

**CELEBRATING  
20 YEARS**



**OUR** IMPACT REPORT 2023-24

**IMPACT**





## How I felt before Acacia's help

I was trapped in a box where I couldn't breathe. I always felt something bad was going to happen to my boys. I would just cry when I looked at them. My husband kept saying I needed to see someone to talk to, but I kept refusing. Then, finally, in the middle of the night, I just woke up crying and said: "Yes, okay, I'll see someone and talk."

## My experience of Acacia's service

At first, I just sat and listened. I remember asking one question and that was, "How is this going to help me?" The answer I got just amazed me and then I cried, opened up and talked my heart out, which helped me and I felt lighter. I would cry till I had no tears left and no one judged me. The talks helped me a lot. The advice I was given, I took it all and I felt like a greatest mum in the world!

## How I'm feeling now

I feel more comfortable and confident talking and not keeping it all in. I came out as a new person. If I can do it, anyone can: you're not alone.

## My hopes for the future

I hope to help other families as much as I can, especially new mums and single parents. I'll do my level best to raise money for Acacia.



STORY

BAV'S

# WELCOME



**This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Acacia's commitment to supporting vulnerable families across Birmingham affected by pre and postnatal depression.**

Over the past two decades, we have been a beacon of hope and healing for countless families navigating the mental health challenges of pregnancy and early parenthood. Our mission is deeply rooted in our Christian values of compassion, love, and service, which have shaped every aspect of our work.

Through the tireless efforts of our dedicated staff team and volunteers, we have provided practical and emotional support to thousands of parents and families who often feel isolated and overwhelmed. As a lived experience charity, we offer compassion, hope and encouragement to those who need it most. We understand that postnatal depression affects not just individuals but entire families, which is why our holistic approach focuses on offering support to dads and partners too, making sure the whole family can thrive.

Turning our gaze towards the next 20 years, we know there is so much more to be done. Making sure we develop new services that reach the most disadvantaged and vulnerable families across the City remains our top priority. As leaders in our field, we also acknowledge our responsibility to raise awareness of the issues faced by new parents and support the wider development of our sector.

As we celebrate 20 years of service, we reflect on the countless lives touched by our work and the lasting impact we've made. Our commitment to supporting families in need continues to grow, with every volunteer and supporter playing a vital role in fulfilling our mission. Guided by our Christian ethos, we remain steadfast in our belief that every family deserves love, support, and the opportunity to experience healing and joy. We look forward to continuing this important work for years to come, with faith as our foundation and service as our calling.

**Georgina Dean**  
Chair of the Board of Trustees

## **Our Christian Values and what they mean to us**

Acacia is built on a strong Christian foundation. We enable people to flourish by experiencing and responding to the love of God which inspires and challenges us to trust steadily, hope unswervingly and love unconditionally. We place equal value on every individual; welcoming people of all faiths and of none. We aim to create supportive, inclusive and energising communities where parents and families can belong, be valued, contribute and thrive.



# Our vision, mission and aims

## Our vision

A World where every family affected by pre or postnatal mental illness receives timely and effective support close to home.

## Our mission

To improve the lives of mothers and families affected by pre and postnatal depression and anxiety.

## Our strategic aims

- To provide and promote high quality support services to those affected by pre and postnatal depression and anxiety.
- To equip communities with the skills to deliver support services to families.
- To raise awareness of pre and postnatal depression and anxiety.
- To establish and advance Acacia as the leader in its field.

**Our services are based on a model of lived-experience and peer support, with a central ethos of 'love and kindness'.**

# Why we exist

- **1 in 5 mothers** suffer from depression, anxiety, or other serious mental health issues during pregnancy or in the first year after childbirth.
- Single parents, young parents, mothers from **deprived communities and minority ethnic backgrounds** are disproportionately affected by maternal mental health issues.
- **Suicide** is the leading cause of death for mothers in the year after pregnancy (Maternal Mental Health Alliance, 2023).

**“I came to you at the most vulnerable and frightening times of my life – you have all offered nothing but love and strength.”**

*Service user*

**“Acacia literally saved my life and my family. Without them, I don't know where I would be today.”**

*Service user*





**This artwork was commissioned in our 20<sup>th</sup> year to celebrate and acknowledge the roots and branches of our work, alongside the scripture that has helped to guide us. It was funded by Emma's Gift, the legacy project that was established in memory after Emma Borg, one of Acacia's founders, passed away in 2018.**

## About this report

**This report explores the impact of our work with families and our wider work supporting the sector nationally. It draws on an internal evaluation and analysis of our impact data between April 2023 and March 2024.**

The mental health outcomes data in this report come from two clinical measures of depression and anxiety – the PHQ-9 and GAD-7 questionnaires. These are the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) recommended tools for measuring these conditions (IAPT manual, 2019), and are also amongst the tools recommended by NICE (NICE, 2011b; NICE, 2012; NICE, 2014).

During the year, **210 mothers completed these 'before' and 'after' clinical measures.** Data is also taken from **246 mothers who received telephone support** and responded to an evaluation questionnaire at the end of the phone call.



# WHO ACCESSED OUR SUPPORT

## SUPPORTING PARENTS

605

**families**  
accessed our  
support

## Background

The families we support experience higher than average levels of disadvantage and deprivation. We continue to expand the number of mother we support from BAME communities.

39%

of our clients live in the  
**10% most deprived**  
areas of England

48%

of mums were of  
**BAME** origin

## Severity

44%

of mums entered with  
**severe anxiety\***

6%

of mums entered with  
**severe depression\***

\*Based on 2 IAPT and NICE recommended clinical tools for measuring depression and anxiety: PHQ-9 and GAD-7 questionnaires



## Age

30%

was the **average age** of all mums and dads entering the service

20%

of mums were aged **24 years or under**

## Referrals

46%

were **self referrals**, the most common route

24%

came from other **health professionals** or **agencies**

30%

came from **health visitors** and **midwives**

21%

of mums referred were **pregnant**

## SUPPORTING PROFESSIONALS

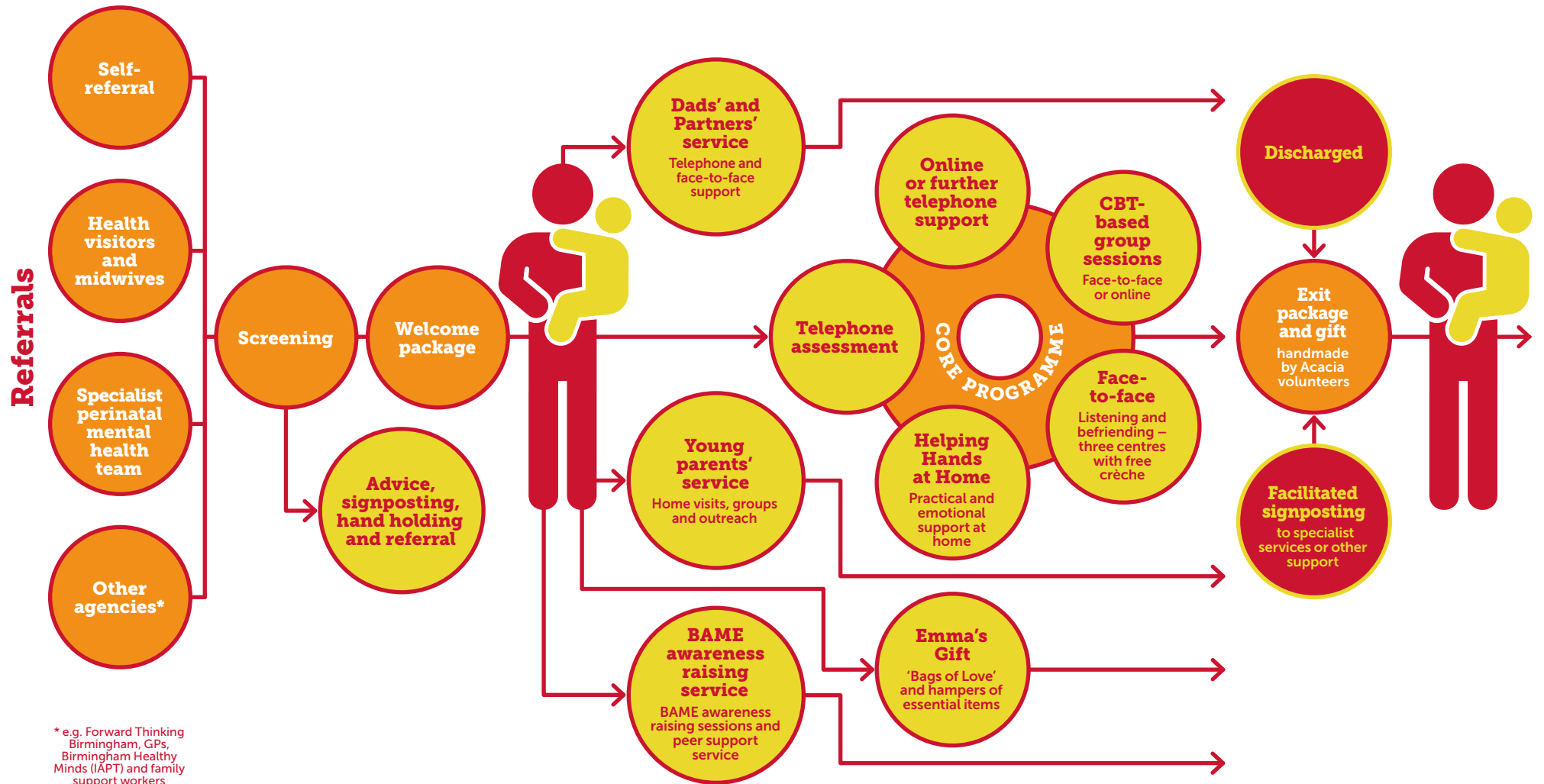
Health professionals and members of local community groups.

15

awareness raising workshops delivered to **296 health professionals** and members of local **community groups**

# HOW WE HELP

## OUR SUPPORT JOURNEY





Three  
20<sup>th</sup> birthday  
coffee mornings  
at each of our  
centres

A  
thanksgiving  
church service  
at St John's  
Church, Walmley,  
where Acacia  
began 20 years  
ago

A  
20<sup>th</sup> birthday  
AGM that brought  
together all of  
our previous  
trustees


A special  
20<sup>th</sup> birthday  
party and  
fundraiser

Our  
largest ever  
20<sup>th</sup> birthday  
fun run  
event in  
June 2024

A specially  
commissioned  
birthday logo

# CELEBRATING OUR 20<sup>TH</sup> YEAR



  
You're invited to  
Acacia's  
20th Birthday  
Coffee Mornings!



Wednesday 11th October, 10am to 12pm  
Swissway Church, Northfield, B31 1QS  
Thursday 12th October, 10am to 12pm  
St John's Church, Walmley, B76 1QN



# OUR SERVICES SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE PARENTS' MENTAL HEALTH

86%

had **reduced depression**  
and **anxiety**

82%

had **reduced depression**

77%

had **reduced anxiety**

98%

felt more **optimistic**  
and **hopeful**

98%

felt better **able to cope**

99%

felt more **supported**

99%

would **recommend Acacia**  
to friends and family

100%

rated Acacia's services as  
**good, very good or excellent**

7

**months**  
was the average length of  
**time spent in service**

OUR

IMPACT





Hearts&Minds

“Hearts and Minds is a partnership between Smile Group and Acacia, set up to connect, support and celebrate the incredible England-wide VCSE community in perinatal mental health. Fostering a spirit of collaboration and shared learning, we have created a suite of assets; our online map of services, digital training programme and living library of resources..”

*Natalie Nuttall, Lead Coordinator,  
Hearts & Minds Partnership*

## WORKING NATIONALLY

Acacia is a founding partner of The Hearts and Minds National Partnership – an England-wide partnership of grassroots perinatal mental health VCS organisations that aims to connect, support and celebrate the VCSE community in perinatal mental health across England. Over the past 12 months, the partnership has:

- Developed a **new website for parents and professionals** to access information about the Partnership and perinatal mental health VCSE support, including our England-wide interactive map of services.
- Grown a **social network** of more than **5,300 people** who are engaging with our content.
- Featured **91 services** on our England-wide digital map.
- Hosted **9 Conversation Space sessions** – our free, online chats.
- Created ‘Smart Space’, our free **online training resource** for emerging and established VCSE groups, with **209 individuals** signed up.
- Represented our sector at multiple, strategic **perinatal mental health forums and networks** such as the NHS England Perinatal Mental Health Clinical Network meeting.
- Worked to embed **equality, diversity and inclusion** into the heart of the partnership via the new Root makers programme.



# GROWING OUR DADS AND PARTNERS PROJECT



**Our holistic approach supports the whole family and we are passionate about supporting dads and partners. In 23/24, there has been some exciting developments across our Dads Project including:**

- The highest number of referrals to the Dads Project since the project began: 51 over the year.
- A dedicated full time Dads Peer Support Worker supporting Dads and Partners face to face and on the phone.
- Our beautiful little film 'Dads Struggle Too' won Silver at the Smiley Charity Film Awards.
- In June 2024, we hosted a national webinar with 100 delegates about supporting the PNMH of dads and partners. The webinar was aimed at service providers, VCS, health professionals, commissioners and those working across the pathway.
- A brand-new partnership between Acacia Family Support and Dads Club UK to offer support and mental health awareness for dads and partners across Birmingham.

**“ I thought the speakers were very varied and passionate – it was really great to see representation from a LGBTQI+ community parent. I found it really helpful. Thank you. ”**

*Dads and Partners Webinar*

**“ The personal anecdotes were truly remarkable, as the presenters shared their experiences with honesty and emotion, which further enriched the already informative session. ”**

*Dads and Partners Webinar*





**Dads Club was set up in March 2024 by Rob Smart and his wife Rosie. Rob is a previous user of Acacia's Dads' Support Service and together they wanted to create a space for dads, partners and their children to spend time, connect and support each other.**

Working together, Dads Club and Acacia:

- Run monthly Dads Stay and Play sessions in South Birmingham.
- Organise social nights out for dads.
- Offer ad hoc individual meet ups, coffee and walk and talks.
- Organise community events that raises awareness of the unique mental health challenges faced by dads.

# STORY ROB'S



## How I felt before Acacia's help

In my head, it had always been the narrative for me that I had to be a hero, to feel ashamed of asking for help. However, for me to be able to support my wife with her mental health,

I had to be able to focus on my own. Especially when I was feeling tired, I was getting more stressed and more anxious.

## My experience of Acacia's service

My wife was assigned to the perinatal mental health team. Whilst talking to them, they suggested that Acacia would be able to support me and help me in supporting her.

Being able to speak to Ben (the peer support worker for dads and partners), I was able to verbalise some of my thoughts and experiences. This also gave my wife peace, because she could see I was getting help, and that made our relationship stronger as well.

## How I'm feeling now

Since feeling much better and being discharged from Acacia, I have gone on to found 'Dad's Club', which is a monthly stay-and-play session for dads and their young children, where they can socialise and support each other. I honestly wouldn't have been able to do this without the support I received from Acacia.

## My hopes for the future

I hope that other mums and dads are able to reach out for support from Acacia.



# OUR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Acacia's services are delivered by an inspiring and dedicated team of 30 staff (18.4 FTE) and over 50 regular volunteers. Our 2024 staff survey showed that staff satisfaction has increased in virtually all areas:

91%

of staff feel Acacia looks after the **emotional wellbeing** of staff very well

95%

of staff were either very satisfied or satisfied **working for Acacia**

100%

were satisfied/very satisfied with **terms and conditions**

95%

of staff agreed/strongly agreed that they like the **workplace culture**

“ I feel very supported, encouraged, motivated and uplifted within my work place and within my role at Acacia and for that I am very grateful. ”

Staff member

## Lived experience

Acacia is a lived-experience charity committed to supporting the wellbeing of our staff and volunteers.

61%

of **volunteers** have experienced maternal mental health/ mental health difficulties

91%

of **staff** have experienced maternal mental health/ mental health difficulties

## Safeguarding

100%

of eligible staff received **adult safeguarding** training Levels 1-3

100%

of eligible staff received **child safeguarding** training Level 3



# DIVERSE, INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE

**Acacia Family Support is committed to providing inclusive services which embrace diversity and promote equality and inclusion, so we treat our families, employees, volunteers and all stakeholders with dignity and respect, embracing our individual and collective diversity.**

We aim to build a more inclusive, diverse and equitable organisation where our team members and the children and families we work with can thrive.

Over the past 12 months, we have committed to the following actions in our new 2024-2027 Strategic Plan.

★  
Ensure an equal spread of locations/services across the city by planning a new service that targets families in areas of high deprivation and need.

★  
Increase our focus on EDI initiatives including the development of our Experts by Experience group.

★  
Produce additional resources for families that ensure we offer flexible and accessible support and information.

★  
Active recruitment of staff and volunteers from diverse backgrounds that reflect the communities we serve.

★  
Prioritise initiatives that focus on increasing the health, resilience and wellbeing of our team.



## Volunteer survey results

**100%**

of our volunteers said that their **skills** had remained consistent or increased

**27%**

of volunteers have helped Acacia for **6-10 years**

**100%**

volunteers felt that they were **making a useful contribution** to society

**100%**

of our volunteers felt that their **sense of community** had remained consistent or increased

“ I love the fact that mums have support at such a critical time in their lives – something that wasn’t available for me. Acacia offers a safe place for everyone involved – mums, babies, volunteers and staff. ”

Volunteer

“ Acacia is a great organisation to volunteer for. They are caring to volunteers and users as well as staff members. They are friendly, professional and have a deep sense of commitment for the community. I feel part of a family and very much enjoy volunteering with them. ”

Volunteer

### How we support and thank our volunteers

Annual volunteer appreciation event and meal

Annual volunteer survey

A gift on volunteers birthday

Individual yearly catch up

Ongoing training and development

Christmas parties and thank you gift

Termly social catch-ups

Volunteers' week 1-7 June with personal note of thanks



# THANKS

## TO OUR SUPPORTERS

**They say it takes a village to raise a child and we think the same is true for running a local charity! We would like to give a heartfelt thanks to the following local partners for supporting our work over the year. We simply couldn't do it without you.**

### Charity of the year partnerships

- Zurich Charitable Trust
- Timet UK
- Sutton Coldfield Soroptimists
- Rhythm Time Sutton Coldfield, Lichfield, North Solihull & Balsall Common
- Cudos Creative (The Curry Design Studio).

### Corporate fundraising

- Serco
- SJ Financial Solutions
- One 2 One You matter
- Children's Physiotherapy Group
- On the Go Accountants
- Razzamattaz
- Ego Bar and Restaurant.

### Individual fundraisers

Thank you to all of our individual fundraisers and families who took part in so many different events over the year for us including:

- Our annual Wingwalk event
- Sutton fun run
- Ride London cycle event
- Ego Restaurant charity night.



Thank you to our 50+ Monthly Acacia Angel donors including our youngest ever monthly donor Mya Aston! At just 10 years old, Mya decided she wanted to support a charity. For over a year now, she has been donating £1 of her pocket money every week to Acacia, proving that age is no barrier to making a difference!

# OUR BRILLIANT TRUSTEE TEAM



**Hayley Bowen**  
Data Protection Manager,  
Zurich Insurance



**Hannah Borg**  
Managing Director and  
founder of Cherished Charity



**Georgina Dean**  
Chief Financial Officer,  
Black Country Healthcare  
NHS Foundation Trust



**Marie Clare (Dr)**  
General  
Practitioner



**David Knott**  
People Change Lead, Ministry  
of Justice and Director –  
ResourceRight HR Ltd



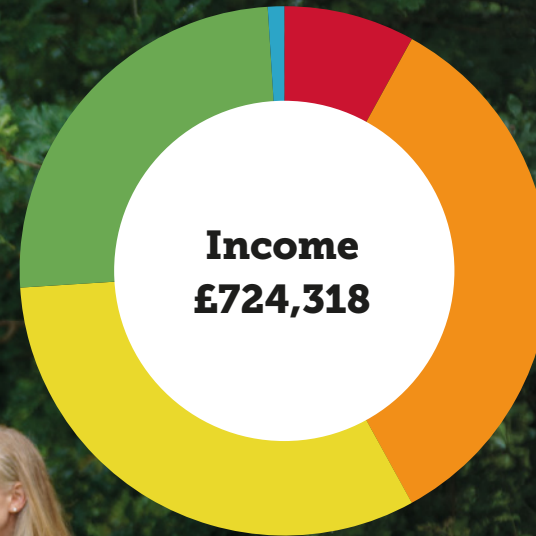
**David Spooner**  
Consultant  
Oncologist





# OUR FINANCES

## 2023-2024



- Community fundraising
- NHS contracts
- Restricted income – grants
- Unrestricted income – grants
- Bank interest



- Direct charitable activities
- Fundraising, support and governance





# A huge thank you to our funding partners

**Thanks go to all the trusts, foundations and NHS teams who supported us through the financial year. We are hugely grateful for the support we continue to receive from so many. We couldn't do it without you. Thank you.**

## Acacia Family Support

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Sutton Coldfield  
West Midlands  
B72 1SD

0121 301 5990

🐦 @Acacia\_Family

📘 @AcaciaFS

📷 @acaciafamilysupport

[www.acacia.org.uk](http://www.acacia.org.uk)



**NHS**  
Birmingham and Solihull  
Mental Health  
NHS Foundation Trust

**NHS**  
Birmingham and Solihull  
Clinical Commissioning Group

**NHS**  
Birmingham Women's  
and Children's  
NHS Foundation Trust



The **Eveson**  
Charitable Trust



Acacia is proud to be an accredited Living Wage Employer



**ZURICH**  
Community Trust

