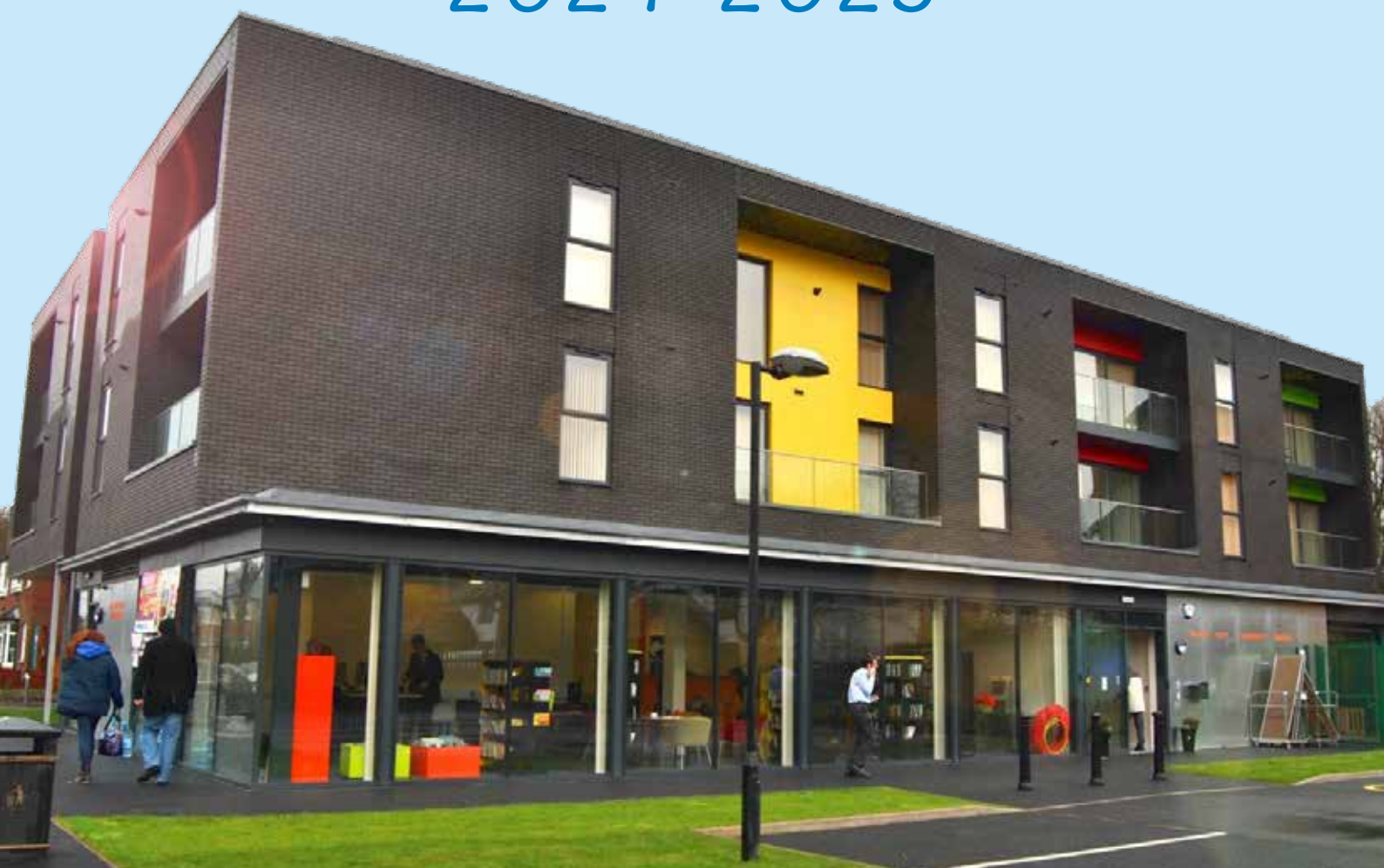




IMPACT REPORT 2024-2025



Hello and welcome to the Impact Report for Barlow Moor Community Association 2024/2025.



I know I say this at the start of every report but I'm proud of everything we've achieved this year! BMCA continues to be a place where people feel safe, supported, and part of a caring community. We've helped families, children and young people, and older residents through services like childcare, youth clubs, food support, training, trips out and a wide variety of social activities and events.

Reducing the impact of poverty is central to our work. We've helped people with emergency food, helped getting access to benefits and housing advice, and offered free courses to build confidence and skills. We know poverty affects every part of life and we're working hard to make sure people have the support they need to move forward and get their confidence back.

We're also tackling loneliness, especially among older residents and those facing difficult circumstances. Through social groups, community meals, and friendly drop-ins, we've helped people feel more connected and less alone.

This year, we were excited to open our smart and shiny new kitchen. It has already helped us run more community meals, cooking sessions, and social events bringing people together and creating a warm, welcoming space for everyone.

We've also seen the power of creative expression in our community. Through poetry workshops and creative writing, people have found new ways to

share their experiences and connect with others. Look out for the poem in the report written by a talented local resident that beautifully captures the spirit of BMCA and the strength of our community.

Our volunteers are at the heart of everything we do. They give their time and energy every week running activities, supporting events, and simply being there for others. Their kindness and commitment make a real difference, and BMCA couldn't do what it does without them.

Looking ahead, we want to grow our services, make sure we're financially secure, and involve more local voices in shaping what we do. Times continue to be tough for voluntary organisations, but our goal is to keep BMCA strong, welcoming, and ready to meet the needs of our community.

On a personal note, my favourite thing about BMCA is walking through the door and knowing that there will be a warm and friendly welcome, smiling faces and something interesting going on. It's a very special place to be involved with.

Together, we can build a stronger BMCA for the future one that continues to support, inspire, and bring people together.

Thank you to our brilliant staff, volunteers, Board members, funders, and partners. Your support makes all of this possible.

Warm wishes,

Joanna Midgley

Chair, Barlow Moor Community Association

DRIVING CHANGE

BMCA actively works to influence positive change at both local and sector levels, building strong partnerships and empowering community voices.

Our Cost-of-Living Partnership stands as a powerful example of collective impact. Collaborating with over 40 local organisations, we continued to provide crucial support to individuals and families, especially during the challenging Christmas period.

This coordinated effort included delivering Christmas Dinner in a Bag, supporting Mission Christmas toy distribution, and providing emergency food parcels and Christmas Eve surplus food. By working in partnership, we've minimized duplication, ensuring that support reaches a wider network of those in need.

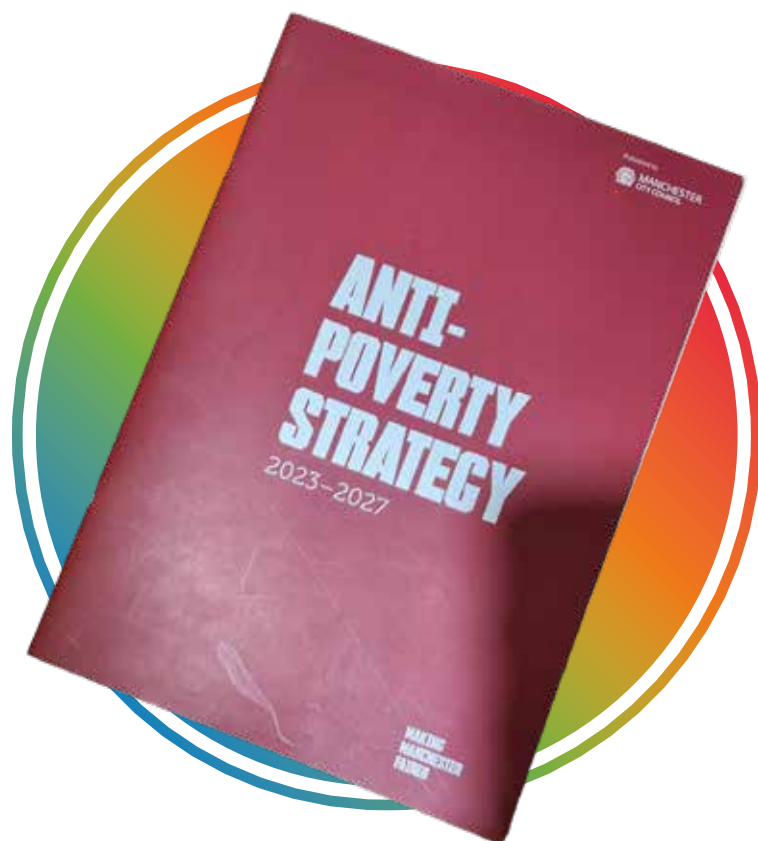


Our reputation as a trusted community hub is further evidenced by the 100 individuals referred to BMCA from external partners, highlighting the essential role we play within the broader support network.

Our newly enhanced newsletter is also a key tool in driving change, effectively promoting our wide range of services and events to a broader audience through social media, our website, and direct distribution.

In addition to our cost of living and anti-poverty work we are also working with **Something To Aim For** to facilitate **Manchester City Councils Anti-Poverty Insight Group**.

Providing a critical friend to the city's response to tackling poverty.



REDUCING THE IMPACT OF POVERTY

Alleviating the burden of poverty remains a core focus for BMCA, and our comprehensive support services have made a tangible difference in the lives of many.

Our **hot food provision** has grown significantly, with approximately **2,741** meals served over the past year, made up of **2,676** community lunches, **45** community Christmas dinners and **20** Christmas Day meals.

This service provides vital, nutritious meals to individuals experiencing financial hardship, combating food insecurity and reducing isolation.

Our **school uniform support** proved invaluable, assisting **42** families with access to essential school uniform and shoes, often covering costs that can exceed **£300** for a secondary school uniform.

We distributed a remarkable **£2,415 in supermarket vouchers (874 vouchers)** and provided **164** support packs/emergency food parcels.

Furthermore, we issued **426 food bank vouchers**, connecting individuals to essential resources.

The **“Let’s Cook”** program expanded to include slow cooker and air fryer recipes, empowering service users with skills for cost-effective and healthy meal preparation.

“I really enjoy learning how to cook different meals, and I am then also able to have it for my tea, it’s a double win for me.”



Overall, our comprehensive Cost of Living support directly assisted 256 individuals without duplication across various Christmas and winter initiatives.

REDUCING THE IMPACT OF POVERTY



A landmark achievement this year was the development of our new, fully functional commercial kitchen, made possible through strong partnerships with Siemens and Nando's.

Their generous support has transformed our facilities, enabling us to significantly increase our capacity to provide meals and create new opportunities for skills development and training in the hospitality sector.



Our **Winter Warmer** event, in partnership with Groundwork and Citizen's Advice, distributed **60 winter warmer packs**, helping attendees keep their homes warm and access tailored information on energy usage and available support services.



Our **Christmas Day Dinner**, delivered by dedicated volunteers, served a three-course hot meal to **20** individuals who would otherwise have spent the day alone, significantly reducing loneliness and isolation.



The annual **Mission Christmas campaign** was a resounding success, providing toys to **176** children. This initiative significantly eased the financial and emotional strain for families during Christmas, ensuring no child wakes up on Christmas morning without a toy.



"Thank you so much this was well needed, you don't understand how much I was struggling and needed it."

"Thank you so much for the gifts, it really will make a big difference to my children"



SOCIAL ACTION

Our 78 dedicated volunteers are the backbone of our social action efforts, contributing countless hours to support our mission.

We believe in empowering individuals and groups to actively participate in shaping a better community and a healthier environment.

Our commitment to environmental sustainability and climate action was clearly demonstrated through the “Keep Manchester Tidy” initiative.

A special highlight was a community litter pick organised with a newly registered volunteer from the Kurdish community, which brought together **25 participants**. This initiative not only improved the local area but also fostered a strong sense of pride and ownership. As one local person observed,

“walking home today there was a noticeable difference after the litter pick.”



The newly launched **BMCA Bike Library**, in partnership with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), has been a significant success. Offering free access to a range of bikes for both children and adults, it breaks down financial barriers to cycling, promoting sustainable travel and enhancing physical and mental wellbeing. We’ve invested in new cycling infrastructure, including bike racks and secure storage, and provide essential accessories like helmets, locks, and lights, ensuring safe and convenient use. Our free bike maintenance station also empowers local people to keep their bikes in good condition.

UNIVERSAL SERVICES

BMCA provides a wide array of accessible services designed to enhance wellbeing, foster lifelong learning, and build stronger community connections for all ages.

Our **Reception team**, supported by **4** dedicated volunteers, is the welcoming heart of BMCA. They pride themselves on offering a warm, professional, and empathetic first point of contact. Through Initial Advice and Guidance (IAG), they actively listen and assess needs, effectively signposting individuals to the right support. This approach fosters trust, with many service users gaining the confidence to engage further with our services, often starting with a simple chat or coffee.



The **BMCA Library** continues to be a highly valued community space, recording **3174** visits between April 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025.

It offers a quiet space for reading, studying, computer access, and meetings, supporting learning, connection, and personal development for all age groups.

NURSERY SERVICES

Our Nursery has welcomed 25 children over the year, fostering a love of learning.

We've strengthened our provision through partnerships with CAHMS, Quality Assurance, Health Visitors, and local schools.

Our commitment to staff development saw 5 staff members completing training and 3 gaining qualifications, including **two** Level 3 NVQs in Early Education and one in Early Years SENCO training. Parents consistently highlight the positive impact:

“My child has settled well into Nursery. His speech has developed so much in a few weeks. The staff have made him feel so welcome and comfortable.”



A CAHMS observer noted **“lovely interactions between staff and children,”** praising the team's engagement and conflict resolution skills.

The Nursery also supported families by managing **32 MCC School Holiday Food Vouchers**, holding **13** TAF (Team Around the Family) Meetings, and completing **4** EHA's (Early Help Assessments).

UNIVERSAL SERVICES

YOUTH & PLAY SERVICES

The Youth & Play (Y&P) Team had a successful year, increasing participation among children and young people.

Despite staffing challenges, they maintained and improved the quality of their diverse activities, which included academic support, sports programs, and exciting trips like **Go Karting** and **Ice Skating** with **44 attendees** and a **Christmas Pantomime** which saw **52 children** and their families attending.

They also led themed projects for **Black History Month** and **Hate Crime Awareness** with **74 children** and young people taking part.

Easter and Summer Playschemes welcomed 67 individual children.

The team focused on holistic wellbeing and developing life skills, with a budgeting project being particularly useful for young people. Their dedication to building a “tightly-knit and supportive community” is evident, with young people gaining empowerment through participation in planning.



The development of 8 young volunteers, including a **Youth Buzz Award** finalist, and the provision of **Bleedkit** training for **10 young people**, highlight their commitment to fostering leadership and crucial life skills.



800
ATTENDED
MERSEYFEST



50+
ATTENDED
SPOOKYFEST



127
PARTICIPANTS BROUGHT
TOGETHER THROUGH
SANTA DASH

UNIVERSAL SERVICES

LEARNING HUB

The Learning Hub (accessed by 120 individuals) achieved significant success, undergoing a full Matrix Assessment in December 2024.

The assessor's overwhelmingly positive feedback praised the "positive, welcoming and supportive working culture" and the effectiveness of our Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) services in enabling "meaningful progression opportunities."



76

INDIVIDUALS MOVING
CLOSER TO THE JOB
MARKET



119

QUALIFICATIONS
WERE ACHIEVED



25

JOB
OUTCOMES



353

ADULTS ACCESSED
PROVISION



143

INDIVIDUALS
ACCESSED HEALTH AND
WELLBEING SERVICES



135

INDIVIDUALS REACHED
FOR 1-TO-1 FIAG
SUPPORT



2

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY
PLACEMENTS



3

SCHOOL WORK
EXPERIENCE
PLACEMENTS



Many staff, like our Chef David and our Receptionist Toni, began their journey as BMCA service users and have since transitioned into employment within the centre.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Our Cake & Conversation group continues to thrive, with around 12 older individuals attending weekly, planning their activities and fostering strong social connections.

Social Afternoons have also seen increased engagement, providing vital opportunities for social interaction through activities like bingo, Play Your Cards Right, and creative workshops. Participants expressed their enjoyment, with one noting:

"I really enjoy the social afternoons, particularly the bingo."

VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

BMCA is dedicated to fostering a lively and interconnected community through engaging events and shared experiences.

Our annual **upcycling event** and weekly **sewing group** (in partnership with Men in Sheds) promote creative and practical ways to reduce waste, teaching participants how to repair, redesign, and upcycle clothing, thereby fostering sustainable fashion and developing new skills.



The **intergenerational trip to Llandudno** was a highlight, taking **over 100 individuals** from Adult Services and Children and Young People departments on a memorable shared experience, strengthening community bonds across generations.

POSITIVE CHANGE

The collective efforts across all our services lead to profound positive changes in the lives of individuals and the strength of our community.

STAYING CONNECTED

We helped **161 people** stay connected through the distribution of **66 SIM cards**, **6 My 5's**, and **89** instances of digital support, bridging digital divides and combating isolation.

ACTIVE LIFESTYLES

58 individuals stayed active through a range of sessions including **yoga, walk and talk, chair-based exercises, and chair yoga**, promoting physical and mental wellbeing.



CREATIVE WRITING

Our Creative Writing sessions, led by a passionate volunteer, have been a “resounding success.”

Attended by **8-10 regular participants** monthly, these sessions provided an invaluable creative outlet, building confidence and fostering connection.

“Absolutely loved it,”

“When is the next one I have so many ideas to write about,”

“That was great, we read out some of our work and it was amazing.”

Our Barlow Moor is friendships hard as iron, days buzzing with belonging, knowing you're cared for. It's what do you need right now? Tea milky the way you like, toast at crochet sessions, real butter dribbling down your chin.

It's a 93-year-old living for music every Friday, where the magic happens. It's a Greek bouzouki, a tin whistle, people of all ages, all capabilities. It's teaching someone two chords and they're away.

It's the bike library, spooky fest and men's den, harmonising yin and yang energy in tai chi, yoga keeping us healthy even when we wobble, it's eight hundred people coming to Merseyfest. It's the tireless work of the staff, keeping people alive, how well they take a joke, welcome young and old.

It's the volunteers, all the kindness we need today, it's every time you come in, another precious memory.

Our Barlow Moor is Santa's first first stop, nobody alone at Christmas, it's like a big fluffy arm around you, the friends you gain, the heart and soul. It's being lifted after loss, a life-line. It's come on in, it's just walk through the door.

MY JOURNEY

“As a mature woman I came to know about BMCA through the job centre when moving from tax credits to universal credits. Due to this I needed to start to look for work and as a stay-at-home mum for 25 years this was a big task, and I asked my job coach for help.



The job centre then mentioned BMCA and suggested that I asked about courses and help towards looking for work.

I contacted the centre about the support they offer and was invited in to discuss how they could support me more.

When I first came, I spent time going over what they could help me with, and they also spoke to me about volunteer work that was available at the centre and I also had a tour of the centre.

I initially joined the digital support session to develop my digital skills which would then help me to carry out job searches and complete applications. Whilst at the centre I was told about a level 1 preparing to work in schools' course that was starting, I was keen to complete this so put my name down.

During the course I regularly meet with my tutor who shared information and knowledge with me providing me with the support and feedback to complete the written evidence needed for the course. Whilst doing the course we often spoke about work experience, and this then led me to discuss volunteering at the nursery within the centre.

I was really pleased when I meet the nursery manager who asked me about my experiences and the days I would like to volunteer, she also spoke to me about the need to have a DBS which the centre would help me with.

As soon as I received my DBS I had a full induction into the centre and also the nursery I was apprehensive as I had not been working for such a long time. I was put at ease and welcomed by the nursery staff and children. I gained experience of working with children from diverse backgrounds and children with special needs. I was supported fully by the staff supervising the children inside and outside, I offered comfort to the children and kept them safe, I learnt how to adapt my communication to develop relationships with the children.

I am still I volunteer at the centre in the nursery and after gaining my level 1 preparing to work in schools' qualification I am currently on the level 2 preparing to work in schools' course with a group of people who are also looking for work.

My main goal is to acquire professional level experience and as much as possible and have qualifications that will better enhance me getting into employment.

Everyone who I have come into contact with at BMCA have helped and supported me to reach my goals which I am very grateful for.”

CEO STATEMENT

Every year, our impact report gives us a moment to pause, reflect, and celebrate the journey we've taken together.

At Barlow Moor Community Association (BMCA), we believe in the power of community to create positive change, and 2024 has been a remarkable chapter in that story.

This year, we've continued to stir the ingredients of our community recipe blending compassion, resilience, and innovation to meet the evolving needs of our community (now this only makes sense if you read last years Impact Report so if not head to our website and take a look). From alleviating the immediate pressures of poverty to fostering lifelong learning and building vibrant connections, our work reflects a holistic approach to community wellbeing.

So, let's return to our metaphorical kitchen for a moment. If last year was about baking the cake, this year has been about refining the recipe, making sure every ingredient is balanced, every flavour is felt, and every slice reaches those who need it most.

Our 2024/25 Ingredients...



Universal Services

These remain the foundation of our daily delivery. Our children and young peoples work, job club, training programmes, wellbeing activities, and social afternoons continue to provide stability and opportunity for all ages.



Social Action

The richness of our community spirit shines through our forums, volunteering pathways, charity shop, and bike library. These projects empower individuals to give back, connect, and lead change.



Reducing Poverty

Our work tackling poverty, from emergency food support to cost-of-living partnerships, ensures that no one is left behind. It's the glue that holds our mission together.



Driving Change

This year, our partnerships have grown stronger and more impactful. Collaborations with Manchester Central Foodbank, Something To Aim For, and the University of Manchester have amplified our voice and extended our reach, helping us influence change at both local and city-wide levels.

As you read through this report, you'll see the stories, statistics, and smiles that show just how far we've come.

We are immensely proud of what we've achieved together. But we know the journey doesn't end here. The challenges facing our community are evolving, and so too must our response. With a new 5-year business plan in motion and a team of passionate staff, volunteers, and partners, we're ready to rise to the occasion once again.

Here's to 2025/26 – let's keep baking, building, and believing.

Becky & Toni



LOOKING AHEAD



Our Focus for 2025/26

Building on the successes and lessons of the past year, BMCA is committed to further deepening its impact in 2025. Our key areas of focus will include:

Expanding Reach and Deeper Impact in Poverty Reduction

We will leverage our new commercial kitchen to significantly increase our hot meal provision and explore new partnerships to further expand our food and financial support, ensuring that no one in our community is left behind in the face of rising costs. We aim to reach even more families with essential support like school uniforms and winter warmers.

Empowering Through Skills and Opportunity

We will build on the success of our Learning Hub. Our focus will be on developing more tailored skills-based training, utilising our new kitchen for hospitality training, and strengthening pathways to employment and volunteering within and beyond BMCA.

Enhancing Digital Inclusion and Connection

Recognising the vital role of digital access, we will seek to expand our digital support initiatives, providing more devices, connectivity solutions, and digital literacy training to ensure everyone can stay connected and access essential online resources.

Nurturing Future Generations

We will continue to invest in our Children & Young People services, further developing programs that promote holistic wellbeing, life skills, and safe, engaging spaces. This includes exploring new ways to empower young volunteers and expand their leadership opportunities.

Strengthening Community Resilience and Wellbeing

We will continue to foster vibrant community spaces and activities, exploring new intergenerational programs and environmental initiatives that bring people together, reduce isolation, and promote sustainable living. We'll actively listen to community feedback to ensure our offerings remain relevant and impactful.





JOIN US IN MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The achievements outlined in this report are only possible through the generosity and commitment of our community. As we look to the future, your support is more vital than ever.

Here's how you can continue to make a tangible difference:

Donate

Your financial contribution directly fuels our programs, providing meals, supporting families, and creating opportunities. Every pound makes a real impact.

Volunteer

Lend your time and skills to any of our diverse services, from helping in the kitchen or library to supporting youth activities. Your dedication is invaluable.

Spread the Word

Share this Impact Report with your networks. Help us raise awareness about the critical work happening at BMCA and inspire others to get involved.

Partner With Us:

If you are an organisation, business, or community group interested in collaborating, we welcome the opportunity to work together to strengthen our community.

Stay Connected

Follow us on social media and subscribe to our revitalised newsletter to stay updated on our progress and upcoming events.

Together, we can continue to build a community where everyone thrives, feels valued, and has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Thank you for being a part of the Barlow Moor Community Association family.

23 Merseybank Avenue,
Chorlton, M21 7NT

T: 0161 446 4805

www.bmcaltd.co.uk



Registered Charity No: 1142217

Website



Donate

