

The Friary is a local charity - we empower homeless and disadvantaged adults to rebuild their lives by providing practical services, advice and emotional support.

New Friary Advice Centre opens on Musters Road

The Friary's new Advice Centre, which will see more and more people given help with welfare rights, has been launched at 34 Musters Road. Offering free one-to-one advice on a range of problems including all kinds of benefits, and signposting for help with debt, addiction and mental illness, the Friary Advice Centre has been up and running since early May.

"This new venture is about preventative work," said CEO Ben Talbot. "We don't want to wait for someone to become homeless before we help them - we want to get them the help to stop that happening."

Senior Welfare Benefits Officer, Albert Venables, has been joined by newly appointed Welfare Benefits Advice Worker, Katie Corey, to offer help in the new centre which is light, airy and welcoming.

"The idea of an advice centre has always made sense to me," adds Ben. "This will allow the main centre to concentrate on food and clothing, hygiene and medical help whilst the advice centre can expand the amount of one-to-one benefits advice.

"The advice centre is about prevention work- trying to see people who have fallen on



difficult times and don't know where to go. We can let them know their rights and point them in the right direction. We have to fight for their rights or they won't get what they are entitled to. They need advocates, people who can help them get what they need."

"The system is so hard to navigate. Most of us wouldn't have the first idea where to start. And we can reach people who wouldn't know Friary was there to support them. We want to catch them before they reach rock bottom, before they lose their homes."

continues on next page

New Friary Advice Centre opens on Musters Road *continued*

General Manager, Ann Bremner, agreed: "Expanding the advice function will make such a huge difference. It can lift people out of poverty and give them a chance. It is the difference between just managing and falling into debt. We have known for some time through our existing welfare rights work that people are not aware of the benefits they are entitled to and so often when they fill in the forms themselves they get refused. There are lots of issues around mental health because people find it difficult to describe how it affects them. Our welfare rights workers can challenge the decisions because they know the law."

Ann expects to see more demands on the service if unemployment rises as a result of Covid 19 and also thinks it will be difficult to accommodate large numbers of people in the

centre in the foreseeable future - so the advice centre will be crucial. "The opportunity came at just the right time," she said.

"Not everybody in the general public feels comfortable coming into the main centre as they may feel it's not for them and it's also not easy to ask for help. Once you make up your mind to ask for help you want to feel comfortable and this new office will be very welcoming," she added.

By Liz Jones

"... Once you make up your mind to ask for help you want to feel comfortable and this new office will be very welcoming."

Real life stories

Case Study: Kaspar

Kaspar is originally from Estonia and first came to the Friary in summer 2019. He was rough sleeping and received practical support (food, clothing, showers) at the Friary as well as help with applying for free health care and arranging dental treatment. As he was homeless, we also stored documents and clothing for him.

We supported him for 6 months during which, his behaviour was, at times, challenging and he was given a number of warnings. Kaspar also received help from Emmanuel House in gaining a passport.

We then didn't see Kaspar until autumn 2020. He'd been working off and on but was still rough sleeping. We told him about the hotel and, although he stayed there a while, he

left saying he couldn't cope with the regular checks by staff on his wellbeing. We advised him to contact the Street Outreach team but he was reluctant. However, towards the end of 2020, Kaspar asked for his documents as he was moving into shared accommodation (through Street Outreach). At the start of 2021, he moved into his own place and we provided a home starter pack of essential items (kettle, toaster etc.)

Kaspar provides a good example of how we support people in conjunction with other organisations. Communication hasn't always been easy (his English isn't great and he can be quite short-tempered) but now that he's in settled accommodation, he's in a much better frame of mind and should be able to get work relatively quickly.

Staff update



Charlotte Mayfield Resource Manager

"There's always something to be done at the Friary – a shelf to be cleared, something to clean down – it's like a massive house with always something to be done," says Charlotte Mayfield who gets a chance to do anything and everything in her role as Resource Manager.

Charlotte started out with Friary as a volunteer for two years, helping with the bargain sales and the coffee bar, and then later in the kitchen.

"I just sort of fell into it really," she says. "My partner used to help out at Friary but his job got more demanding and I started volunteering. I loved working in the kitchen, volunteering with the chef, and in the laundry. No matter what role you have, you do everything. It's a really lovely place to work and nobody is afraid to get their hands dirty." Charlotte then became employed as a part-time Project Worker, helping at the Ludlow Hill depot and with the Rough Sleeper breakfasts and later was appointed as Resource Manager.

"My new role, which I have been doing for over a year now, incorporates some of my old work but I have taken on new responsibilities," explains Charlotte. She now manages the Ludlow Hill depot which has operated with limited capacity during the pandemic, and supervises what clothes and electrical items need to be brought down to the Friary Centre and what food is needed.

"When I was doing the Rough Sleeper breakfasts on Tuesdays and Thursdays, I really got to know the service users because you get chatting to them. Everybody's got a story to tell and it's really heart breaking. When you get home, you just can't stop thinking about it but it is all so rewarding."

Charlotte has two daughters who keep her busy and fill her time up.

"We're all three pay days away from being in a homeless situation so we should never judge people because you don't know what's going on in their lives."



Free printing of this newsletter courtesy of A R Signs

BIG YELLOW



BIG YELLOW – Making a bedsit like home with Big Yellow’s help – learn about their charitable business impact even during a pandemic!

Knowing exactly when someone is about to become homeless isn’t predictable from the perspective of the person involved let alone the Friary getting ready to meet them in their hour of need. Nobody plans to be homeless.

Events can escalate quickly for some depending on their relationships, finances or health. We do, however, know from experience that somebody will become homeless in Nottingham every week so we plan ahead by storing practical household items. We receive generous donations from the public and store these until needed.

Big Yellow’s ongoing support with storage space at their Lenton Lane premises here in Nottingham enables the Friary to plan with some precision. The secure space down there is spotlessly clean for easily storing clothes and soft furnishings. The temperature is ambient so we can store tinned & packaged dry food too. Accessibility is good so we can take items down there at our convenience and retrieve to coincide with someone moving into accommodation. We also store marketable items for the Friary fundraising sales to generate income for our charity too.

Kitting out someone’s bedsit with homely goods such as lamps, radios, pictures and bedding definitely helps with wellbeing and saves financially too if a person is relying on benefits. We try to select items to match individual tastes wherever possible. A young man won’t necessarily want floral plates or bedding but we select from a range when possible. Gratitude from the people we help is only possible due to the generous offer of storage by Big Yellow. There is a positive chain effect here with support from this local branch of a huge national business - Big Yellow allows the Friary the luxury of storing many more items than would be possible on our own premises and therefore enables both provision and choice to the people we help. This restores dignity. Thankfully, we generally tend to have what’s needed. If not, then we supplement the home-starter packs with an essential tin opener/ toothbrush from supplies we keep at the Drop-in and only occasionally have to make a purchase.

During the pandemic, movement of people was kept to an absolute minimum and we were allowed to stay open as an essential lifeline to meet people made homeless during that time. Sadly, on occasion, the stress of the pandemic was the final straw to break some relationships. Essential items provided via the Friary were literally the only way homeless and vulnerable adults could get this type of specific help they needed and we are grateful for Big Yellow’s provision of convenient direct-access storage.

Big Yellow provides our charity with what they do best: clean, secure, accessible storage. Does your organisation have something to offer the Friary so we can all pull together and provide the best possible service to the homeless?



Help the homeless get Linked In



Are you following the Friary? With so many charities competing for funds which one should you and your organisation support? We believe nobody should go hungry. Food poverty is a symptom of poverty and by addressing hunger we find out why someone has become destitute. We are looking for local businesses to support us in reaching out to the homeless here in Rushcliffe & Nottingham. The pandemic will sadly force more people into poverty. We have experience and ideas to enable you to help us.

Building online community: The Friary recently joined LinkedIn to build its online community of support and we invite you to follow us. Your organisation will most likely be looking to support a local charity but might be unsure which one and how. The Friary invites you to do so this way - simply connect with us on LinkedIn and share our posts. We need to get our message out there. We are looking for businesses to support our work. You never know when the right person is going to see one of our appeals and respond. Raising awareness of homelessness and securing support for our charity is key to the survival of those living on the streets.

Team building: We are keen to connect with businesses locally in Rushcliffe & Nottingham. Don’t think we are expecting Charity of the Year status but that would be amazing. We can work with you to enable team building activities to benefit the Friary and your staff. Don’t forget we have an allotment requiring hours of hard work in the fresh air!

Matched Funding: Fundraising underpins our range of services which must remain fit for purpose requiring specialised staffing costs and with your corporate matched-funding the total can double in no time.

Publicity: A little bit of publicity goes a long way with social media. This is good for us and certainly good for you. We will work with you to ensure your fundraising efforts are publicised and encourage other organisations to follow your example.

Serving the poorest of our community is a team effort and with your help nobody needs to be turned away. Food poverty is a symptom of poverty and by addressing hunger we learn why somebody has become so destitute.

Nobody chooses to become homeless. Nobody can get out of the situation without help. Thank you for helping. Tell others about our work: www.linkedin.com/company/75162806/

Serving the poorest of our community is a team effort and with your help nobody needs to be turned away.

Friary Statistics – see how the numbers add up

Statistics for Friary Drop-In April 1st 2020 - March 31st 2021

Total Number of Visits	6132
Number of Unique Visitors	823
Male	623 (75.7%)
Female	200 (24.3%)
Total FPs	1799
Total Breakfasts (since Jul 2020)	875
Clothing (normally 2 - 3 items)	1400
Homestarter Packs **	147
Number of New Visitors	378 (45.9%)
Number of People Presenting as NFA	306 (37.2%)
Number of Unique EU Visitors	125 (15.2%)

** 23 referred from Framework, 14 referred from other organisations

More information on New Visitors Apr 2020 – Mar 2021

In total, 378 visitors came to the Friary for the first time in the 12 months from 01-04-2020. This represents 45.9% of the 823 unique visitors who came in that period. 37.0% (140) of the new visitors were NFA. 9.5% (36) were EU citizens. 28.8% (109) were female.

On average, new people visited 4.7 times in the year (overall average number of visits per person, 7.5). This lower figure is partly due to the fact that 55.6% (210) of the new visitors came just once in the 12-month period.

Reasons for this include:

- We referred them to their local food banks
- We signposted them to other organisations (e.g. St Ann's Advice Centre)
- They were referred to us for Homestarter packs (25 referrals mostly from Framework)
- They were in the hotel under 'Everyone In' scheme so advised to speak to staff there
- They were self-isolating and needed food delivering
- They have visited Friary subsequently after 31/3/21 so technically not single visit

Catherine Todd – volunteer plant seller, Lady Bay

I have collected for the wonderful Friary for many years. Most years I have had a weekend plant stall when we opened our house as part of the Lady Bay Arts Trail. Last year and this year the Arts Trail was cancelled so I've had the plant sale on my front wall. Many kind friends have donated plants, neighbours also add plants and I've potted up plants from my garden. I ask for donations and people have been very generous. Last year I raised £152. This year I've raised £250 so far and there are still a few plants to sell. I hope this will inspire others to do their bit.



Colourhill's wonderful contribution to our new kitchen



Thanks to Steve Keene, Colourhill Director and Showroom Manager, for the donation of the materials and his time. The newly fitted kitchen units at the Friary Drop-in look fantastic. Steve is a great local supporter of the work we do. colourhill.co.uk

colourhill
KITCHENS & BEDROOMS

Friary Centre – Services available

Service provision & opening times may vary to reflect current Covid-19 restrictions, if you need further information please contact the Centre.

- Walk through the door to a warm welcome (no matter what!)
- All welcome (regardless of circumstances)
- Initial point of contact in time of crisis
- Food & hot drink, shower, clothing, footwear.
- Welfare advice.
- Health advice.
- Access to computers e.g. to apply for benefits, support with CV writing & job searches – essential with roll out of online only applications for state benefits.
- Hot meals – promotes healthy nutrition, helps prioritise spending on food first.
- Budgetary advice.
- Support to maintain tenancies.
- Fellowship.
- Social interaction to improve mental health and confidence building.
- Access to Drug/Alcohol Abuse counselling.
- Rough sleeper sessions.

These are some of the services/activities on offer at the Friary, please feel welcome to visit.

If you have been inspired to support us in any way, we would really love to hear from you.



Where to find us

46 Musters Road
Nottingham NG2 7PR

Phone 0115 982 5448
Option 1 Centre, Option 2 Admin Office
admin@the-friary.org.uk

General Manager; Ann Bremner MBE

FRIARY OPENING TIMES

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 8.30 am – 1 pm

Tuesday and Thursday 8.30 am – 11.00 am

Sunday Evening Fellowship 8 pm – 9 pm

Donations Depot, Unit 6c, Ludlow Hill Road,
West Bridgford, NG2 6HF
Tel: 0115 998 1764

www.the-friary.org.uk

[linkedin.com/company/friary-drop-in/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/friary-drop-in/)

the Friary Working
locally to end
homelessness



You can find out more about our events and what's going on by following us on twitter @theFriary88

REGULAR GIVING: Please visit our website for details on how to set up donations on a regular basis. This is the most helpful way for our Charity to be able to budget and plan for the future. Complete a Gift Aid form as appropriate.

Registered Charity Number 1056825
Company registered in England and Wales
Number 3190740