

## Caritas at Christmas

Our annual appeal this year brought in a wonderful total of £10,005.54! We received cash donations from 20 parishes, 6 private donations and 1 school with, and toys from 6 schools and 2 parishes.

We were also successful in securing funding for crisis grants from; The Gubay Foundation, Wirral Borough Council, and Citizens UK. The support of food and toys made a huge difference to families all over the Diocese from South Manchester to Shrewsbury.

We are so blessed to have people who think of others when life for everyone has been very challenging. Together we made Christmas incredibly special to over 210 families, and over 440 children.

*Many thanks for all your help and support!*



## Contact Us

Contact us for more information about what we do and how you can help support our work.

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## Newsletter April 2022

### Some of our Projects across the Diocese

#### Schools and Community Work - Wirral

As we are coming out of lockdown, Caritas has been busier than ever due to an increase in referrals from clients suffering with more severe mental health issues. This is due in part, to the isolation some clients had to endure, giving them time to reflect on their own stories and analyse the various traumas they have suffered through their lives, which has only intensified anxieties and lowered self-esteem.



Sad, confused little girl shared happy thoughts of rainbows so we made one for her to keep!



So thankful for playdough! This is the alien that invades a little girl's head. Breakthrough!

Caritas has an increasing number of children who have lost parents through COVID/cancer, and people who have lost loved ones. Due to this our Bereavement and Loss Service is receiving a high number of referrals. The School Project Team have noticed a high level of children refusing to return to school after the pandemic due to increased feelings of fear and anxiety through falling behind academically. Domestic violence, parental abuse, and self-harming are also escalating.

Due to the above, the workload for the Caritas Support Team has increased significantly. Our Bereavement and Loss Service, and the Early Help and School Teams are receiving a high level of referrals.

Our counsellor is facing an increase in pressure to find more time to address critical cases, as there are no other options to provide a safe haven for mental health needs; this is mainly due to the backlog of patients waiting for NHS appointments.

### Counselling Service

As time has progressed, we have received more referrals from an increasing number of varied sources due to word-of-mouth and feedback from the many clients who have made great progress in improving their mental health under our service. Due to the high volume of clients, we currently have 4 volunteer trainee counsellors mentored by Caritas, to help. Caritas enjoy a good working relationship with the local colleges. Our current students have been brilliant, and due to the high success rate, we are looking to increase the numbers of students placed with us when the new term begins in September 2022.

### Shrewsbury

Work in Shrewsbury centres around schools and, more recently, the setting up of a Mental Health/Family Drop-in Community Service. This is a work in progress and will be developing in the forthcoming months. Caritas is collaborating with other agencies in the area to provide a more holistic approach to working in the community.

### Community Work - Runcorn

For our new venture, we in the process of recruiting a part time Community Support Worker based in the Runcorn area who will directly engage and provide support to the families in this area over the coming 12 months. The groundwork has been carried out by members of our team, and we look forward to establishing this valuable service to the parishes in Palace Fields, Castlefields and Murdishaw.

### Manchester Update – St. Aidan’s Centre

#### Here: Now: Us People Workshop (Together for the Common Good) - January 2022

A workshop on Catholic Social Teaching was delivered to 17 people from a broad range of backgrounds. There was positive feedback from all with plans to develop a programme for schools with students.

**Nature Garden** A project aimed at providing a more nature and people friendly space. The MENd Minds and SENSitive Group working alongside Hulme Community Garden Centre are leading this see increased Local garden/DIY centres have begun to make material donations.



A place of safety where people can develop and form friendships

English classes have continued running online and re-started face to face at St Aidan’s Centre in January. We plan to start the women’s group again as some of the service users want to rebuild the group which had to stop in the pandemic.

**Temporary hotel accommodation for people seeking asylum** - We are still taking the coordination role in the hotel to organise partnership work, donations, and events. We have worked in with; MRSN, Rainbow Haven, GMIAU, Care4Calais, Manchester College and the medical team in the hotel, to deliver the following; English classes, women’s groups, food vouchers and regular distribution of clothes.

**Afghanistan Crisis Response** - We have worked intensively since the crisis in Afghanistan to provide a local emergency response, alongside Manchester City Council and many other charities, delivering services and activities in the temporary hotel accommodation, for example English lessons to help improve their English and enable them to integrate and have links with organisations to help support their mental health

### Community Sponsorship

Working together with parishes who feel that are able to sponsor a refugee family to settle in the UK. We have currently four more groups in different stages of the application process.