

Salisbury & Bristol Diocese Supporters eNews with Gill Ford

Hello to you all!

Welcome to my sunny June newsletter! June so far is glorious, let's hope it continues! I hope that you enjoyed the bank holiday weekend and have had the opportunity to see friends and family as lockdown restrictions easing.

May was another busy month planning for months ahead. I can't quite believe it is a whole year since I was put on furlough for 3 weeks. I remember spending a lot of time enjoying the sun in the garden and walking the dogs.

It's National Volunteers' Week this week 1-7th June. This is a time where volunteers across the UK are recognised for their amazing contribution to charity. What better time for me to say a MASSIVE thank you to you all for the volunteering time and commitment that you give to The Children's Society. It's a time for celebration and you can find out in this newsletter what we are doing to recognise our volunteers, showcase the impact you have on our work or find out how you can get involved.

Our monthly webinars continue. May's webinar on children's mental health attracted 200 viewers. At this webinar, we launched a new friendship guide for church Primary Schools, which has proved very popular. This can be viewed, along with many other church and youth resources, on our [Flipsnack](#) site here and I've included the link to the recorded webinar in this newsletter in case you missed it.

Our June webinar will take place during Refugee Week, which runs from 14-20th June. Read on for more information about Refugee Week, our work in this area and how you can support. I will be on annual leave the week commencing 14 June, returning on Monday 21 June. If you need any support during this time, please contact our Supporter Care Team on 0300 303 7000 or email supportercare@childrenssociety.org.uk who will be happy to help.

We know what a hard year it's been for everyone, so thank you for sticking with us and let's make this year one to remember!

With my very Best wishes,

Gill Ford

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Working Days – Monday–Wednesday 9-5



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Thank you.

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Volunteers week



Every year in the first week of June, we take advantage of National Volunteers' Week to celebrate everything our amazing volunteers do to help change the lives of vulnerable young people in the UK.

We have around 7,000 volunteers and over 200 colleagues across The Children's Society who directly manage volunteers. Our volunteers and managers are from all walks of life and are collectively transforming the lives of young people through their actions. We want to celebrate every single one of them, for whatever they contribute to our mission – whether it is their time, money or voice.

At The Children's Society:

- *9,307 people volunteered with us in the past year, with over 1,000 new volunteers taking action for the first time.*
- *Over 5,000 community volunteers held events, delivered talks, co-ordinated donations, influenced decision makers and inspired local people to take action for children.*
- *3,216 Retail volunteers assisted in the running of our network of 111 shops, rising vital funds for our work with young people.*
- *We awarded an unprecedented 16 National Volunteering Awards to our most outstanding volunteers, due to the exceptional contribution of the nominees.*
 - *We recognised over 960 years of volunteering time given over the course of the year as part of our Volunteering Recognition Scheme.*
 - *Volunteers were involved in important new roles such as Volunteer Therapists and Family Activities Volunteers.*

All of our volunteers who have signed up to receive emails from us will receive a thank you email with a special video from our CEO Mark Russell. An inspirational new volunteer blog will be shared during the week, along with quotes and inspirational stories from volunteers being shared on our social media channels.

Across my patch, I work directly with 1 Diocesan Ambassador, 5 volunteer speakers, a Campaigns Champion as well as 12 fundraising committees and Support Groups.

As you know, I have both a Twitter and Facebook page for work and I would love to share stories on them both from volunteers across Bristol and Salisbury Diocese. If you'd like to get involved and share your story, please send a paragraph to me by email, ideally with a photo. This could include who you are, where you live, what role you do, why you chose to volunteer with The Children's Society and why others should consider it.

I want to extend a personal thank you to all our supporters across the Bristol and Salisbury Diocese. You make a difference every time you organise an event, raise funds, talk about and pray for our work.

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Refugee week



Refugee Week is a festival celebrating the contributions, creativity and resilience of refugees and people seeking sanctuary. You can find out more about the week at <https://refugeeweek.org.uk>

There are 13 million child refugees across the world. 9,000 unaccompanied children have applied for asylum in the UK since 2016. We worked with 1,500 refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant children in 2019, with 99% saying their lives had improved after working with us.

Every child should have the chance to be safe, happy and achieve their dreams, regardless of their or their parents' immigration status. Our services across the UK give young refugees and migrants opportunities to recover, meet people and start enjoying life in a new country.

A group of young people known as the YLCSC are campaigning so that all children who arrive in the UK alone get a legal guardian. Guardians help young refugees and migrants with immigration interviews, understanding rights and adapting to a new life in a new country. Guardians exist in Scotland but not in England or Wales. The YLCSC are fighting to change this. Please watch this [documentary](#) about the campaign, told in their words and have a look under the campaigns section of this newsletter to find out what you can do to support them. You'll also see under the 'You're Invited' section a link to register for the next church audience webinar, which will focus on our work with young refugees and migrants.

Black Lives Matter



27th May marked one year since the murder of African American George Floyd – which sparked a global [Black Lives Matter](#) moment that re-energised the movement and has prompted a long overdue and profound reappraisal of racism,

including within the charity sector. I'm proud that The Children's Society pledged our commitment to be anti-racist, and that we have made progress since: creating space for conversations and networks to build, investing in individual and collective learning, training and new guidance, sharing experiences and exploring ideas through blogs and sector debates, challenging our leaders to reflect on what this commitment means for our engagement and taking part in Race Equality Week.

We still have some distance to travel – we need to work harder to progress further. Last week, the Board of Trustees and Executive Leadership Team dedicated the afternoon to a session exploring our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, facilitated by The Unmistakables, an expert inclusivity partner who brought a number of internal and external contributors to share their experiences. We concluded that our leadership needs to get more “comfortable being uncomfortable” if we are to learn and grow; and that more leadership action is needed, prioritised by the whole organisation. We will be carrying forward the discussion with our leadership team and continuing to open up across all teams at The Children's Society. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is not a nice-to-have, separate from our vision, goal and values – it's intrinsic to who we are, why we are here, how we achieve change and what change we achieve. We will continue to push harder and continue to challenge.

You can find out more about the [George Floyd Memorial Foundation here](#).

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Campaigns

Strengthening the Safety Net

Thanks to you, and the support of thousands of campaigners, our joint letter to the Treasury received signatures from over 150 councillors across the country, putting further pressure on the Chancellor to commit to a long-term funding plan for local crisis support. With this, we have helped secure an extension on the deadline for current spending and an additional £59 million to support local schemes – but we know this is not enough. There is still no long-term financial plan in place for councils who face unprecedented pressure in the wake of the pandemic. We are continuing to call on the government to address this oversight. Please continue to [sign and share our petition](#).

Together we can stop families from having to face this crisis alone.

Distress Signals

We are campaigning for all unaccompanied and separated children to have a guardian. Young people fleeing war and persecution have to take a range of difficult journeys to get here.



Once they arrive, they continue to face significant barriers, and have to navigate a complex immigration system. In England and Wales, there isn't anyone to act in their best interests, so they have to make life-changing complex decisions all by themselves. Please [sign our petition](#) and help young people get the support they need to build the future they deserve.

You're invited!

The Children's Society - We Cannot Walk Alone –

A Refugee Week Webinar

Wednesday 16 June 2021 11.00am – 12.00pm

Join us during Refugee Week 2021, to hear more about The Children's Society's work with young refugees and migrants and to get an update on our Distress Signals work, a young activists' campaign for Independent guardians.

Last January, the group took a research [trip to Scotland](#) and discovered the positive effect a guardian can have on a young person's mental health and well-being throughout their asylum journey. They've been campaigning for this change ever since and it's needed now more than ever. With over **17,000** people supporting their campaign, the young people are determined not to give up on their dream to help others, even though it's too late for them to benefit from having a guardian. Will you help them reach [20,000 signatures?](#)

Hear from:

- **The Rt Revd Guli Francis-Dehqani**, Bishop of Chelmsford, talk about the Christian imperative to care for young refugees and migrants.
- Members of our **Youth-led Commission on Separated Children (YLCSC)**, a group of young people with lived experience of the asylum process, who are calling

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on the Government to provide legal guardians to all unaccompanied and separated children arriving in England and Wales.

*There will be plenty of time for questions to the speakers and to Lucy Leon, Policy and Practice Adviser, The Children's Society for refugee and migrants. **Registration is FREE but essential via this Zoom link-***

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_HIYlePWOQdmbVXaPThVEIQ

Please sign up even if you cannot attend on the day to receive the recording afterwards.

** If you missed the webinar on 13th May on Young People's Mental Health and Well-being – supporting friendships – you can catch up [here](#).*

Salisbury and Bristol Diocese – we need you!

Do you know anyone who would be keen to find out more about becoming a volunteer speaker? If so, please do pass this on to them!



Can you talk with passion to audiences both large and small?

Would you like to help the most vulnerable children in the UK?

If so, please support us by becoming a Volunteer Speaker for The Children's Society! We are in desperate need for Volunteer Speakers. We need people to make a real difference by increasing awareness of our vital work. By reaching out and sourcing talks in your local community, inspiring people to support us and strengthening our links with the local area, through churches, schools and businesses.

You will thank existing supporters and motivate new people to get involved in our work and donate their time, money, voice and prayer. We want your time with us to be enjoyable and rewarding as well as impactful, which is why we will provide you with all of the support and training you need to be effective in your role and to get the most out of volunteering.

As restrictions continue to lift in the UK, why not try something new and join The Children's Society family?

For an informal chat about the role, please contact Gill Ford, Relationship Manager on 07539 445 415 464 (Mon-Wed) or email gill.ford@childrenssociety.org.uk

Across the Diocese

We are so grateful to you all for your continued engagement with us and for doing what you can when you can. Here are a few of the activities planned so far. As lock down restrictions lift please do let me know your plans so that I can support you!

- Melksham Committee are hosting a Melksham Open Gardens event on 25th July
- Shaftesbury Committee raised £638 in their "It's Nearly the End of the Lockdown Quiz" . Great innovation there! Shaftesbury also have a Street Collection in the High Street on 26th June.
- Wimborne Committee planned a 21st May stall at Allendale Minster Market
- Bradford On Avon Committee hope to have a street fair in July

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Thank you all so very much for all that you do to help to make this a society that is built for all children.

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