



St Vincent de Paul Society

Turning concern into action



2018

Annual Report



St Vincent de Paul Society

Befriending people in need is at the heart of what we do.

Our volunteer members, motivated by their Christian faith, seek and find people in need, and offer them sincere friendship. They visit people in their homes, in hospital and in care homes on a regular basis, sometimes for many years, and offer additional practical support such as food, furniture or financial help when this is needed. This core friendship service is complemented by four additional areas of activity: community support projects, youth work, holiday provision and overseas aid.

Our History

The SVP was founded in Paris in 1833 by Blessed Frédéric Ozanam. The organisation grew rapidly, arriving in England in 1844 and then spreading across the world. It is now one of the largest Catholic lay organisations in the world with an established presence in 153 countries and a global membership of over 800,000.

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How we help...

Community Support Projects



Community Support Projects (CSPs) is the term we use to describe the project work we do in the community and includes our community

shops, furniture stores, advice and support centres, supported accommodation and our contract with the Home Office to manage and run two local approved premises for offenders making the transition from prison into the community.

Youth Work



Our youth programme takes our Vincentian values, especially the befriending of others, into primary and secondary schools, as well

as colleges and universities, inspiring young people to give their time to volunteer, and sowing the seeds for a lifetime of service.

Overseas Aid



Through twinning groups in England and Wales with SVP groups in India, Sudan, South Sudan, Guyana, Grenada and Romania, we aim to

create a unique worldwide community of love and solidarity, dedicated to sharing the necessities of life with as many of the world's poor as possible.

Holiday Provision



Each year our holiday homes and children's camps provide holidays for about 1,600 adults and children who, in the current economic

climate, find it hard to afford a break. The camps are run by teams of enthusiastic volunteers, many of whom return year after year to help.

Our Vision

Our Vision, which is inspired by Christ's message to love our neighbour as ourselves, is for individuals and families who are in need to have hope together with a sense of dignity, worth, well-being and peace of mind.

Our Mission

To seek and find those in need, to help them in a spirit of justice and to tackle the causes of poverty where we can.

Our Values

Christ Centred - *We acknowledge the presence of Christ everywhere.*

Compassionate - *We aim to show a compassion that is non-judgemental towards those with whom we work.*

Respectful - *We respect the dignity of all in the knowledge that we are all equal before God.*

Generous - *We aim to be generous with our time, our possessions and ourselves in the service of others.*

Responsive - *We aim to be alert to the ever-changing needs in the communities in which we work and to respond accordingly in order to alleviate poverty in all its forms as well as we can.*

Accountable - *We recognise our accountability to God and to those we seek to help, whilst acting within the limits of our own knowledge and skills.*

Confidential - *We respect the confidentiality of those we help, whilst recognising that the physical and mental wellbeing of any vulnerable party must always be paramount.*

We strive to achieve these values through the intercession of the Holy Spirit, through prayer, friendship, mutual support and encouragement.

Putting our faith into action...

I began my five-year term as Chair of Trustees and President of the St Vincent de Paul Society in November 2017. The majority of the work described in this report was achieved under the stewardship of the previous Board of Trustees and my predecessor Adrian Abel. I pay tribute to Adrian for his dedication to the Society and for his skilful leadership as National President. I am grateful for his continued support.

I am very privileged to have been asked to be President of a charity that carries out so much good work for those in need and I am very grateful to our members, staff, volunteers and trustees for their tireless efforts during this year. In 1833 our founder, Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, started the first SVP Conference with a rally cry: "What must we



Helen O'Shea

do to live our Faith? Let us no longer talk so much about charity. Let us put it into practice and go out to assist those who are poor." Putting faith into action is what SVP members continue to do today, where poverty in its many forms is as rife as it was in the days of our founder.

The core work of the Society is visiting and befriending and in 2017-18 our members undertook nearly half a million visits to 87,701 beneficiaries. A key strategic aim of the last Board was regeneration and development of our membership through recruitment and training. The recruitment and development strategy included the appointment of three more Membership Development Officers to work in Cardiff, Hallam and Nottingham to work alongside the volunteer member recruiters and trainers. Membership increased by 1% overall although the number of adult SVP Conferences fell, in part because of the changing nature of Catholic parishes and the need to amalgamate. Addressing this issue and establishing new Conferences in areas of greatest need will be a priority moving forward.

A highlight of the year was our National Meeting and Vincentian 400th Anniversary Mass in Liverpool in June. Attended by over 350 members and fellow Vincentians, it was a vibrant and inspiring gathering.





87,701

beneficiaries visited in 2017-18

Inviting young people to join in our mission is key to sustainable growth. Our youth programme continues to flourish, with continued growth in the number of primary and secondary schools with SVP groups. Inspiring young people to be “Young Vincentians” was a challenge made to us at the 400th Vincentian Anniversary in Rome in October and we are certainly committed to rising to that challenge through the consolidation and expansion of our youth programme.

The opening of St Vincent’s Tower House in Brighton is a notable highlight amongst many in our Community Support Projects. An initiative of our local members, Tower House now provides a

friendly, warm and stimulating meeting place for socially isolated older people in the Brighton area.

In November I visited Khartoum and was able to see at first-hand how the money raised through our Overseas Aid or ‘Twinnage’ programme is helping the poorest of people in Sudan.

I am pleased to report that both our income and expenditure have increased, with more money spent on assisting those in need. Continuing to secure sustainable income streams and releasing monies for furthering our mission are important goals for the year ahead.

Helen O’Shea National President

Rising to the challenge

In 2017–2018 the Society continued to provide a range of services to those in need, both through its core membership befriending activity and its Community Support Projects.

Through the work of our local Conferences over 87,000 beneficiaries were visited over the course of the year (80,000 in 2016) and many were provided with additional material support. Most commonly this includes the provision of transport, followed by food and then financial assistance.

This work is only possible because of the dedication of our volunteer members so we are seeking to grow this amazing resource to enable us to rise to the challenge of increasing need. During the year there was a net gain of 108 members, making a total of 9,746 and 15 new Conferences were started. Following a successful pilot involving a paid member recruitment officer post in 2016–2017, a further 3 part time paid recruitment officers were appointed. Expenditure on core Conference activity also increased over the year.

The continued focus on recruiting youth members is bearing fruit, with growth in all areas except the 18–33 age group, which is under review. There has also been significant investment in the development of youth resources in line with

“ Charity is certainly greater than any rule. Moreover, all rules must lead to charity.” **St Vincent de Paul**

the strategic plan, an aspect which will continue into 2018–2019. This has been made possible by significant grants from trusts and foundations, which have enabled great progress in this area and for which the Society is very grateful.

Our Community Support Projects also continued to grow in key areas with the opening of a new support centre in Brighton and several new community shop openings. In general, project expenditure also increased. Our greater strategic focus resulted in the closure of some projects allowing us to focus on planned areas of growth.

Our holiday provision remained constant, but with greater emphasis on training and standardising systems to ensure consistency and professional standards across all locations.

The Society has continued to support our overseas SVP partner countries through our Twinning programme, overseas project support and disaster relief. Expenditure in these areas has continued to increase year on year, although this year saw a slight decline in the number of twinned groups or Conferences, which we are hoping to rectify in 2018–2019 as part of our strategic plan.

Overall income and expenditure increased, reflecting growth in most areas of our activity. Expenditure exceeded income in large part as Conferences were encouraged to spend local reserves on regional, national or international Vincentian activities.

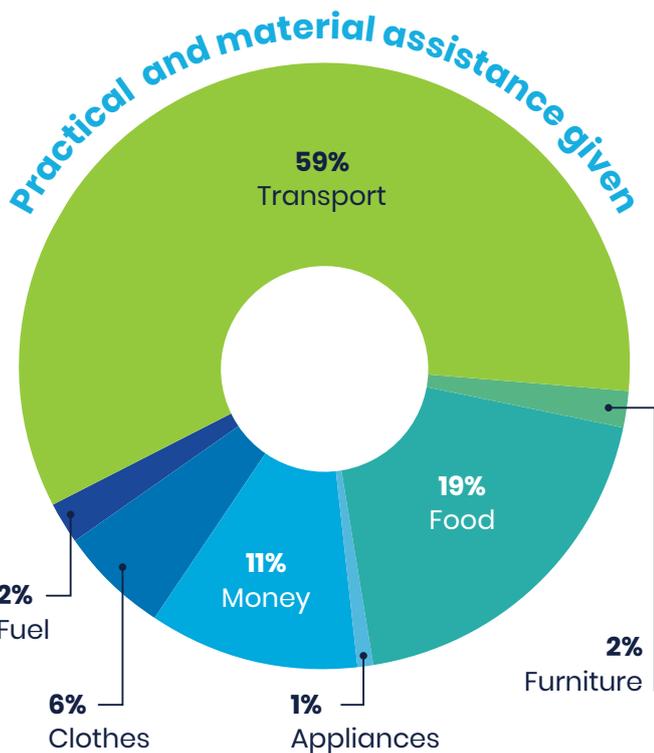
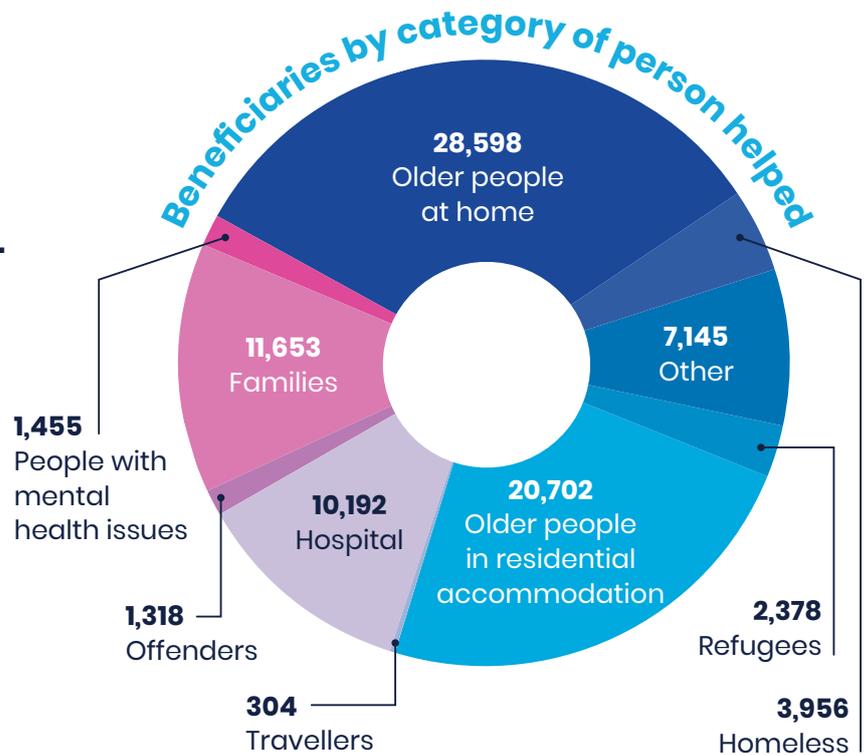
The results for the year provide a solid foundation for the new five-year strategic plan, which commenced in April 2018. As well as sustaining growth, the emphasis is on seeking greater external funding to invest in infrastructure such as IT, systems and people, in order to scale-up our services in the most efficient and effective way and to enable more innovation.



Continuing to support our local communities

Throughout England and Wales, our 9,746 volunteer members in 986 Conferences continued to support those identified as 'in need' in their local communities.

The core work of the Society is visiting and our members undertook nearly half a million visits in 2017-18 to 87,701 beneficiaries. Members visit a wide range of people of all faiths and none. As in previous years older people made up the majority of those visited, with family visits and hospital visits being the next largest categories. The total number of visits made in all categories was 438,847.



In addition to visiting, Conference members complemented their work for the community by providing additional support such as provision of food, transport, furniture or money, and arranging events and outings that combat isolation, particularly among older people.

Progress towards objectives identified in 2016–2017:



Increase membership

The Society established 15 new Conferences and recruited 844 new members. At the same time 36 Conferences closed or were amalgamated with other Conferences – in part due to Catholic Church parishes being amalgamated – and 756 members died, retired or left the Society. Therefore the total number of Conferences declined, although the total number of members in fact increased by 1% from 9,688 to 9,746.

Recruit more regional Membership Recruitment Officers

In addition to the Membership Recruitment Officer for Southwark Central Council, three more regional development officers were appointed for the Central Councils of Hallam, Nottingham and Cardiff. They began work on starting new Conferences and recruiting members for any 'at-risk' Conferences (i.e. those with ageing or declining membership).

In the year ahead we will seek to...

- + Continue to develop and secure the framework for membership support and development
- + Recruit more regional Membership Development Officers
- + Deliver a national Society meeting for 2019 to inspire and develop awareness of current need and showcase innovation
- + Continue to develop the functionality of our new website

Secure the framework for membership development

During the year we continued to develop the framework for Membership Development. This is presented in three sections: attracting new members, informing new members and developing members. It includes membership recruitment resources, a Members' Pocket Handbook, 'Faith in Action' training and training for Conference officers.

The new 'Faith in Action' programme, communicating the Vincentian ethos to members, continued to be rolled out. It supplements the in-house magazine, 'Vincentian Concern', which is designed to reach all members and promotes Vincentian spirituality, fellowship and action.

The Centre for Catholic Studies at Durham University completed an organisational review, commissioned by the Trustees. It considered the internal structures of the Society, how they help or hinder the delivery of our mission and what changes might be necessary. The conclusions are being rolled out and devolved locally.

Hold a membership National Meeting to inspire and develop awareness of current need

Our biennial National Meeting held in Liverpool on 23 and 24 June 2017 was attended by 350 members from all over the country. Inspirational speakers included Sarah Teather, director of the Jesuit Refugee Service, prison chaplain Monsignor Malachy Keegan who spoke about working with offenders, and Bertrand Oussett, former National President of the SVP in France, who spoke movingly about working with migrants in his country. Newly-elected President of the Society in England and Wales, Helen O'Shea, was also introduced to members at the event in advance of assuming the role in November.

The first SVP National Trainers' Meeting took place in Birmingham attended by 32 of the Society's trainers. The event included a review of the take-up of the Faith in Action programme and explored how existing trainers could help recruit and mentor more new trainers to expand the programme. All delegates requested that the National Trainers' Meeting become an annual event. Consequently a second National Trainers' Meeting was arranged for November 2018.

Launch a new website with better access for people requiring assistance

The SVP website was relaunched with a new look – much more modern and streamlined – and improved functionality. Changes included a new 'request help' section which is more user friendly, as well as pages aimed at those interested in becoming members, seeking help or donating money. In addition, a new members' area offers a wealth of downloadable resources for the SVP's membership.







Richard's story

The Society was contacted by Richard, a homeless man in his early 60s who was staying in a temporary hostel in London; He was worried that people were trying to steal his meagre possessions as his time at the hostel was about to come to an end and he'd soon be back on the streets. The local SVP Conference set out to help Richard, befriended him and soon gained his trust.

They discovered that he had mental health issues and accompanied him to GP appointments. They gave him an Oyster card, enabling him to use public transport, and also gave him food bank vouchers. They then discovered that he was entitled to receive a small private pension that he wasn't claiming. They helped him set up a bank account and arranged for the pension to be paid into it. They also helped him find sheltered accommodation which they helped him furnish.

From living on the streets, Richard's life has been transformed. He is now happily settled in his studio flat with food to eat, a bed and a TV. He is also receiving medication and psychotherapy for his mental health problems and is still friends with the SVP members who helped him.

[Read more stories >](#)



Community Support Projects



In the year ahead

A board review of the CSP action plan reaffirmed our strategic priorities, namely to:

- + **Grow the number of new shops and increase surplus income from existing shops**
- + **Review the future of furniture projects**
- + **Grow our support centres**
- + **Extend our advice and support services**

Community Support Projects (CSPs) is the collective term we use to describe the project work we do in the community and includes our community shops, furniture stores, advice and support centres and our hostels for the homeless.

In addition we have a contract with the Home Office to manage and run two local Approved Premises that offer the opportunity for young men to transition from prison back into the community.

Growing people, changing lives is the primary aim of all the SVP support centres. We do this in a variety of ways, but primarily through practical support to people in need who often have nowhere else to turn.

The heart of our support centre ethos is that everyone is valuable. Whether a volunteer, staff member or beneficiary, everyone is treated with dignity and respect. All support centre staff and volunteers remember in their daily work to

show that “everyone is welcome”. This means that no matter how vulnerable and powerless someone might be, no matter what their past, everyone is received with care and treated with the same dignity and respect. In fact, many former beneficiaries become volunteers, or even staff members themselves. It’s a real mix of roles and relationships, no one is ‘fixed’ or ‘pinned’ into their current situation and the support centres are a prime example of this.

In Leeds, Brighton and Newcastle head, heart and hunger are all fed through cafes where people can come together to share good food and conversation. These spaces of meeting and eating are the hub of our centres, a place where stories are told and ideas exchanged, in a friendly, welcoming recreational setting. Classes and activities take place around these hubs. All the support we offer is designed not just to relieve physical need but also to provide a listening ear and emotional support for people who are vulnerable and marginalised.



Progress towards objectives identified in the 2016–2017 report...

Grow shops' income – increase our shops' network to raise more income for the Society

In 2017–18 our shop income increased. We opened three new shops in Middlesbrough, Pontypridd and Hove, and continued in our focus to increase our surplus which allows us to run our projects.

Review and make recommendations about the future of furniture provision within CSPs by December 2017

We closed a number of furniture depot operations and continue to rationalise and save costs where we need to. A strategic review of the provision of furniture across CSPs was undertaken in February 2017. As a result three projects were deemed unsustainable in the current climate; these were based in Rhyl, Ellesmere Port and Manchester saving approximately £90,000 a year.



For the remaining furniture projects based in Sheffield, Leeds and Bradford the challenge for sustainability continues, coupled with the financial burden of collecting, storing, processing and delivering furniture to those in need, which remains a costly service. Further activity and improvements are planned for the future so that we can ensure we give the right level of quality to those in need but remain able to fund the projects adequately.

Grow support centres – review the Society's support centres and community hubs; develop financial sustainability and services which fit the CSP vision

We continue to grow our support services for those who need us. In Bradford we developed our immigration support services and in Newcastle we opened our doors to feed over a hundred people a week who are isolated and hungry.

People – create an organisation in which staff and volunteers are supported, trained and managed by having capable people and reward frameworks in place

To further manage staff we introduced an online HR management system and provided training on its use.

Other staff training took place on 'Conduct and Capability', and recruitment. The Society also reviewed and amended its recruitment and sickness policies and procedures to ensure they are efficient and user-friendly.

[Read more >](#)



CHAS@St Vincent's, Bradford

CHAS@St Vincent's at Allenby House, Bradford offers community based advice, which is contracted by Bradford Council.

This covers a range of advice including welfare benefits, debt advice, housing advice, employment and immigration. Allenby House works with members to provide fuel top-ups, especially during winter months, food parcels and household items through an assisted purchase scheme run by the local authority. Subject to funding, we will see growth and development of our advice services. In 2017 we supported 1,409 people with debt matters, resulting in £423,661 of debt being written off for clients. In total, we handled 4,717 advice cases and helped secure £1,249,535 of benefits income to which our clients were entitled.



Our community Learning and Development team focus on support for lifelong learning using an approach tailored to each person and their individual needs. Classes focus on basic skills for IT and literacy, although there is a range of other groups and projects to take part in such as health and wellbeing, knitting and creative art classes.

For people for whom English is a second language, including asylum seekers and refugees, there are English language classes, with additional support to help people connect with the community. Migrants and refugees studying English at CHAS@St Vincent's often receive help with wider needs such as finding suitable housing or school places for their children. Likewise there is employment support and related activities such as computer classes which are open to the whole community. It's all about helping people empower themselves out of poverty and helping people become active and included in society.

Members of the Society also get involved at CHAS@St Vincent's when it comes to helping those in need. Members identify where help is needed within the local community, and work with the support centre to address a variety of issues. In addition, members also help promote volunteering at the centre and came to help during the refugee crisis and in response to the call for action in this area.



St Vincent's, Leeds

St Vincent's Support Centre, Leeds, offers a wide range of support and activities to help and empower local people. This includes a large education programme with 15 English language classes each week alongside counselling, debt advice, migration support and a large and inclusive volunteering programme.

Our debt team had another busy year with each advisor seeing an average of 259 new clients. Our Income Maximization Officer helped 253 clients (by telephone and face-to-face) and the total income maximised for clients was £242,406. This includes backdated payments, grants, on-going awards and benefits that clients were unaware they could claim. In addition, all the decisions we appealed against in courts and tribunals were successfully overturned in the clients' favour. Both the debt team and migration support service achieved AQS accreditation. This Advice Quality Standard is the quality mark for organisations that provide advice to the public on social welfare issues.

Emergency food parcels are available for those in need and the community café, which is the heart of the centre, offers a "pay it forward" scheme to provide free hot meals to those without. In addition to the more formal services, a number of group activities are available for everyone to join in. This includes an art and conversation group, a friendship group and a good mood group.

The centre is dementia friendly and accessible to all which means that everyone can come and join in – there is even table tennis on a Friday afternoon. In December 2017, the centre was awarded the Jo Cox Compassionate Cities award for its contribution to tackling social isolation.

In Leeds, St Vincent's Support Centre is well known as a place where everyone can join in. Corporate Supporters such as Marks & Spencer and Equifax are often found helping out as are local Conference members and young SVP members, Mini Vinnies. People find the welcome wonderful and often say the place feels homely and somewhere where everyone has a value, whether as a volunteer, a student or just a customer popping in for a coffee.





Blackfriars Centre, Newcastle

The heart of Blackfriars Centre in Newcastle is its café. On a Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, it runs on a 'pay as you please' basis, where anyone from any walk of life can come in and have a meal and choose whether to give a donation.

Thus, no one is excluded from the service. To date it has served over 3,500 free meals while also providing companionship and warmth to those who are homeless, struggling with poverty or simply lonely. Around 100 emergency food parcels plus donations of sleeping bags, warm clothing and toiletries have also been given to those most in need.

The Centre is currently supported by 40 regular volunteers, who are a mix of SVP members and others. Volunteers include people who are seeking asylum, or may have committed crimes or be recovering from addictions. Some of these people are residents from our hostel and other homeless projects, and others whose backgrounds prevent them from volunteering elsewhere without appropriate support. Blackfriars is a place of second (and third) chances and is giving people the opportunity to recover their dignity and self-esteem after setbacks in life.

An extensive review of our supported accommodation highlighted the high quality of service we provide to those who are homeless in Newcastle. Some areas for improvement were also identified and are in the process of being implemented. The project provides en-suite rooms and apartments for 12 people, who would otherwise be homeless or at immediate risk of becoming homeless and are currently at a point of crisis in their lives. In addition, there are six 'move-on' apartments and three self-contained flats for women. Our staff members are available 24 hours a day to help residents fulfil the terms of their occupancy agreement.

Staff also offer help with:

- Support to access treatment services for alcohol, drug or health problems
- Support and advice with claiming benefits
- Support in developing independent living skills, such as budgeting and cooking
- Increasing physical and mental wellbeing, including support to access social activities and peer support groups
- Encouragement to reconnect with family and friends, or develop new social networks



St Vincent's Tower House, Brighton

Tower House is the SVP's newest support centre, and is based in a beautiful Victorian house that has been converted into a specialist centre for older people in Brighton.

Welcoming older people and their carers, Tower House volunteers drive a St Vincent's mini bus to collect people from their homes and bring them to the centre. They can have a hot meal, a cup of tea and cake in the café and a chat with their friends. They can participate in a music class, have a go at some table tennis or enjoy a light exercise class.

For many people who attend the centre, their visit is the highlight of their week. Otherwise isolated, frail and potentially lonely, they are often unable to access other services in the local community and being transported to Tower House and returned home means they can have some much needed social contact. This is an invaluable experience for people who are all too often forgotten by society.

The house is warm and welcoming, decorated with artwork, flowers and bunting. Sunlight streams through the huge bay windows and there is usually relaxing music playing. There is a large living room and conservatory with comfortable arm chairs and sofas where everyone can gather after lunch.



As with all SVP support centres, the positive feeling is palpable and you can't help but leave with a smile.



Furniture Store, Sheffield

St Vincent's Furniture Store, Sheffield has helped to improve the quality of life for those most in need for the last 30 years.

The Furniture store collects and then redistributes recycled furniture and household items to vulnerable families and individuals in the city of Sheffield.

St Vincent's Furniture store accepts referrals from registered Statutory Agencies within the Sheffield area. Many of these agencies are also voluntary and charitable organisations and they establish the individual needs of the client which in turn ensures they are reaching out and helping those in crisis and most in need of help and support.

They are able to offer comprehensive and immediate practical help to people by providing beds and bedding, cooking equipment, cutlery and crockery, carpets, tables and chairs, sofas, cupboards, wardrobes and small electrical items. In short, all the basic furniture and household items that people should have to live comfortably.

Last year the store received a total of 1,262 referrals and in turn distributed a total of 6,547 items helping a total of 2,103 people, which included 887 children.



“Thank you so much to St Vincent's for your help. I was homeless having served in the army and also suffering from PTS disorder. I had been living in supported accommodation and was then provided with my own flat however it was unfurnished. I was refused a local assistance grant and didn't have any money to purchase any items for my flat. The furniture I received from St Vincent's was in really good condition and also it came really quickly. I gave the driver a donation of £5.00 and am so glad I could do this. Thank you once again.”

Focus on: Community Support Projects

Management and oversight

The national board of trustees delegates responsibility for oversight of Community Support Projects (CSPs) to a CSP Committee which is chaired by a trustee. Each local project is managed and run by a paid manager and staff, supported by SVP members and a team of dedicated volunteers. SVP members are engaged in such projects through Local Oversight Groups and Management Committees. Through this involvement they play a key role in ensuring that local needs are identified and that the Vincentian ethos is maintained in the work that we do. Local Conference members also get involved by promoting referrals between Conferences and projects and vice versa.



CSP Strategy

The key strategic priorities for the CSPs agreed by the board for the year ahead are as follows:

- **Secure Greater Financial Stability** by generating income in our shops.
- **Extend Our Reach** by growing new Support Centres in new locations by at least 1 by 2021.
- **Embrace Innovation** by developing new Advice and Support services within our existing Support Centres and by new and improved client services for Supported Accommodation.
- **Raise Our Profile** by increasing internal and external articles and press releases.
- **Build a “Mission Ready” Infrastructure** to ensure we are compliant and fit for purpose.

CSP Organisation



People

200 staff & approximately
250 volunteers



Money

Retail turnover: £2.75m
Support Centre expenditure: £2.5m
- this includes Approved Premises (APs) and other CSPs, principally St Vincent's Support Centre, Leeds (SVSC) and Sheffield Furniture Store (SFS)

Projects

- 40** **Community Shops**
(across England & Wales)
- 4** **Furniture Projects**
(Leeds, Bradford and Sheffield)
- 2** **Approved Premises (APs)**
(Newcastle)
- 3** **Hostels offering Supported Accommodation**
(Len Woodley, Newcastle)
- 4** **Support Centres**
Tower House (Brighton), SVSC (Leeds), Blackfriars (Newcastle) and Advice contract & immigration services (Allenby House, Bradford)



Iva's story

Iva and her family were housed in Leeds when they sought asylum after fleeing Iraq. The family met one of the St Vincent's team at an outreach session at a local church and came to the centre where they were given food from the emergency food service, toys and clothes for the children and also information on English classes.

Over time, the family has accessed a number of services including migration support and advice on financial matters. The centre offered a befriender who became a 'go to' person for guidance and advice. They helped get the children into school and also assisted them with registering with a local GP.

The family are now settled and Iva and her husband attend English lessons and have met other people from the community with whom they have now become firm friends.

[Read more stories >](#)



Breaks away with the SVP



Government statistics show that the number of children living in relative poverty reached 4.1 million in 2017/18 – 100,000 up on a year earlier. However, some of those who were disadvantaged had an opportunity to experience a carefree break at an SVP holiday home or children’s camp, providing them with valuable relief, albeit briefly.

The Society operates six modern static caravans located around the country on professionally run sites from Holy Island in the north to Bognor Regis in the south, providing holidays for families who wouldn’t otherwise enjoy a vacation. In addition, there are another seven children’s camps offering supervised activity and fun to youngsters aged between eight and 14.

The summer camps are staffed by about 500 dedicated and caring volunteers, offering a high ratio of adult to child supervision. This means that each and every child receives a great deal of time and positive attention, perhaps more than some have ever known before.





Progress towards objectives identified in the 2016–2017 report:

Begin to implement recommendations arising out of a comprehensive camp review

An action plan was established and priorities were identified and incorporated into a rolling three-year plan. Six major changes were implemented for the 2017 camp season including internal health and safety audits to ensure all volunteers were working to best standards.

Substantially increase controls over camp financial operations by introducing standardised accounting forms and reporting requirements

Conversion to standardised accounting practices was initiated and will be completed in 2018–19.

A three-year rolling audit of safeguarding compliance, including spot audits, should be established and maintained

This programme was established and the first year audits were completed.

In the year ahead we will seek to...

- + Improve the gender mix of helpers across all camps
- + Develop camp websites under a single SVP brand and website access point
- + Complete standardisation of camp financial processes

Expand the safeguarding training curriculum for camp leaders

A new programme called 'Emerging Issues for Leaders' was developed and successfully delivered by the national safeguarding manager. The programme will be updated every year.

[Read more >](#)



Louis's story

Louis is an eight-year-old boy and the middle child in a large family. While his mother is occasionally supported by her parents, she finds every day a challenge. When she was dropping off Louis at camp, she referred to herself as “the little old lady who lives in a shoe.” Louis finds it difficult to spend one-on-one time with his mum at home. However, at camp, Louis enjoyed the attention and support of dedicated camp volunteers. Thanks to all the extra encouragement, Louis began to come out of his shell and discovered new hobbies. Despite also being the smallest child at camp, Louis somehow became the odds-on favourite to win

at table tennis. And while he had never owned a camera, he said his afternoon as “official camp photographer” was one of the highlights of his week, even if most of his photos were of half-submerged frogs in the camp pond! Louis found confidence through the support he was given by the camp staff and when his mother picked him up at the end of the week, he proudly showed her his photography medal and proclaimed his time at camp as his “best ever, ever time – ever!”

[Read more stories >](#)



Values and spiritual growth

We continued to expand our Young Vincentians team and our four apostolates (Mini Vinnies, Youth SVP, B-Attitude and SVP1833) which promote Vincentian values and spiritual growth in young people, especially the befriending of others, among pupils in primary and secondary schools and in parishes, colleges and universities.

The Mini Vinnies programme continued to expand with many more primary schools expressing interest in becoming involved. By the end of the financial year we had 516 active Mini Vinnies groups.

Spiritual resources were produced and will continue to reflect the high quality of our Mini Vinnies materials for Youth SVP members. B-Attitude provides appropriate and stimulating input for the upper end of the teen spectrum (14-18 years) and additional training is being delivered in the use of the B-Attitude web app and the development of spiritual resources. The Young Vincentians team has a Spiritual Adviser who provides spiritual advice to the Youth Committee and contributes to spiritual resources. The teen apostolates provide an opportunity for teens to engage in voluntary work in their local community whilst developing their faith and spirituality. At the end of the financial year we had 97 active Youth SVP Conferences and 17 B-Attitude Conferences.

The name SVP 1833 recalls the year in which the Society was started and also alludes to its approximate age range. It is a unique branch of the Young Vincentians wing of the SVP and at the end of the financial year we had 17 active 1833 groups established within universities and colleges.

The Young Vincentians Team work in close liaison with SVP Central Councils and Young Vincentian Development Officers to support the work of the Youth Apostolates in encouraging young people in their faith journeys. We aim to encourage greater links with adult Conferences in our work towards forming life-long Vincentians.



Mini Vinnies' Pledge

As a member of Mini Vinnies, I promise to make a difference in my world by:

- 👉 Caring for, respecting and loving myself.
- 👉 Strengthening my friendship with Jesus by talking to him each day and talking to others about him.
- 👉 Caring for others in my school and community by being a friend to those who are alone, in need or in trouble.
- 👉 Making my family happy by my help, respect and showing kindness and consideration.
- 👉 Caring for and enjoying God's world.
- 👉 Treating others the way I would like them to treat me.

© St Vincent de Paul Society 2010



Progress towards objectives identified in the 2016–2017 report:

Increase the number of Mini Vinnies Groups to 500 by March 2018

By the end of the financial year we had 516 active groups and the number of Mini Vinnies groups continues to grow.

Keep the number of Youth SVP groups stable at around 90 by March 2018

By the end of the financial year we had 97 Youth SVP groups (82 in schools and 15 in parishes).

Increase the number of SVP B-Attitude groups to 15 by March 2018

By the end of the financial year we had 17 active B-Attitude groups (11 in schools and 6 in parishes).

Plan to promote our programmes in parish settings – particularly as pre-Confirmation and post-Confirmation programmes

This work was developed and led to an increase in parish group participation. It will become a key focus of our on-going work for the year ahead.

Develop the sustainability of the Young Vincentian Core Support

This has been achieved to date by reviewing staffing and recruitment needs within the Young Vincentians team, providing greater opportunities for training of Young Vincentian Development Officers and providing additional advice and support to schools.

[Read more >](#)

Continue to streamline our administrative, financial and legal procedures and processes for the setting up and support of active groups and make further efforts to ensure that these processes and procedures are communicated to members of the Society and non-members alike

Work was undertaken to streamline the high level processes within the Young Vincentian team, with key documents and processing of documents reviewed in full and verified legally and new processes and procedures explored. The Young Vincentians team recruited a full-time Administrator to support this and streamlining of processes will continue in 2018-19.

Continue to recruit and train Young Vincentian Development Officers (YVDOs)

Three new YVDOs were recruited and trained nationally within cluster settings - a model we will continue for future YVDO appointments.

Continue to develop and complete the spiritual resources for both Youth SVP and SVP B-Attitude with a view to promoting these resources together with their respective apostolates across England and Wales

Work was undertaken to develop spiritual resources for B-Attitude and the promotion of the B-Attitude Web App. The Youth Committee reviewed the development of resources at their quarterly meetings and continued to benefit from the active support of the spiritual adviser for the Youth committee, Fr Ged Walsh. The work of promoting these spiritual resources will continue in the year ahead.



In the year ahead we will seek to...

- + **Expand and develop** the Young Vincentians Team through staff recruitment, training, including cluster training for YVDOs, and training for Young Vincentians Coordinators in parishes and schools
- + **Continue to grow** and develop the four Young Vincentian apostolates across England and Wales
- + **Develop plans** for a re-launch of the 1833 model for implementation in September 2019
- + **Further promote** our youth programmes within parishes
- + **Begin planning for** the development of ambassador, leadership and mentoring schemes for young people within all the strands of the apostolate
- + **Launch the B-Attitude Web App**

[Read more >](#)



Ben's story

Ben, a Youth SVP member, explained that for him, going to the meetings was an important part of his life. "It might sound like a cliché," he said, "but being involved with the SVP really makes you realise just how much you have to be happy about in your own life.

"It teaches you to be content with the things you've got and helps you keep your temper in check. It also helps you put others first, which can be very hard to do when you live such a busy life. It's great to have other people in the group because you may have days when you try and do a little good but it's not really working – but then you can look at the rest of the group and know that you're all trying to support each other.

"Last but not least, it's an incredible feeling to have people you can pray with."



[Read more stories >](#)

Strengthening our links



National Twinnage was established in 1961 in response to a plea from Pope St John XXIII for the laity in developed countries to help those less fortunate.

By linking Conferences in England and Wales with their counterparts overseas we aim to create a unique worldwide community of love and solidarity, dedicated to sharing the necessities of life with as many of the world's poor as possible. Through SVP Conferences in India, Grenada, Guyana, Romania, Sudan and, South Sudan, we provide practical support to assist our fellow members in those countries in their work with those suffering from often desperate poverty in their communities.





Respond to situations of immediate need throughout the world from our Disaster Fund and in particular to grow and develop our support for the work of our members in South Sudan who are involved in feeding and assisting internally displaced refugees

In 2017-18 we sent £9,000 for international hurricane relief, £10,000 to India for cyclone relief and £15,000 to South Sudan to aid people who are displaced.

Seek to support Central Councils which are struggling to maintain their support for Twinnage and seek sources of outside funding so we can maintain the support we give to our members in our twin countries

This year was one of transition, with the effects of Conferences going into abeyance being keenly felt. However, several Central Councils saw their levels of Twinnage sponsorship rise and much re-twinning took place, in particular for India. Work on this objective continues.

Promote awareness of the needs of the members in our twin countries through our website and articles in publications

Several articles were published in 'Vincentian Concern', our in-house magazine, and Twinnage has become a regular item.



Progress towards objectives identified in the 2016-2017 report:

Maintain, consolidate and promote our support for the work of our members in our six twin countries through Twinnage grants, projects, student sponsorship, vocational training, pre-school feeding programmes, street-children homes, water distribution and other works

This was achieved to some extent and continues. All conferences in Grenada, Guyana, Romania, Sudan and South Sudan have a twin. The number of twins for India declined from over 1,520 to 1,492. There are now 7,200 India SVP conferences, fewer than 45% of which have a twin. The need for twins is great, particularly in the rural areas.

The Indian scholarship scheme sponsored 40 students in the Higher Education Scheme, 104 through Technical and Vocational Training and 423 under the Vidya Jyothii Education Scheme. More than 70 small-scale project applications were funded, up on previous years, and 71 Project Completion reports were received.

In the year ahead we will seek to...

- + **Sustain the twins** with Grenada, Guyana, Romania, Sudan and South Sudan and increase the number of Indian twins to over 1,550. Reduce the numbers of twins being sponsored at Central Council level by increasing Conference sponsorship
- + **Increase the number** of Indian students receiving scholarships: 200 in the Higher Education Scheme, 300 through Technical and Vocational Training (VTVS), 3,000 under the Vidya Jyothii Education and increase support for income-generating projects
- + **Significantly improve** communication and awareness of the work carried out to alleviate poverty in our twinned countries so that Twinnage becomes a renewed source of inspiration for good and renewal in our Society
- + **Strengthen the** infrastructure and administration of Twinnage and Overseas Aid so that it is seen as integral to the Society and is on a long-term sustainable footing
- + **Relaunch the** Sudan and South Sudan appeals
- + **Launch a new** £50,000 fund for micro financing in India enabling multiple self-help groups to be established

[Read more >](#)



“ Twinnage was started to bring justice to the developing world.”



Survana's story

The Twinnage grant enables a local SVP conference to literally feed and clothe the poorest of the poor. In a village in Nellore Central Council in Andhra Pradesh a conference of poor daily agricultural workers supports five adopted families – widows, orphans, disabled and Survana's family.

Survana's mother died recently of TB; her father also has the disease and has not been given long to live. Survana has had to stop attending school in order to try and earn some money as a daily wage earner – 100 rupees (£1) per day weeding in the fields or other such work, as and when there is work to be done.

The local SVP use their Twinnage grant to provide food hampers each month (5kg of rice, dahl, vegetables and cooking oil) as well as blankets and clothes on St Vincent's Feast Day and at Christmas.

Without this support and befriending by local SVP members Survana would be forced to resort to begging in order to survive.

[Read more stories >](#)

Financial summary



From a financial perspective this year has shown a period of growth for the Society. Our overall income rose by £438,000 to £9.30 million and expenditure on fundraising and charitable activities increased by £667,000 to £9.93 million.

Voluntary income increased largely due to a number of grants receivable by our support centres and legacies received by our Conferences. Income from our shops and furniture stores was boosted partially as a result of opening three new shops during the year. Our support centre income decreased overall, but this is because more grants received were of a voluntary nature, rather than being performance-related.

Spending by our Conferences and Councils increased during the year in line with the Trustees' policy to spend accumulated legacy balances held by Conferences.

Spending by our Support Centres increased by £259,000 as a result of the opening of our new centre in Tower House in Brighton and the replacement of the flat roof at the Blackfriars

Centre in Newcastle. Spending on our Twinnage programmes increased by £109,000 to £924,000, primarily as a result of increased grants from our disaster fund to support the work done by our partner organisations in Sudan and South Sudan as well as an increased number of projects generously sponsored by our Conferences.

Our cash position decreased by £502,000 from £4.75 million to £4.25 million, primarily due to a reduction in funds designated for use directly by Conferences as well as the substantial cost of replacing the roof at our Blackfriars Centre.

At year end our Conferences controlled £2.70 million of designated reserves that are available to be spent locally, reduced from £2.89 million last year. Our free reserves are spread between our projects and funds held nationally. These free reserves were £1.33 million at year end which is very close to our target of three months' worth of spending from general funds. Based on 2017-18 spending our target reserves level would amount to £1.26 million.

[Read our full annual accounts and auditor's report >](#)

St Vincent's Co

Helping Locally Work



Financial summary

Income: Consolidated Accounts

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2018	2017	Change	Change
	£	£	£	£	£	%
Donations and legacies	3,192,228	707,230	3,899,458	3,338,282	561,176	16.8%
Other trading activities	79,842	-	79,842	66,411	13,431	20.2%
Income from investments	227,472	32,673	260,145	233,204	26,941	11.6%
Income from charitable activities:						
Shops and furniture stores	2,848,382	-	2,848,382	2,813,606	34,776	1.2%
Holidays and camps	153,814	-	153,814	145,636	8,178	5.6%
Residential provision	355,080	1,315,609	1,670,689	1,687,844	(17,155)	(1.0%)
Support centres	348,042	12,070	360,112	555,920	(195,808)	(35.2%)
Youth programme development	22,377	-	22,377	22,246	131	0.6%
Other income	7,081	2,326	9,407	2,481	6,926	-
Total income	7,234,318	2,069,908	9,304,226	8,865,630	438,596	4.9%

Expenditure: Consolidated Accounts

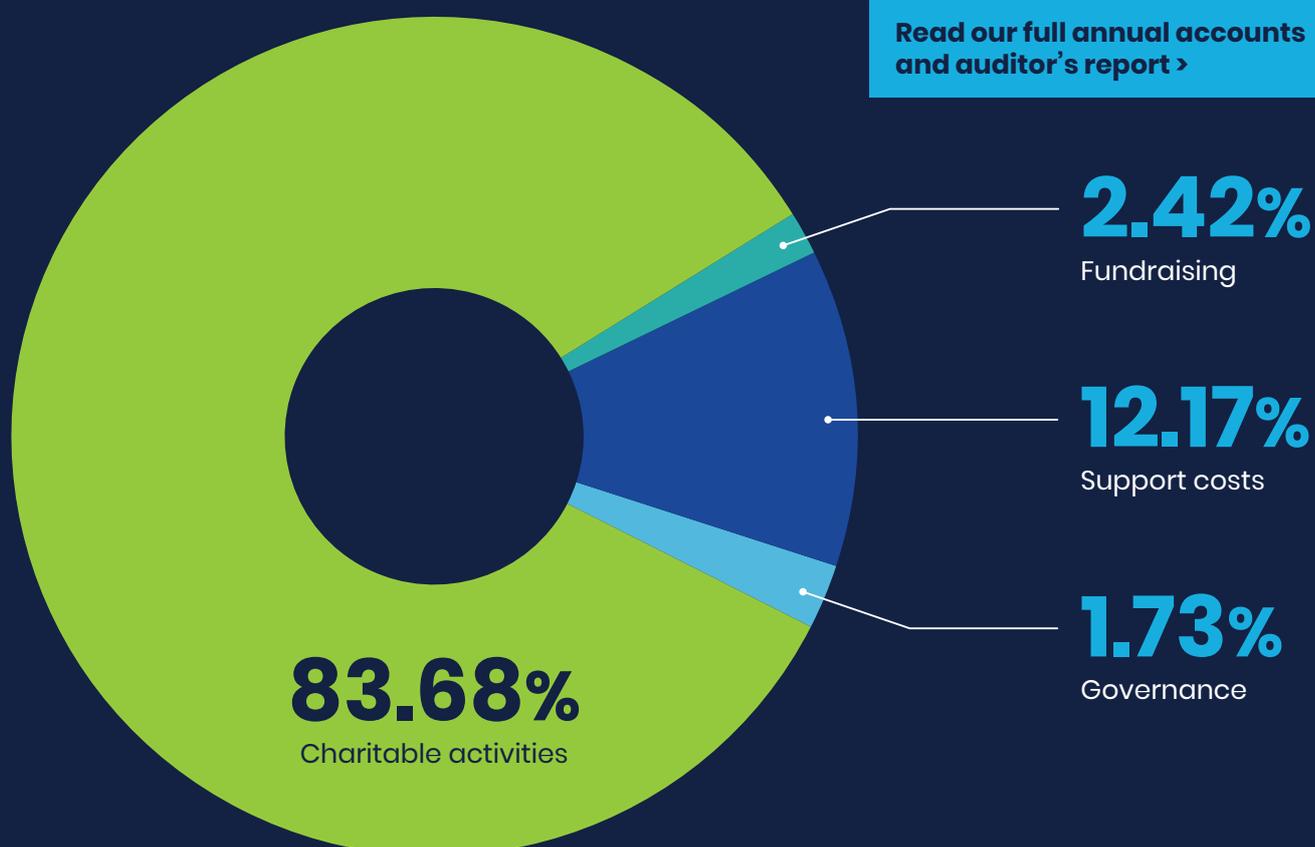
	Unrestricted	Restricted	2018	2017	Change	Change
	£	£	£	£	£	%
Expenditure on raising funds	240,607	-	240,607	241,606	(999)	(0.4%)
Expenditure on charitable activities:						
Visits & assistance to individuals and families	1,851,423	280,739	2,132,162	1,941,655	190,507	9.8%
Shops and furniture stores	3,109,505	94,240	3,203,745	3,163,615	40,130	1.3%
Holidays and camps	315,864	31,351	347,215	304,567	42,648	14.0%
Residential provision	320,443	1,368,858	1,689,301	1,656,307	32,994	2.0%
Support centres	899,492	336,276	1,235,768	977,367	258,401	26.4%
Twinnage	852,267	71,407	923,674	815,016	108,658	13.3%
Youth programme development	102,086	50,798	152,884	158,116	(5,232)	(3.3%)
Total expenditure	7,691,687	2,233,669	9,925,356	9,258,249	667,107	7.2%

Income: Voluntary

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2018	2017	Change	Change
	£	£	£	£	£	%
Members' contributions	253,911	-	253,911	256,464	(2,553)	(1.0%)
Church collections	821,828	39,487	861,315	828,196	33,119	4.0%
Legacies	597,480	66,950	664,430	423,545	240,885	56.9%
Other fundraising activities	226,156	44,629	270,785	241,919	28,866	11.9%
Other donations and voluntary grants	1,292,853	556,164	1,849,017	1,588,158	260,859	16.4%
Total voluntary income	3,192,228	707,230	3,899,458	3,338,282	561,176	16.8%

The help we offer to people in need would simply not be possible without the generosity of our supporters. We aim to steward every gift with great care and we report regularly on how we use our funds.

[Read our full annual accounts and auditor's report >](#)



Based on the Society's 2017-18 accounts.

Structure, governance and management



**The charity's objective is:
To relieve poverty, both material and emotional, in England and Wales and abroad, without differentiation on the grounds of race, colour, creed, ideology or gender.**

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees comprises a minimum of nine and a maximum of thirteen people, including the Chair. The Board is responsible for the overall governance of the St Vincent de Paul Society. On the election of a new President, seven Trustees are nominated by the President. They include a Vice President, an Honorary Treasurer and at

least three current Central Council Presidents. The Board must be formally approved by the National Council to serve for a period of five years. Up to five new Trustees are selected half way through the President's five year term to act as continuation Trustees and they remain in post until the next President's mid-term.

This process was enacted in the course of 2017-18 with a new National President elected for a five-year term who then accordingly nominated seven new Trustees. In addition, three members of the previous Board remained in place as continuation Trustees. This new Board was approved by the National Council.

In addition, Fr Paul Roche attends Board meetings as a National Spiritual Advisor.

The selection of new Trustees seeks to maintain a balance of skills and experience appropriate to the charity's activities. An induction programme is offered to all new Trustees to ensure they are briefed on the charity's objectives, strategy and activities. The Board meets at least four times a year to review the performance of the charity, both financially and in meeting its charitable objectives.

Responsibility for the day-to-day running of the charity is delegated to the Chief Executive, who is supported by a group of senior managers. The Chief Executive attends all Board meetings and other senior managers attend as required.

To discharge its governance responsibilities effectively, the Board has created a number of sub committees formed of Trustees, other members, external experts and operational managers.



Sub-Committees of the Board

These committees are given delegated powers by the main Board of Trustees and each is chaired by a Board member. They are responsible for supporting a specific area of operational oversight and their activities are reported to the Board. As the number and structure of the committees reflects prevailing priorities, they are reviewed and updated periodically, particularly on the commencement of the incoming President's term. The role of each of the committees during 2017-18 was as follows:

- + **Finance:** reviews and approves financial results, budgets and other financial governance matters in addition to fundraising.
- + **Community Support Projects:** supports and develops sustainable community projects in appropriate areas.
- + **Membership:** reviews membership issues, including communications, internal relationships, the structure of the Society, recruitment, training at all levels and oversight of youth matters.
- + **Audit & Compliance:** oversees financial risks and reviews control systems (Safeguarding, Human Resources, Health & Safety, Risk Assessment and Data Protection).
- + **Twinnage:** reviews overseas activities from local funding to international grant applications.
- + **Camps:** ensures that SVP camps provide a safe and enjoyable experience for young people in accordance with defined Safeguarding and Health & Safety procedures.
- + **Social Justice:** explores opportunities for SVP contributions to the poverty agenda, both within and outside the Society.
- + **Property:** reviews and oversees issues and risks relating to SVP property.

Governance, risk management and internal controls

The Trustees regularly review the risks faced by the charity to develop appropriate controls and deliver the charity's strategic aims. The main risks monitored include:

- + Delivery of safe, effective and personalised poverty relief especially in the context of charitable activities involving children and vulnerable adults.
- + Financial sustainability, especially in the context of the current economic situation.

The SVP has three subsidiary undertakings:

- + **The David Young Charity** was originally set up in 1860 to aid poor relatives of the Young family. Under a new scheme (1978) the charity aims to assist, in addition to Young family relatives, those who are in financial difficulties and who, because they are members of the Society, are not eligible to seek support from the Society itself.
- + **The Pen-y-Pound House Fund** was formed in 1973 to alleviate poverty in the Catholic Archdiocese of Cardiff.
- + **The TB Hunt Fund** was established with funds left to the SVP by Thomas Bernard Hunt, who died in 1928. His desire was to alleviate poverty among the Catholic poor in the areas of Leicester and Market Harborough. The SVP distributes grants on a quarterly basis to people in need.

Investments

The Board of Trustees sets the overall performance and ethical parameters within which our investment managers operate. They report quarterly and meet with the Finance Committee annually to review performance and outlook. Performance is measured against the Association of Private Client Investment Managers and Stockbrokers balanced index. The primary objectives of our investment portfolio are to:

- + **Generate income to fund operational costs.**
- + **Provide capital growth to fund new activities.**
- + **Offer diversity across asset classes including fixed interest investments and medium risk equities.**

The Trustees have adopted an ethical investment policy in line with the teaching of the Catholic Church.

Reserves

The Trustees annually review the level of reserves to be held by the charity to ensure they are adequate. Free reserves of the charity are considered to be its unrestricted funds not designated for specific spending, less any fixed assets held within unrestricted funds. Our reserves target is to hold a minimum of three months' spending in free reserves. Free reserves of the charity were £1.3m at 31st March 2018 which represents almost three months of expenditure.





Chief Executive's statement

2017-18 was another positive year for the Society. A new chair of Trustees was appointed, as well as several new Board members, bringing with them additional expertise in specific areas of our work, such as children's camps and retail.

A change of Board always signals a step change. An opportunity to review, to look afresh and to make new plans. We have been able to look back at what we have achieved with some satisfaction: more adult members, more young Vincentians and a growth in projects. Equally we have laid down plans for further growth across all areas of our activity, whilst also seeking to address our infrastructure and how we might make the Society 'mission ready' in order to support this growth.

2017-18 saw the development of a new strategic plan focusing on growth, empowerment of our volunteer members, innovation and sustainability,

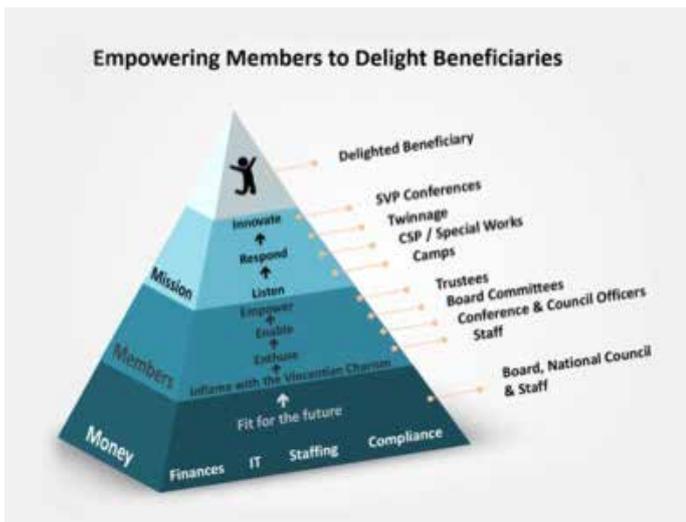


all with the beneficiary in mind, seeking to provide improved services for those in need.

Our own Rule, which members of the Society are asked to follow, demands that "faithful to the spirit of its founders, the Society constantly strives for renewal, adapting to changing world conditions. It seeks to be ever aware of the changes that occur in human society and the new types of poverty that may be identified or anticipated. It gives priority to the poorest of the poor and those who are rejected by Society."

This annual report gives witness to the scope of the work already done and the amazing work undertaken by staff and members in their Vincentian mission of service to the disadvantaged and marginalised. Our new and ambitious plans seek to build on this work further and ensure that the organisation can continue to deliver long into the future.

Elizabeth Palmer Chief Executive Officer



“ We have been able to look back at what we have achieved with some satisfaction ”



We are grateful to all those who have supported us in 2017-18

- + Anthony Scholefield Charitable Trust
- + Barnabas Charitable Trust
- + Beatrice Laing Charitable Trust
- + Big Lottery Fund
- + Bradford City Council
- + CCLA
- + Chalk Cliff Trust
- + Childwick Trust
- + Church Burgess Trust
- + Cutlers Company Charitable Trust
- + Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust
- + Essex Community Foundation
- + Lawson Trust
- + Leeds City Council
- + OLST Outreach
- + Porta Pia Foundation
- + Sisters of the Holy Cross Charitable Trust
- + Sobell Foundation
- + Souter Charitable Trust
- + The Terra Firma Capital Partners Trust
- + The Mercers' Company
- + Tula Trust Ltd
- + Anonymous donor

Your local community store

Shop - Donate - Vol





Legal and administrative

Status

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a charitable company limited by guarantee incorporated on 13 March 1996 and registered as a charity on 25 March 1996.

Governing document

The St Vincent de Paul Society was established under a memorandum of association which established the objects and powers of the organisation and is governed under its articles of association dated 27 November 2015.

Company Number 3174679

Charity Number 1053992

Registered and Principal Office

Romero House, 55 Westminster Bridge Road,
London, SE1 7JB

Trustees

Until November 2017:

Adrian Abel (National President)
Ann Harris (Senior Vice President)
Greg Pelham (Vice President)
Maurice Downey (National Treasurer)
Raymond Daley
Elaine Heyworth (from 19 March 2017)
Dominic Ion
Helen O'Shea
Richard Palmi
Jo Regan
Michael Willcock

From November 2017:

Helen O'Shea (National President)
Michael Willcock (Senior Vice President)
Christine Knight (National Treasurer)
Ann Towey
Raymond Daley
Jo Regan
Elaine Heyworth
Ann Harris
James Bellamy
Richard Palmi
Sebastian Muir
Ian Kempzell
Colm Ennis
Vince McAllister

Senior Management Team

Chief Executive Officer: **Elizabeth Palmer**

Deputy CEO: **Kate Nightingale**

Head of Finance: **Rob White**

Head of Fundraising, Communications and Marketing:
Ken Madine

Governance & Compliance Manager: **Matthew Stockton**

Membership Support and Development Manager:
Kieran Knights

Patrons

Cardinal Vincent Nichols

Ann Widdecombe

John Battle

Auditors

Kingston Smith LLP

Devonshire House
 60 Goswell Road
 London
 EC1M 7AD

Bankers

The Co-operative Bank

80 Cornhill
 London
 EC3V 3NJ

Solicitors

McCarthy Denning

25 Southampton Buildings
 London
 WC2A 1AL

Investment Advisers

Investec Wealth & Investment

2 Castlefield Court
 Church Street
 Reigate
 Surrey
 RH2 0AH

22,000 people

gained access to clean drinking water in Khartoum last year thanks to the SVP Sudan Appeal



St Vincent de Paul Society

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Keep in touch with us

