CARITAS
DIOCESE OF SHREWSBURY
CHILDREN | FAMILIES | COMMUNITY

Impact Report

2021-2022

Welcome

Ben Gilchrist

Chief Executive

Welcome from the CEO

2021 brought many continued challenges for people within the Shrewsbury Diocese and across the world. I'm incredibly proud of our response as a charity to adapt to new ways of working and the impact that this report shows we have had together.

The terrible situation in Afghanistan during the summer saw Caritas collaborate with new and existing partners both regionally and nationally in an attempt to assist those fleeing the Taliban. And just when we thought some form of recovery might be emerging, war in Ukraine meant further upheaval. It has been a privilege to work with so many others in responding to these crises.

During these exceptional times Caritas' work has been more important than ever and our amazing team of staff, volunteers and supporters have continued to serve those facing the greatest difficulties. Innovation and adaptability has been at the centre of this and I'm particularly excited about the work we have done to prepare for the launch of the Wirral Family Toolbox for children, young people and families, and the new St. Mary's Community Centre in Crewe.

Thank you for your prayers, your donations, your volunteering, your campaigning, and your unwavering faith in the work we do. Please do contact us to find out more and to get involved. Our impact would look so different without your continued support.

Right Reverend Mark Davies

Bishop of Shrewsbury

Chair of Trustees

Welcome from the Chair

I write as we anticipate the financial stresses of the winter ahead which will impact most upon the poor and most vulnerable in our communities.

I am sure you will be heartened to read in these pages of the work of Caritas Diocese of Shrewsbury. So many initiatives have been developed in the past few years for the pressing needs of children, families and communities in our Diocese. All this has been made possible by your support and is undertaken with caritas, the love of Christ. Please God, with the help of your prayer, support and donations we will see the continued growth of Caritas to meet new needs and new forms of poverty in the year ahead.

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Why we are here

Caritas is the social action and social justice agency of the Diocese of Shrewsbury which seeks to develop the Church's social mission.

Caritas means 'Christian love of humankind' and we express this through loving service. This is the motivation at the heart of all the work we do here at Caritas Shrewsbury.

Our Mission

In the Spirit of the Gospel, we work with children, families, communities and parishes to build stronger, supportive communities wherever there is current disadvantage.

Our Vision

All children, families and communities are empowered to experience fullness of life.

Our Values

- Family
- Dignity
- Partnership
- Community
- Diversity
- Welcoming

Schools Service

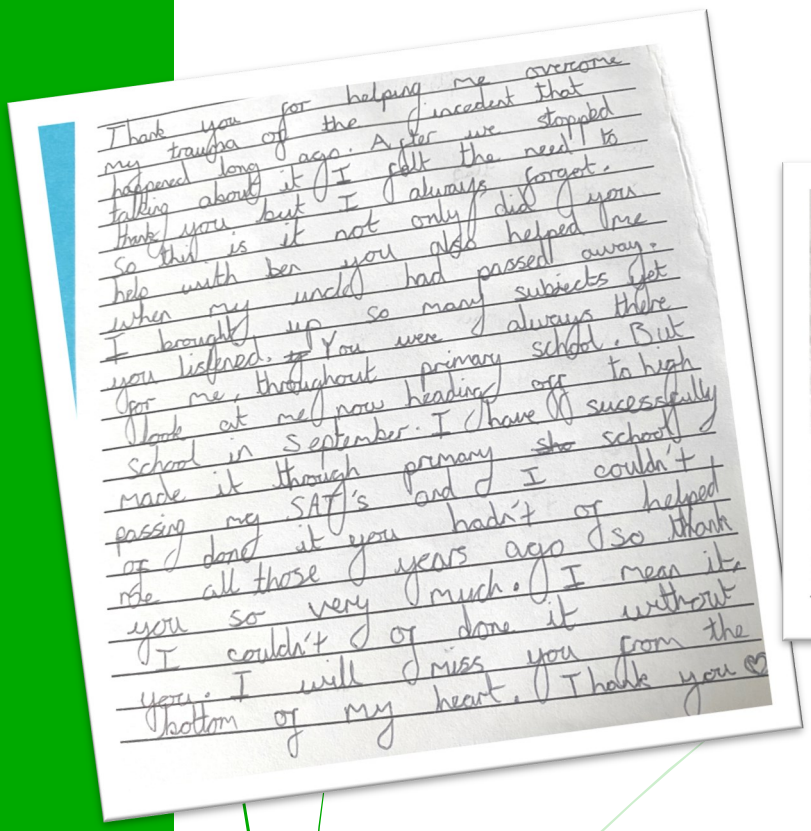
136

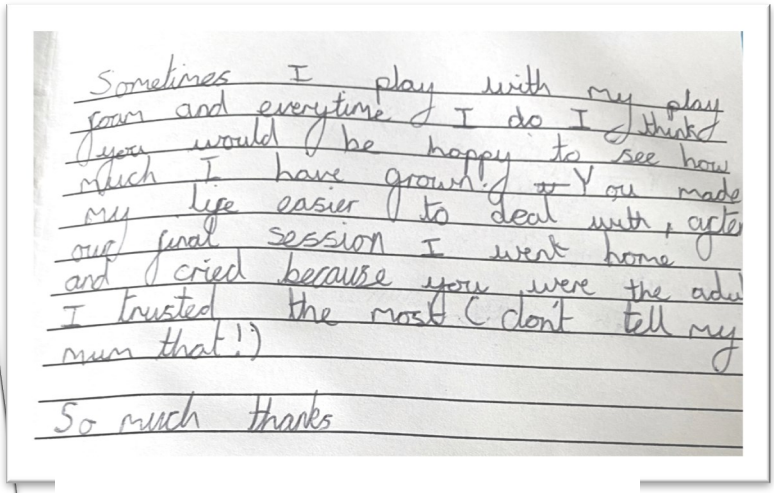
Families Supported

197	351
Adults	Children

Our help is far reaching, as by working with children in schools and their parent/s or carers at home we are able to help the whole family, in some cases extended family too. This takes the pressure off schools, assisting with outcomes that are more positive for all involved.

A school may ask us to provide listening ear support to one child they feel is struggling emotionally in class only for us to find through our own assessment and engagement, that there's more going on behind the scenes at home. For example; bereavement, financial hardship, disability, illness, separation, relationship breakdown, undiagnosed ADHD, autism, health conditions, drug or alcohol dependency or hospitalisations. Caritas has also been able to bring people together to support each other through community groups set up in schools enabling us to make even more of a positive difference. This helps parents to develop their own coping skills, enabling them to move forward and reach goals, empowering rather than rescuing them. Building upon their confidence and self-esteem gives them courage to take a lead and move forward themselves.


I thank you for helping me overcome my trauma of the incident that happened long ago. After we stopped talking about it I felt the need to thank you, but I always forgot. So this is it not only did you help me with ben you also helped me when my uncle had passed away. I brought up so many subjects yet you listened. You were always there for me, throughout primary school. But look at me now heading off to high school in September. I have successfully made it through primary school passing my SAT's and I couldn't of done it you hadn't of helped me all those years ago so thank you so very much. I mean it I couldn't of done it without you. I will miss you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you ♡


Sometimes I play with my play foam and everytime I do I think you would be happy to see how much I have grown. You made my life easier to deal with, after our final session I went home and cried because you were the adu I trusted the most (don't tell my mum that!)

So much thanks

A thank you letter received in 2022 from a child we worked with 3 years ago. The impact Caritas had continues to help him.

Our services are highly valued by schools as we are able to gain the trust of the children and adults we work with and offer an empathic ear. We help families link in with other services and agencies and are now introducing the new Family Toolbox where families can go online and seek help either digitally or on a face-to-face basis.

As a result of our work in schools both families and school staff report feeling supported, heard and informed along with their relationships between each other improving. There is appreciation of our linking in other services and working together for the greater good of all involved. The Caritas Schools Service is highly valued by families and schools alike.

Parenting Programmes

Parenting Programmes help adults to understand and manage feelings/behaviours, enabling them to become more positive and nurturing in their relationships with children and each other. It encourages an approach to relationships that gives children and adults of all ages, an emotionally healthy start for their lives and learning.

As a community support service, the team at Caritas facilitate parenting groups and if needed, work on a one-to-one basis for those parents who cannot attend a group.

The impact of bespoke Parenting Programmes include:

- Parents/carers' understanding of empathy.
- Parents/carers' are able to listen and communicate more effectively both verbally and non-verbally.
- Praise and positive interaction.
- Positive discipline and fair boundaries.
- The importance of self nurture and nurturing family relationships.
- Recognising changes in family life and how these impact on the feelings and behaviours of children and family members, and having strategies for managing these feelings and behaviours.
- Having a better understanding of teenage development and knowing how to react to subsequent behaviours.
- Having a basic 'Toolkit' for parenting effectively through change.
- Enabling parents/carers to share their experience with others through self-run peer-support groups.

Caritas Community Support Team are inundated with requests for placements for parents on these courses, especially for those with children who are in LAC or have special needs. Caritas are inclusive and classes are open to all.

One of our facilitators preparing for the Nurturing Programme which will be inclusive of children with special needs.

Early Help Service

63

Families Supported

104	143
Adults	Children

Families come into our Early Help Service for a wide range of reasons including; sexual abuse, child mental health, parent mental health, child with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, managing behaviour, non-school attendance, neglect, parental conflict, housing and financial difficulties, criminal exploitation, anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse.

As a result we work collaboratively with over 60 partner agencies including all Wirral primary and secondary schools. A strength of our support is the ability to link into our wider Caritas services such as counselling, listening ear sessions, parenting groups and bereavement support. All this ensures families receive the most effective and appropriate support possible by putting together a bespoke plan of help with reachable outcomes. Impacts of this work include reducing isolation, improving mental health and wellbeing, and growing a happier family life.

Early Help Case Study

Support for a single mum with two young children. Mum was struggling with the eldest child's physical and verbally aggressive behaviour towards the whole family. He mainly struggled with sleep, eating and sensory processing. Mum felt isolated and did not know how to find support. Another parent whom Caritas had previously supported, recommended she contact us for some help and advice.

The support worker was able to identify possible additional needs and made referrals to appropriate services for the child to be assessed for ASD and ADHD. Mum attended our Parenting Programme and was given bespoke therapeutic and sensory strategies to help support both children. Mum was also signposted to other agencies and parental support groups, which helped her to feel less isolated.

Despite this support in place, mum continued to experience challenges with the child's school. He was often late due to his behaviour for which the school blamed mum's parenting. Caritas then set up multiagency meetings within the school to identify the areas of concern and ensure appropriate support was put in place. Unfortunately, the relationship between mum and school continued to breakdown and the child continued to struggle. It was felt a different school would be better equipped to meet the child's needs, and Caritas supported mum through this process.

The child is now thriving in his new school but his attendance, although improved, continues to be a concern. He now has a formal diagnosis and is being supported by community paediatricians. Mum attends community groups for children with SEND, and has open access to Caritas for any further advice and support she may require.

Quotes from mum:

"Thank you so much, you are honestly so kind and I'm really grateful for all your help… I would have definitely struggled without you…I would be lost without you."

"I'm so glad you are supporting us, I felt no one was listening to me before you. You have just listened and understood our situation without making any judgements. His school made me feel like the worst parent ever, but I know now it was not my parenting, I just needed the right help to understand his needs and use different strategies. It has made such a difference to us all."

Counselling Service

757	38	22
Hours of Counselling	Clients	People Completed Therapy

Caritas continued work throughout the pandemic providing essential Zoom sessions for clients who would otherwise be facing a 9-month waiting list. This has meant that individuals are not isolated or falling deeper into despair. We have received more referrals from an increasing number of sources. This is due mainly to word of mouth and feedback from the many clients who have made great progress in improving their mental health under our service.

As we are coming out of lockdown Caritas have noted an uptake in referrals with clients suffering with more severe mental health issues, this is due in part, to the isolation some individuals have had to endure, they have been given time on their own to reflect on their own stories and analyse the various traumas they have suffered through their lives, which has only helped to increase anxieties and feelings of trauma. Caritas counselling service is becoming an essential mental health service for these people as there are very few other options for them. Caritas' Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) therapist has noted an increasing number of clients who are self harming and have attempted suicide.

Monthly Wellbeing Walk at Priory School, Wirral, to improve mental health and reduce isolation

The Serpentine Counselling Service was a pop-up service offer and achieved great results, as more referrals were coming in from the public who saw the various posters placed in the windows of local shops. This has also further promoted not only the Counselling Service but has increased Caritas' profile in the area as potential clients were made aware of other services provided under the Caritas umbrella.

Kindness tree photo: working with children to produce and hang their ideas of kindness on the kindness tree in The Priory Primary School.

Shrewsbury Community Project

We have been developing our support for families in the Shrewsbury and Telford area, and are in the process of establishing an office in Shrewsbury town centre. Referrals come from many valued partners, including the SVP, and work covers a range of issues:

- **Finance** – work has included referrals to Money Advice to successfully resolve financial issues, completing applications for PIP, food bank referrals, and food vouchers. We supported a successful application to the Local Welfare Fund to provide a family with a new cooker and money for beds and mattresses for the children.
- **Schools** – support has been provided for parents with issues including non-attendance of children at school with the impact that all children are now attending school. Bereavement and listening support has also been arranged.
- **Housing** – contacting a letting agency and providing supportive letters for a family living in poor conditions with the result that the damp in the house was addressed and internal redecoration undertaken.

We have been active in making links with other charities and networks across Shrewsbury and Telford. Through all this work we have refined our focus onto a new Caritas Mental Health and Listening Support Service. From work so far we know the value and impact of this service includes:

- Offering a drop in service that doesn't rely on referrals or a complex appointment system.
- Adults with anxiety benefit from improved coping methods by joining shared activities such as discussion/creative sessions.
- Parents/carers or grandparents have improved parenting strategies.
- Improving community spirit and employability as clients are encouraged to follow the volunteer route with a plan of getting them back into employment where possible.

In December 2021 we spoke at six Shrewsbury masses raising awareness of the Caritas at Christmas Appeal

£1312.57

Collected in Shrewsbury

(Above) Christmas donations for local families.

(Left) Food donations, free to our community.

Bereavement & Loss - Listening Service

14

Referrals into the service

41

Individuals and family members benefitted from 1-2-1s

We offer a listening ear without judgement immediately after loss or bereavement. To open up to others and let them in and talk about their struggles can be very scary so we provide a safe place where clients can talk freely about their fears and worries. Grief is recognised as a process and range of emotions people go through as they gradually adjust to their loss. Feelings of grief also happen regarding other types of loss such as the end of relationships, the loss of a job, moving house to a new area or decline in physical and mental health of someone you love.

Some things are just too hard to talk about, that's where a Breakthrough Alien can help.

A sad, confused little girl shared happy thoughts of rainbows, so of course we made one.

IMPACT

100%

Felt the service had helped them

77%

Felt that it had improved their mental health

"I feel it's ok to cry and be angry, the pain is still with me but is getting easier".

Generosity & Partnership

INDIVIDUALS

£2,900+

In online donations (first

£7,500+

From parish collection

£10,000

Raised in legacy

£16,031

From regular giving by

414+

Donations

PARISHES & SCHOOLS

£3,453

Raised by schools for the Lent Good Shepherd Appeal

£10,578

Raised by parishes for the Caritas at Christmas Appeal

£1,444

Raised by 5 Special Parish Appeals

Support from **47** parishes, and **9** schools

GRANTS

20 grants

To support our work

2 councils

Supporting our work

1 business

donation

1 partner charity

donation

£130,650+ raised from payments for our services

The Caritas Twitter-verse

@CaritasDio

#LoveinAction

#CaritasShrewsbury

@UptonHallFCJ @uptonhallfcj · Mar 11
Lent is fundraising time. Each year group is allocated a week to raise funds for Cafod & Caritas. Thursday was teacher Karaoke in the hall. As you can see, this was well attended and raised a lot of money! Thank you to all of the staff who took part and sang their hearts out 💚

2 6 35

info@caritasshrewsbury.org.uk 🧡 @CaritasDio · Mar 11
Wonderful support. Will make a big difference.

info@caritasshrewsbury.org.uk 🧡 @CaritasDio · Mar 31
Thank you so much for this wonderful #support and #solidarity which will make a big difference to many people facing challenges at this time #GoodShepherd #CatholicSocialTeaching #CostOfLivingCrisis

St James' @StJamesCheadle · Mar 31
The cake sale was a huge success. We raised an incredible £142.20 for Caritas. A special thank you to everyone who baked or contributed cakes. #WeAreStJames #faith

St. Joseph's, Upton @StJosephU · Mar 18
34JM did an amazing sponsored walk today for the Good Shepherd Appeal for CARITAS today. We walked a total of 36 miles as a class. Well done - you are all superstars! #CARITAS

2 2 8

info@caritasshrewsbury.org.uk 🧡 @CaritasDio · Mar 21
Thanks for your faithful fundraising! So glad the sun was out and great to see health benefits too. Keep walking proud and in #solidarity

Cheadle Catholic Junior School @CheadleRCJnr · Dec 14, 2021
We are truly humbled by the generosity of our families. This overwhelming number of gifts and presents (plus £373) has been donated here at the junior school for @CaritasDio @ShrewsRCnews Thank you!

2 5 21

info@caritasshrewsbury.org.uk 🧡 @CaritasDio · Dec 14, 2021
Wow! Thank you so, so much to everyone involved for their #kindness and #generosity. This will make a big difference for many people #SocialAction

The Hope Project Foodbank @FoodbankHope · Mar 13
Lent Appeal
The Hope Project have direct responsibility for several foodbanks in Wythenshawe Northern Moor. Our foodbanks aim to provide a supply of three meals a day for three days to those in need.
Please support our work in helping fight food poverty.

crowdfunder.co.uk
Lent Fundraiser for Foodbank Supplies
Our foodbanks aim to provide a 3-day supply of 3 meals a day for families and individuals in Wythenshawe and Northern Moor, ...

info@caritasshrewsbury.org.uk 🧡 @CaritasDio · 12 May 2021
Replying to @CaritasDio
First huge #thanks to @StVincentsPr for their #generous #donation of £519 to our #GoodShepherd appeal. Children took part in a number of activities including a pancake flip challenge and a photo competition 'Lent through a lens'. Brilliant #fundraising ideas!

The Caritas Twitter-verse

@CaritasDio

#LoveinAction

#CaritasShrewsbury

Campaigns

@CaritasDio

#LoveinAction

#CaritasShrewsbury

We have continued to speaking up for social justice and to try and tackle the root causes of the issues we work to address. We have been active in campaigning on child poverty and for people seeking asylum and refugees, through national coalitions and networks especially the Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN).

Our campaigning as part of a broad national coalition of groups on the Government's £20 uplift to Universal Credit led to a 6 month extension of this vital support. We have spoken out as one of the over 400 organisations in the Together With Refugees coalition about our grave concerns around the Government's cruel new Nationality and Borders Act and will continue to call for a fair, kind and more effective approach to supporting refugees. If you would like to become a campaign volunteer please do get in touch.

Refugees & People Seeking Asylum

Our English classes have been running online and face-to-face at the St. Aidan's Centre with referrals from partner organisations. ESOL classes are supported by an amazing and dedicated group of volunteers who deliver two hour sessions every week.

"I have the best teacher here and I enjoy learning English. I'm so grateful for what I'm getting here. I feel like I belong to a community of wonderful people and I feel understood and that is very important to me. Thank you Caritas for everything."

8

Volunteers

30

ESOL learners

(Below) Day trip with the families in temporary accommodation at a trampoline park.

(Left) English classes for refugees and asylum seekers at St. Aidan's Centre.

"It was good opportunity to improve my English language skills. The environment was great, all necessary facilities were available, teacher was very kind, the class atmosphere was friendly and material was updated, therefore I encouraged many other friends to join this class. Many thanks for all."

"It was my first face to face class today, it was very nice to me and I liked it. Thank you so much for providing us this class."

(Right) Magic show in one of the Afghan hotels.

Community Sponsorship

We have had **5 Community Sponsorship groups** in different stages of the process. St. Ambrose and St. Vincent's welcomed a family in 21-22 and the All Saints group have now welcomed a family from Syria. The Our Lady and St. Christopher's group have accepted a Syrian family having submitted the application form for full approval. The Hazel Grove group have submitted their application form for full approval. The Stockport Methodist group are working to submit stage 1 of their application form.

Temporary hotel accommodation for people seeking asylum

Throughout 2021-22 we worked collaboratively with MRSN, Rainbow Haven, GMIAU, Care4Calais, Manchester College and the medical team in a Manchester hotel to deliver a wide range of activities including:

- English classes for adults and children three days a week led by MRSN, All in One Centre, and Care4Calais.
- A women's group to give women a safe space to meet and talk run by City of Sanctuary.
- Regular clothes distribution when needed and daily referrals to Care4Calais and Chorlton Refugee Aid.
- **2** grammar schools attended weekly to teach the children.
- Working with the council education worker to help children access educational provision and we registered eligible residents for college.
- Provided weekly food vouchers for **30 families**.
- Organised weekly advice sessions where residents came to meet caseworkers.
- Provided **50 phones and 150 free sim cards** for the residents who didn't have any.
- Organised an Easter event in the hotel and worked collaboratively with independent charities to provide **400 meals daily during Ramadan**, sourcing Eid gifts for all the children and organising for families to attend a fun day that Didsbury Mosque staff arranged.

"I have been in the hotel for 4 months without a cash card. I take the voucher and run to the supermarket to buy cheese, bread, vegetables and fruits for my 3 girls. They don't like the food in the hotel. It's a happy day when we take the voucher"

Local football club invited people who seek asylum to watch the game and spend the day in the neighbourhood.

Afghan Hotel Work

After rapidly developing emergency work to welcome Afghan refugees we have now been appointed to act as the lead coordinator for the voluntary sector in the 3 hotels housing Afghan refugees in Manchester. We are working with many partners, including City of Sanctuary and The Pankhurst Trust, to deliver activities in each hotel. This builds on our other hotel work and has meant we can support people's wellbeing and integration.

SENsitive Group

Over 70 families, parents or carers have engaged with the SENsitive Group during the last 12 months. Almost 50 have attended the support group, workshops or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) events organised by the group. Social media membership, mainly parents of children who have SEND, has grown to 372.

70+
Families

50
Attendees

372
Members on social media

A parent speaking up for SEN children at the Greater Manchester Citizen's Zoom Assembly with Mayoral candidates.

Campaign

At the end of April 2021 the group made a powerful presentation to the Greater Manchester Mayoral candidates as part of an online assembly before the Mayoral election. Mayoral candidates responded positively to this and the group continues to link with Andy Burnham who was elected about improving SEND services in Greater Manchester. Almost 600 people joined the online assembly with over 100 there supporting the SENsitive campaign.

Support Group and Workshops

In 2022 the group developed its support offer by organising SEND workshops and offering targeted support at its fortnightly meetings. The two half-day workshops on disability rights and EHCP's attracted 12 and 17 parents respectively. The support group has an average of 8-12 attendees but numbers can be over 20.

(Right) If you go down into the woods today - Sensitive Group Nature Walk.

Networking and Leadership

The group continues to play an active role in Greater Manchester Citizens with 11 leaders benefitting from training and 4 leaders speaking at assembly events. A strong partnership has been formed with Just Fair and links developed with SEND leaders and organisations across Manchester including two local special needs schools. 14 leaders attended different community organising training delivered by Caritas.

7 leaders have taken up roles, training, or job opportunities thanks to confidence built in the group. This includes specialised SEN and advice training, a community development manager post, 2 school governor roles, and courses to do jobs supporting SEN children.

(Below) Living Wage Campaign – leaders from Caritas lobbying Manchester MP's at Parliament as part of the Living Wage Campaign!

Wythenshawe Community Groups & Activities

Mend Minds Group

11 men have engaged in the group, which meets fortnightly. The group maintains regular contact with those still experiencing 'self-isolation' through engagement over the internet at the regular gatherings. One man in his 60s who is still recovering from 'long Covid' having spent months in hospital said:

"It is frustrating that I can't join you at the group but good that I still feel a part and you haven't forgotten me! It is good to join in the banter and it helps lift my spirits."

This year we piloted a new Together for the Common Good (T4G) course on Catholic Social Teaching in Wythenshawe and Hoylake. Trustee John Fegan shares some of the highlights of the course and the evolving relationship between the parish, Caritas and T4G.

- *One topic per session supported by excellent content including prayers, scripture, a video reflection and questions for reflection and discussion for each session.*
- *Meeting via Zoom with other parishes from all over the country. These discussions proved invaluable. We were able to encourage each other on our journeys.*
- *Everyone who took part in the sessions have said how much they enjoyed them and how they made them realise the importance of an understanding of the Common Good for developing and strengthening our parish family. Having learnt and tested the process and content we are now keen to reach out further and share with more people.*

Please do get in touch about running the course in your parish.

Nurture Art Project

This project began in February 2022 and is part of a partnership between Caritas and Dynamic Engagement, a community arts organisation, to bring people together after the pandemic. Foodbank volunteers along with members of the Mend Minds and SENsitive Group have been involved, with **19 people taking part,** in making a mosaic art mural for the nature garden.

One of the younger men from the Mend Minds Group said; ***"I love doing the mosaic. I didn't think I would be any good at it! It's so relaxing!"*** The project is funded by Buzz.

The Hope Food Bank

After the surge during the height of the pandemic the food bank is now quieter. **22 volunteers** are involved with referrals mainly coming from schools, GPs, and the local women's refuge. On average, the Hope Food Bank receives **20 referrals each month**. Volunteers received recognition for their amazing efforts during the pandemic reaching the final of the Manchester Be Proud Awards.

CARITAS

DIOCESE OF SHREWSBURY

CHILDREN | FAMILIES | COMMUNITY

Supporting us has never been easier! Scan the QR code to donate.

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