

# A year in the life of Birmingham Settlement



developing communities, changing lives

## About us

Birmingham Settlement has tackled social inequality and supported disadvantaged communities since 1899, helping people to overcome barriers they may be faced with. In response to issues such as financial hardship, isolation, unemployment and health inequalities, we provide a range of services to enable people to live happy and healthy lives. These range from Little Settlers for 0-5, through to employment support, training opportunities, wellbeing programmes and Ageing Well support for those aged over 50.



## Our aims

We have 4 core areas of work: **Money Advice; Training, Employment & Learning; Community Action & Wellbeing; and Environmental & Eco Activity.** While each area aligns with our strategic objectives below, all activities support our 5 objectives, employing a holistic approach to address the needs of our communities.

- 1) To improve financial resilience for people and communities
- 2) To build wellbeing for individuals and communities
- 3) To develop people's skills, confidence, and voice
- 4) To build environmental awareness, knowledge, and action
- 5) To build and maintain a sustainable organisation



'Thank you for giving me your time and listening to me'



**Over 8,600 people accessed our services in 2023/24**

**£** 4,892 people accessed our **Money Advice** service. **£**1.89 million of debt was written off or rescheduled. Household income was increased by **£**837,683 through money management. **£**

**338** Households prevented from homelessness



**848 people** benefited from our **training & learning** sessions

We delivered **216 Little Settlers Stay & Play** sessions, attended by **371 individuals**.

'I don't know where we would be without the staff here. The kids love coming and are always excited and have fun'

**228 Community Action** sessions, attended by **260 individuals**. Including trips, health & wellbeing forums, sport & fitness classes.



Registered charity: 517303  
[www.birminghamsettlement.org.uk](http://www.birminghamsettlement.org.uk)

# Our sites

We have three centres across Birmingham to meet the needs of the community and achieve our charity aims and objectives:

- Birmingham Settlement **Sports & Community Centre** - Kingstanding, B44 9SH
- Birmingham Settlement **Money Advice Centre** - Newtown, B19 2AB
- Birmingham Settlement **Nature & Wellbeing Centre** - Ladywood, B16 0SL

# Why we are needed

Our sites are located in Kingstanding, Ladywood and Newtown, all of which are in the top 10% of areas experiencing multiple deprivations, referring to circumstances such as poor housing, low income and health inequalities. Kingstanding is a designated 'left behind ward', owing to its lack of facilities, community disengagement and high ranking on the indices of multiple deprivations. As such, it is severely lacking in community activities and the relevant facilities to increase such engagement. Ladywood has one of the highest rates of child poverty in the UK.

The disadvantage experienced by our communities has been exacerbated by the cost of living crisis, this has been highlighted by a 50% increase in demand for our Money Advice service. Reports such as Joseph Rowntree that young people living in poverty are more likely to end up in lower paid work, being unemployed, and potentially taking more negative pathways and spending time in prison (men) or becoming a lone parent (women).

# Our Core Services

## Environmental & Eco Activity

This is an exciting and evolving area of our work with developments including two geodesic learning domes and an amphitheater made up off spoil materials from previous development, re-using natural resources. Our environmental activities encourage people to connect with nature and advance climate change awareness. We run a range of activities including **horticulture, growing, gardening and eco craft activities** providing the opportunity for our communities who live in areas of green deprivation to engage in activities that not only improve wellbeing but also improve the spaces and places around them.





## Plans for 2025

In 2025 we plan to extend our reach and create even more impact by opening up our centres at evenings and weekends, expanding activity offerings to a more diverse range of people and providing more variety, inclusivity and choice to meet the complex needs of the different communities we support.

We plan to grow our sports and active lives offer from our Sports and Community Centre in Kingstanding, broadening access to our new community gym, running more health and fitness activities to improve health and wellbeing outcomes. We aim to reduce inequality in access to quality sports provision through our newly refurbished outdoor multi-sports pitch.

Sessions delivered from our Nature & Wellbeing Centre will remain environmentally focused and nature-based, with plans to develop our work with children and young people to increase access to safe, green urban space.

## Funding & Budget

We have a mixed income strategy based on donated funds, trusts and grants and earned income. Our applications to Trusts and Grants are cyclical and we regularly apply to funders with whom we have existing relationships and continue to identify new funders, working hard to establish and maintain strong relationships with our funders wherever possible. If we experience funding shortfall, we are committed to using our reserves – although this is not a long term option. We also seek to identify new funding opportunities through links with appropriate fundraising networks and partnerships.

## Community Action & Wellbeing

Working with local residents, we develop community action and wellbeing services to get people involved and engaged in what goes on in their local area. From **women's group activities to litter picks, forums and workshops**, there are opportunities for everyone to participate in. We also deliver targeted activities for children, young people and older adults. Our work with children, young people and families includes weekly **Little Settlers** sessions, family support appointments and workshops. We deliver **Ageing Well** for over 50s which includes health and wellbeing activities, befriending and one-to-one casework.

## Money Advice

Our long-established money advice services provide free, FCA accredited independent and confidential advice relating to issues of **debt and welfare benefits**. We work with clients to take action and resolve immediate financial difficulties and develop financial resilience for the future. We help with identifying correct entitlements and priorities, income maximisation, welfare benefits appeals and support with money management and budgeting skills.

## Teaining, Employment & Learning

We offer programmes to upskill and build capacity in community and professional settings. Subjects include Mental Health, Addiction, Budgeting, Welfare Benefits, CV Writing, Interviewing, Youth, and more bespoke courses on request. We are OCN accredited offering qualifications in Personal Development and Life Skills. We also work with partners to offer access to ESOL and other learning opportunities.