

Autumn 2025



# Community and Family Impact Report



[manchestersettlement.org.uk](http://manchestersettlement.org.uk)



# Welcome to our community



## Our Values

Manchester Settlement has a strong foundation of community work. For over 130 years, we have been working alongside local people to create ecosystems of support, connection, and a place to belong.

The warm welcome starts at the door of our purpose-built community centre. Whether you're visiting for the first time or you've already found 'your people' and come along several times a week, you'll be met by our friendly reception team.

What makes this welcome incredibly special is that many of our staff and volunteers are local themselves. We understand the stories, strengths, and struggles of our community because we live them too. That shared experience builds trust, removes barriers, and creates the foundations of our Manchester Settlement community.

Inside the building, you'll find a place alive with activity. Families, older residents, newly arrived communities, young people, and neighbours from all walks of life come together under one roof.

Our Family Hub provides a bright and creative environment where children grow, friendships can develop and families are supported.

Our community programme of activities for adults creates welcoming spaces for all to belong.

Our Cost-of-Living support links practical help and advice with our wider community offer.

While our community hub sees significant activity – 27,000 interactions in the past year and around 700 weekly visits through our other services – what matters most is the individual behind each visit. We've built a team who know that relationships come first, and everything else follows.

[CHECK OUT 'OUR INSPIRATIONAL STORIES' ON PAGE 7 →](#)

## Our Local Story

- **Openshaw is one of Manchester's most underserved communities**
- **Residents in Openshaw make the third-highest number of calls to the Manchester COL helpline, highlighting the significant pressures facing our community**
- **22% of Openshaw residents live in fuel poverty**
- **There are high levels of poor quality private rented housing in Openshaw and the surrounding neighbourhoods**
- **The community is culturally and demographically diverse and while this is a strength, it can also result in community tensions**

Though we see the effects of all this playing out in people's lives daily, we also see resilience, creativity and **hope**.

Our work is not just about delivering services – it's about creating belonging, providing support, and walking alongside the community as we all navigate the ups and downs of life together.





# Our Community & Family Programmes

## Well Being Wednesday

Well-being Wednesday is a warm and friendly drop-in for adults from our community. Doors are open from 9:30am - 1:00pm, and all are welcome to come for the whole morning or just pop in for a quick brew and chat. There is a *free breakfast* and a *hot lunch* available.



Our planned programme offers a diverse range of activities, including arts, music, therapeutic sessions, cooking, health-focused projects, expert-led knowledge sharing, and open conversation. These sessions are designed not only to support individual wellbeing but also to foster a strong sense of community.

Through these connections, we've also facilitated referrals to essential services, access to our community food provision, and ongoing therapeutic support.



## Conversation Club

In partnership with MAES, we provide a safe and friendly space where people learning English can practise their speaking skills.

Participants meet weekly to chat about daily life and explore topics such as shopping, travel, and work. In this relaxed and supportive environment, there's no pressure to be perfect. As language confidence grows, so do the friendships!

## Women's Walk

**Our intergenerational Women's Walk, started in partnership with MCRactive, encourages people to be more active while building friendships along the way.**

Around 40 women join us each week. The £5 voucher offered on completion of each walk has helped us engage those who need a little extra incentive to increase their activity levels – a social experiment with physical, mental, and economic benefits!



## Food Pantry

Our Food Pantry is a lifeline for people in our community who are struggling to make ends meet. By providing essential food and toiletries in a dignified and affordable way, we aim to ease immediate pressures while offering wraparound support.

This includes referrals to on-site advice services such as Citizens Advice, Penny Plan debt support, and welfare advice from ACCG.

We are committed to creating a warm, welcoming space where everyone is treated with respect and without judgment, ensuring people feel supported during challenging times.



## Cost of Living

**Our Cost of Living support provides practical, hands-on help for anyone struggling with everyday challenges. We offer one-to-one assistance with form filling and accessing services.**

Alongside this, we run a Warm Hub breakfast drop-in where people can enjoy a hot breakfast and a friendly chat. This small, welcoming group is often the first step for many who then go on to join our wider community programme.

During the winter, we host a Community Coat Rack, and in the summer we organise initiatives such as school uniform and prom dress pop-ups. We are also a Visit from the Stork hub, offering free baby supplies to families needing a little extra support.



## Stay & Play

**Our bright and welcoming Family Hub floor hosts our weekly Stay & Play groups.**

Our staff and volunteers create engaging play themes and activities that support families in learning and play. Thanks to our partnership with the National Literacy Trust, our trained Literacy Champions bring fresh ideas and resources each week.

The sensory room is always open, and families can borrow books from our Lending Library. It's a fun, friendly space where all families are welcome.

## Stay & Play for Children with SEND

**Each week, we run a Stay & Play session for children with SEND and their parents/carers.**

It's a truly special space where every child is welcomed exactly as they are, and where parents/carers find understanding, connection, and support.

Our staff and volunteers bring a wealth of lived experience, which helps us create calm, responsive sessions tailored to each child's individual needs. This flexibility allows children to thrive and ensures parents/carers feel genuinely seen and supported. We often hear, *"I can't believe I've only just found you — can you please open every day?"* – a testament to how valued these sessions are.

## SEND Parent/Carer Peer Support Group

**Each month, we provide an evening support group for parents and carers of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.**

It's a unique space where genuine connection happens – parents/carers come along and realise they are not on their own, hearing stories from others they can relate to.

We listen, share, and include moments of pampering too. Guest speakers join us to offer insight and guidance, supporting those whose lives are shaped by raising children with additional needs.





# Our Community and Family team



*Nic*

Nic Ward is the Community and Family Department Lead at Manchester Settlement, where she has been part of the team since 2021.

With over 20 years of experience in community and family work across both the VCSE and public sectors, she brings a wealth of knowledge and a strong commitment to person-centred practice, both in her face-to-face work and strategic planning.

Nic is passionate about creating a welcoming environment and loves connecting with people from all walks of life. Outside of her role at the Settlement, she is a director of the local charity Max Trax and served as a school governor for 7 years, reflecting her deep-rooted dedication to community development.

When she is not working, you will likely find Nic drinking coffee with friends, running on her treadmill, or enjoying time outdoors with her family.



*Stacey*

Stacey Burns is a Community and Family Worker and has worked at the Settlement for 11 years.

Starting out as a sessional worker, with drive, determination, and dedication, she has worked her way up to managing our After School Club provision. An opportunity opened in our community team, and she grasped it with both hands, discovering a passion for working with older members of our community as well as the young.

She loves the different challenges it brings, and leaves work proud every day. You will find Stacey cooking for the Well-being Group, running our Stay & Play sessions, and most recently being instrumental in setting up a parent/carer support group for those with children with SEND.

Stacey brings personal experience and knowledge to this much-needed group. When she is not doing all that, she loves spending time with her family and friends and believes her greatest achievement is her children.



*Lianne*

Lianne Butterfield is the Community & Communications Manager at Manchester Settlement.

With over 20 years of experience in marketing across both large corporations and small businesses, Lianne made the shift to the non-profit sector to use her skills for a greater purpose.

Since joining Manchester Settlement, she has discovered a deep passion for community work. She thrives on connecting with people, hearing their stories, and building meaningful relationships. Alongside her role, Lianne also runs a marketing consultancy, supporting small businesses and charities with their communications and branding.

Outside of work, she enjoys spending quality time with family and friends, getting creative in the kitchen, and planning her next adventure.



*Aileen*

Aileen Bayley is our Cost of Living Coordinator.

After volunteering as an English teacher in Nepal in 2020, Aileen returned home and began volunteering at Manchester Settlement. She soon joined our reception team in 2021, where she gave a warm welcome to everyone who walked through our doors. In 2025, she transitioned into the community team as the Cost of Living Coordinator, supporting local residents to navigate the cost of living crisis, including assistance with form filling and housing applications.

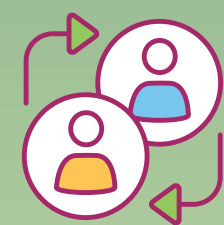
Outside of work, Aileen volunteers online to help children who need extra learning support. In 2023, she spent four weeks in Ghana, contributing to education and community projects in township areas—an experience that strengthened her commitment to inclusive learning and grassroots development.

She also enjoys playing netball, hiking in the hills, and never says no to a good coffee and cake.

# Our Impact

How does it all add up?

Take a look at some of the numbers involved.



27,000 interactions with 2,330 individual people and further work with an additional 500 beneficiaries.



In March we launched our Cost of Living Support project which is reporting some incredible outcomes...

71% have an improved ability to manage home finance  
70% are more confident engaging with helping services  
56% felt more able to reduce energy and other bills to reduce their carbon footprint



In our most recent impact survey

80% of respondents reported that our community activity programme had a significantly positive impact on their community connections  
82% said it had significantly impacted on their health and wellbeing



Our food pantry provides discounted food for around

175 meals per week utilising recycled food supplies.  
Just in the last year we recycled 12,000kg of food for the benefit of low income families.



Our work provides structured opportunities for volunteers to learn and develop with us.

1,845 volunteering hours given in the last year, many by local people, but we are also a pathway for meaningful corporate volunteering. Fujitsu staff providing many hours of weekly support to our community.



Over 1,000 hot lunches and over 1,000 breakfasts plus endless cups of coffee and tea!





# Our Impact Stories

Check out some of our incredible real life stories that bring home the long-lasting, positive impact Manchester Settlement has on the people and communities of North and East Manchester.

## Zara

Zara was struggling with her preschool child's behaviour, which was having a negative impact on the whole family.

Frequent meltdowns at home led to the older siblings retreating to their rooms to avoid the stress.

**'Since receiving this support, family life has improved significantly - spending quality time together again'**

Our Cost of Living worker, Aileen, recognised that Zara needed additional support and referred her to a Family Hub Early Help worker. This opened up access to the help the family needed at home and support from the child's new primary school.

Since receiving this support, family life has improved significantly - meltdowns have decreased, and they are now spending quality time together again.



## Colette

Colette began attending our Wellbeing Wednesday community drop-in, arriving for the first time extremely anxious and visibly shaking. Our friendly receptionist welcomed her and gently supported her into the session. Colette shared that she had recently been diagnosed with early-stage dementia and was keen to sort out her finances before her condition progressed.

A few weeks later, she opened up about her struggles with sleeplessness, caused by debt she owed to an energy company. Fortunately, the Citizens Advice Energy Champion was scheduled to attend a Wellbeing Wednesday session, giving Colette the chance to talk through her concerns. With the Energy Champion's support, Colette was able to have the full debt written off and put a plan in place to manage future payments.

Colette then started working with our Cost of Living worker to put a lasting power of attorney in place for her finances, ensuring future decisions could be managed as her dementia progresses.

**'She says she feels less lonely and has finally found a sense of connection.'**

Through Wellbeing Wednesday, Colette also attended a talk on cancer screening. She admitted she had previously avoided using the bowel screening kit sent to her home out of fear, but after listening to the talk and chatting with our community workers, she decided to complete the test. Inspired to take more control of her health, Colette joined the Nuffield gentle exercise sessions and became a Community Health Club member. This gave her access to our therapist, personal trainer, and healthy eating workshops—leading her to try vegetables she had never eaten before.

Most importantly, Colette has found friendship. She now meets up with others from the group outside the centre to create art together. She says she feels less lonely and has finally found a sense of connection.

## A Family Story

## Jamie

Jamie is a young mum, a care leaver, and recently became a single parent to two young children with additional needs. Life is difficult and isolating.

Her older child had been diagnosed with special needs, and her younger child had recently not met expected milestones at his developmental health checks. Navigating this alone, Jamie lacked a support network and was unsure how to access the right help. She was emotionally drained and overwhelmed, with little confidence in the future for her children or herself.

Things began to change when Jamie started attending our Stay and Play group for children with SEND, where she met Stacey, our family support worker. Stacey built a strong, trusting relationship with Jamie and supported her with new strategies to help with parenting her children with SEND, and also helped her to apply for Disability Living Allowance.

**'Most importantly, she is no longer alone - she has a support network and a growing sense of hope'**

With encouragement, Jamie joined our family coach trip to Blackpool Zoo and connected with another mum who lent her a double buggy. Although she felt disheartened that her children didn't respond to the animals like others, Stacey provided emotional support and made sure she was linked to the right services. The family now has weekly input from Rodney House.

Jamie also joined our SEND Parent Support Group, where a visiting special school teacher helped ease her fears about specialist education. Hearing another parent share that their child only started speaking at age five gave Jamie a spark of hope for her own non-verbal child.

As a result, Jamie is now accessing the right services, has made new friendships, and is better informed, emotionally supported, and practically supported. She is exploring specialist schooling with a more open mind and has started to believe in new possibilities for her children's future. Most importantly, she is no longer alone - she has a support network and a growing sense of hope.



## Corporate Volunteering

In the VCSE sector, it is not uncommon to receive emails asking if a charity would be willing to take 10-12 corporate volunteers on a specific date of their choosing. This can leave the charity having to create an opportunity that perhaps suits the corporate volunteers more than their own community work.

However earlier this year we reached out to Fujitsu in Manchester to see if they could support our weekly food pantry. A handful of our local residents had recently retired from their volunteering roles, and we needed the consistency of regular volunteers to keep the project running.

**'I had a great day today. The staff at Manchester Settlement are lovely people and are doing amazing work there'**

Amazingly, Fujitsu agreed to send two corporate volunteers from their staff team every single week! Each staff member was asked to commit to two days of 'social action'. For us, this means they can learn the ropes one week and use that experience to be even more helpful the following week. The feedback has been very positive, with Fujitsu staff reporting to managers that they have found it to be a rewarding and enlightening experience. One Fujitsu worker emailed his manager to say: "I had a great day today. The staff at Manchester Settlement are lovely people and are doing amazing work there. It was nothing like I expected. I regret only offering one day now. If there are any drop-outs, please consider me approachable."

We consider this to be corporate volunteering at its best and would encourage more businesses to consider this excellent model.





## Trauma Informed Play Project

We developed our Trauma Informed Play Project in response to previous trauma training and the understanding that children can accumulate Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and continue to live with the effects of trauma.

Recognising that being trauma informed is an effective approach – and that building strong, positive connections can make a real difference – the Trauma Informed Play Project was created.



We recruited five new volunteers, alongside child-facing staff members, to take part in the project. It consisted of two days of training in trauma awareness and Thera-play, followed by six weeks to practice the techniques, and concluded with a two-hour reflective practice session.

The training was delivered by a Psychotherapist from One Education and was a highly positive experience for all involved. Staff and volunteers not only developed a deeper understanding of trauma and ACEs but were also equipped with practical strategies to use in their work with children. During the six-week practice period, Thera-play activities were completed with children and modelled to parents. Play cards were provided so these simple but effective activities could be repeated at home.

Staff and volunteers reported feeling more confident, better informed, and newly equipped to respond to the children in our setting (and at home!). The blend of theory and practical strategies proved especially valuable, providing clear, accessible methods that could be applied in real-life situations.

The project has strengthened our community's capacity to support children affected by trauma, built new skills within our workforce and volunteer team, and created meaningful opportunities for families to develop stronger, more connected relationships.

## Community Health Club

The Community Health Club was developed in response to the ongoing challenges we see among local residents, many of whom experience poor mental health, limited mobility, and a lack of confidence in managing their wellbeing.

Having worked closely with our community for many years, we recognised the need for a structured programme that could support people to make sustainable, long-term changes.

The programme included two visits from qualified therapists who provided Q&A sessions to help participants better understand their mental health and identify practical next steps. A personal trainer designed an exercise programme tailored to ageing bodies, supporting people to stay active and independent for longer. We also delivered cookery workshops focusing on low-cost, healthy meals and nutritious snacks, aimed at reducing health inequalities in our underserved community. We developed a booklet for each participant to track their progress and include recipes and exercise routines.

### The impact has been significant:

- 20 people signed up to the Community Health Club.
- 20 members accessed the therapy advice sessions.
- 8 members reported putting the therapist's next steps guidance into practice.
- 5 cookery workshops were delivered, with members trying new recipes and adopting healthier swaps.
- Members have continued exercising together outside the Settlement, using online videos.
- Participants reported weight loss, increased mobility, and greater confidence in seeking NHS support.
- GPs from other areas have praised the programme and expressed interest in offering something similar.

Participant feedback illustrates the difference the programme has made:

*'I've joined a walking group and climbed Mam Tor. Exercise really does help your mental health'*

*'I can do mobility exercises despite my disabilities—they make a real difference'*

*'I've lost over a stone since starting the programme'*

Our numerous positive stories demonstrate the significant changes that our work has enabled in the lives of so many people.







Nursery

After School Clubs

Wellbeing Support

Family Support

Community Information

Community Arts

Food Projects

Youth Clubs

Community Rooms

Supported Housing

Volunteering



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