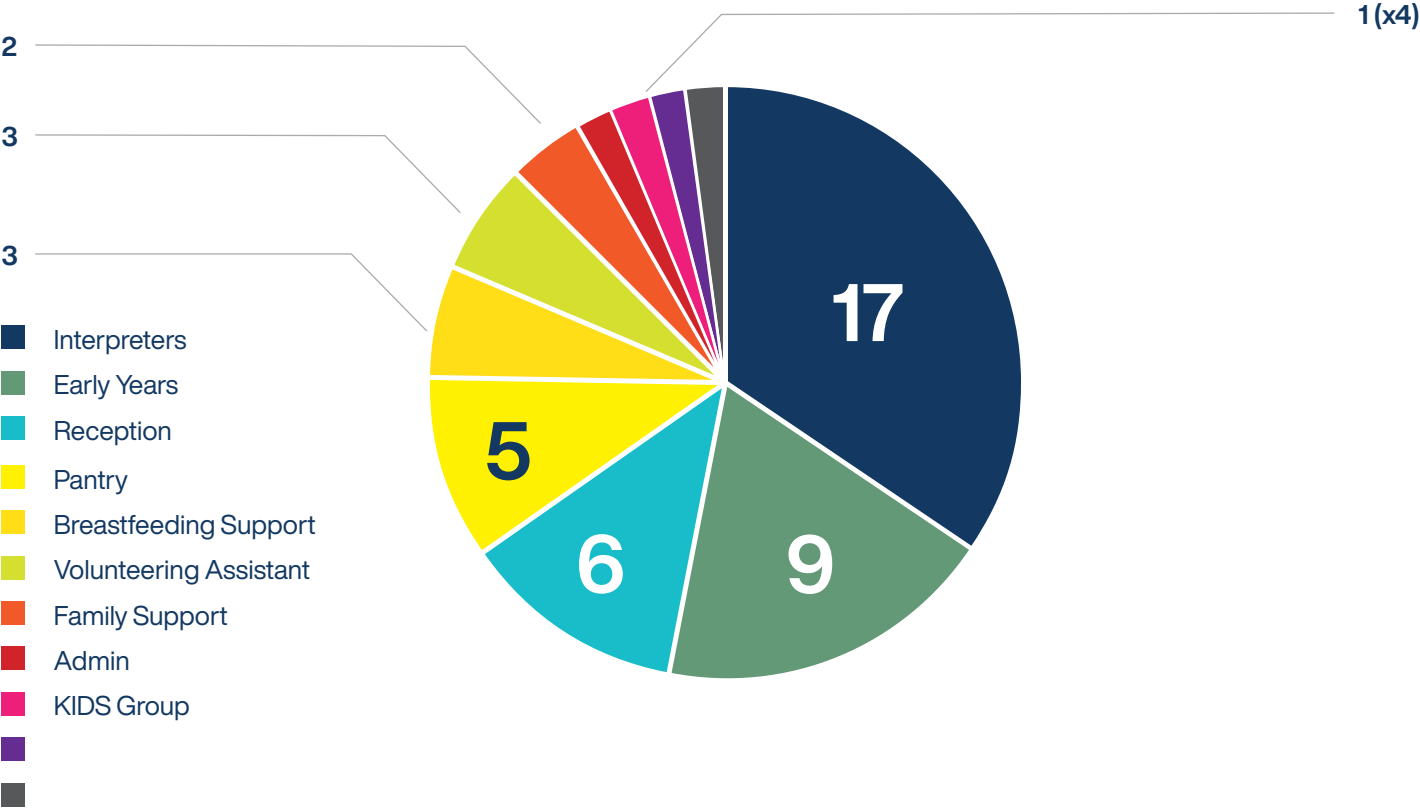
Raafiah was 21 years old and unemployed when she started to volunteer at The Springfield Project. Initially volunteering with Early Years at the stay and play and crèche, she was able to develop her existing abilities, access training, gain practical skills and experience, as well as benefit from direct support and guidance in employment and further education.

As Raafiah's confidence increased, she became involved in more activities at the Springfield Centre. Raafiah is now a much more confident person. Her communication skills have improved, partly due to the training she attended. Raafiah's wellbeing improved as she started meeting new people, socialising and keeping herself busy throughout the week. She gained employment as a sessional Playworker. She has now completed an access course in order to do a degree in primary education, and has a place at University to study education with science. She now has a clear career path.

“

I would recommend other people to volunteer here because of how much volunteers are valued and the significant amount of support they are given.”

Different volunteer roles in the Children's Centre as at 31.03.2022



Volunteering Highlights from the year 2021 to 2022



Two days of food hygiene training were held and **9 volunteers** received the training.



In July we held interpreter training and **17 people attended**, plus 1 member of staff. We focused on obtaining Romanian interpreters. We have benefited from professional training from the Brasshouse centre. All interpreters have accessed this training.



Thank you, it was a pleasure to be part of the volunteering team, it gave me lots of confidence to do what I'm doing now"

Community Services

In the first three months of the year, many of our Community Services were still operating under Covid restrictions.

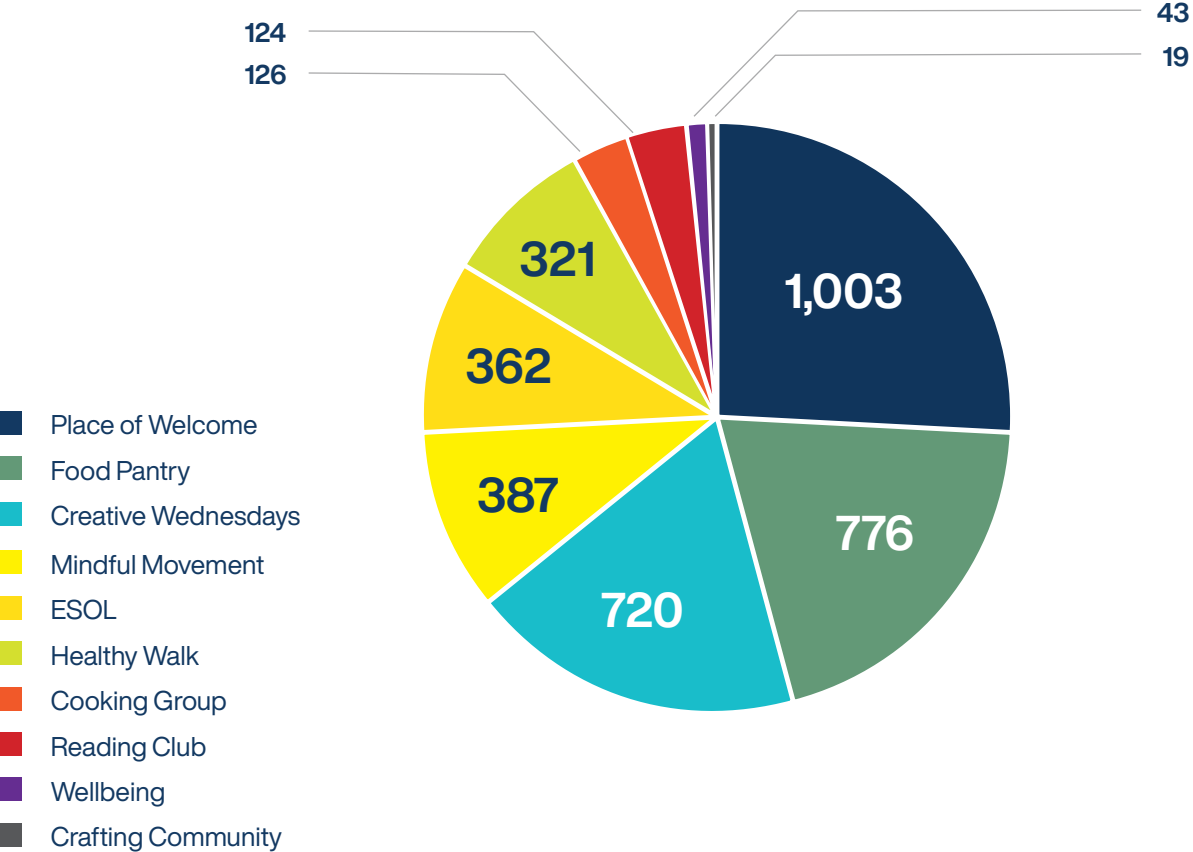
We saw a mix of virtual and face-to-face services, with some in-person events being limited by social distancing. Gradually, attendees began to return as restrictions were reduced, and people became more confident about meeting up in person again.

Total attendances at all Community Services for the year 2021-2022:

3,881 



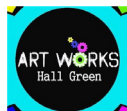
Total Attendances Split



Acknowledgements

We would like to say a big thankyou to all our funders, donors, friends, volunteers and supporters who have given so much to our community this year.

Thanks to your generosity we have been able to keep providing vital support in Sparkhill throughout the year, helping us have a positive impact on the lives of people in Sparkhill, and reflecting our mission to show God's love in the community.



Board Members

Chair, Tim Boyes

Vice Chair, Rev Tom Thomas

Trustees

Caroline Minchin

Andreas Melchior

Alison Roper-Hall

Hannah Greenwood

Greg Moss

Peter Hunt

Fiona Cross-Sudworth

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Park Road Nursery

57 Park Rd, Birmingham, B11 4HB

Tel: 0121 759 0090

Registered charity no. 1134977

Company Registration no. 06582318

Support Us

If this report has inspired you there are several ways you can support The Springfield Project and the vital work we do. We always welcome people who want to get involved as volunteers, donors and supporters. You will be helping to make a difference for hundreds of local families each year and truly showing God's love in our community.

Make a Donation

The Springfield Project supports 2,000 local families a year through our Children's Centre, nurseries and community services. You can now donate online and help us to support those who need us most. A small donation could make a big difference. Visit **www.springfieldproject.org.uk/get-involved/make-a-donation**.

Volunteer

Our volunteers make a difference in our community and help us to increase the support The Springfield Project can offer to children and families. We want to offer volunteers opportunities that are stimulating, relevant, rewarding and mutually beneficial. Anyone can apply to become a volunteer. We embrace inclusivity and diversity and value the skills, enthusiasm and commitment brought by staff and volunteers of different faiths and none.

Visit **www.springfieldproject.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer** to find out how you can get involved.

Join Us on Social Media

Find, follow and share what we do on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Be the first to hear about upcoming events, news and opportunities, and help spread the word about what we do!

Pray for Us

We would be grateful if you could include The Springfield Project in your prayers. If you would like to find out more about the work of St Christopher's Church, visit: **www.stchristopherschurch.co.uk**



www.springfieldproject.org.uk