

Our History

The Society was founded in France in 1833 by a 20-year-old law student, Frédéric Ozanam, as a practical response to the extreme poverty experienced by those living in and around Paris at that time. Frédéric and some of his fellow students started to befriend those in need and provide them with practical help. The group of students took St Vincent de Paul as their patron, and the St Vincent de Paul Society was born. Later, the work spread across France as the members left university and returned to their hometowns. The organisation continued to grow, spreading across countries and continents. Today the Society exists in 150 countries and has more than 800,000 members worldwide.



The formation of the Society was a Catholic response to the poverty which was endemic at the time. Today, the Society remains Catholic in ethos and takes the Gospel message of St Matthew: "I was hungry and you gave me to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me to drink. I was naked and you clothed me, sick and in prison and you came to see me" as the foundation of its work.

“ I would like to embrace the whole world in a network of charity.

Frédéric Ozanam, Founder
St Vincent de Paul Society - 1813 - 1853



How You Can Help Us

SVP members are all volunteers. They are not paid and undertake SVP work in their own time. Please treat them courteously and help them to help you.



If you have comments about our work, good or otherwise, we would like to know. Please email, write or telephone us using the contact details below.

Contact Us

Call us on **0207 703 3030**

Email us at **info@svp.org.uk**

Follow us on Twitter

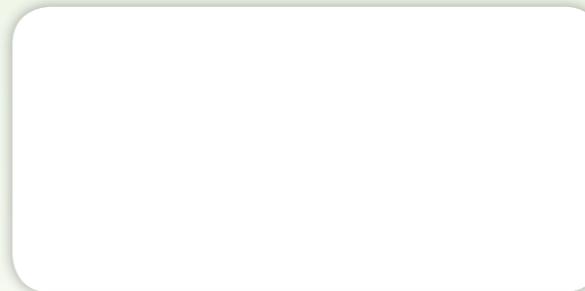
@SVPEnglandWales

Find us on Facebook: **SVPenglandandwales**

Write to us at **SVP National Office,**

9 Larcum Street, Walworth, London SE17 1RX

Alternatively, your local contact is:



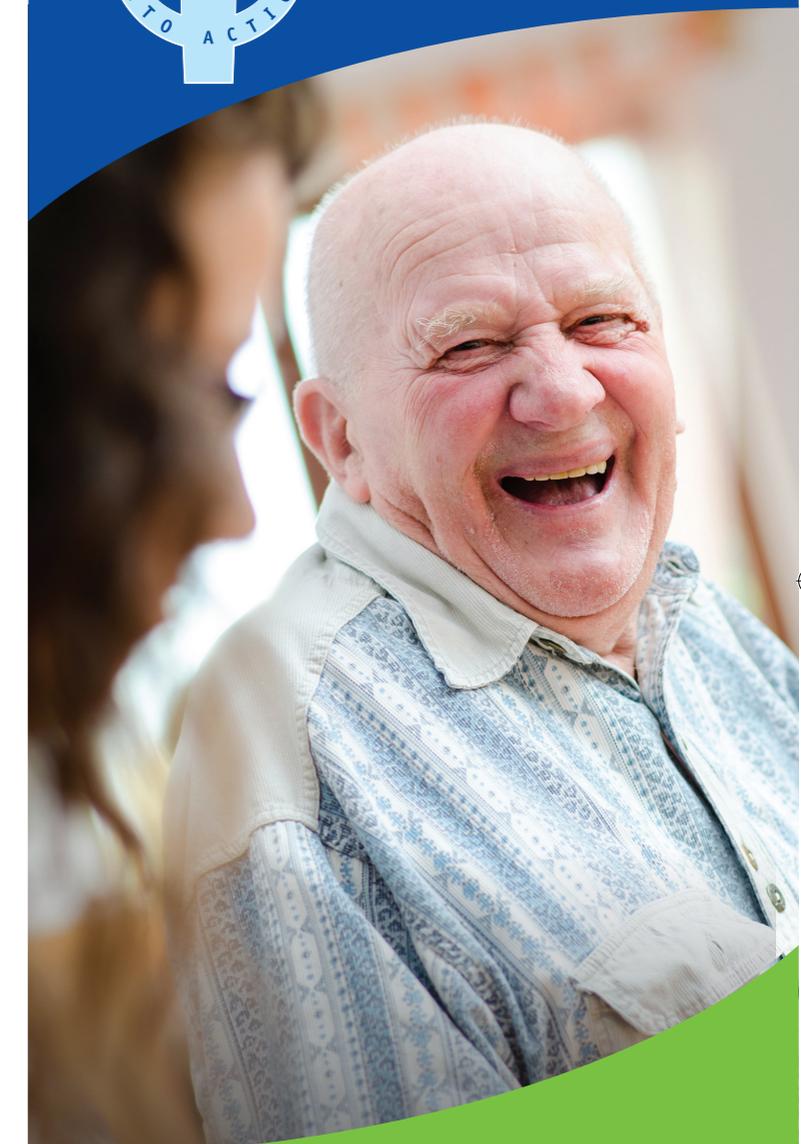
St Vincent de Paul Society (England & Wales), Reg Charity 1053992 Co.3174679
A member of the International Confederation of the Society of St Vincent de Paul

Visit Our Website

Visit our website to find out more about our work around the country - visit **www.svp.org.uk**
Activities may vary between localities depending on local needs.



St.Vincent de Paul
Society
(England & Wales)



What you
can expect
from the SVP



Who We Are And What We Do

The St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) is an international Christian voluntary organisation, providing direct practical assistance to anyone in need. Our main

purpose is to offer people the hand of friendship through befriending visits.

While our motivation stems from our religious belief, we are not here to 'convert' people, or to impose our faith.

The Society has more than 10,000 members in England and Wales who carry out befriending visits and nearly 200 staff engaged in a wide variety of projects, providing practical support in the heart of local communities.

What You Can Expect From An SVP Member

- Kindness and courtesy
- Compassion and understanding
- Respect for and acceptance of you as a person
- A non-judgemental attitude
- Practical help and advice
- Confidentiality (as long as you are not at risk)

What You Can Expect When We Visit You

All initial visits are carried out in pairs. All our members have been recruited in line with safer recruitment policy (including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Disclosures) and follow our own Safeguarding policies. This is to protect you and ourselves. Subsequent visits are usually carried out in pairs or, in some circumstances, by individuals, but this will be agreed with you in advance. We never share any information about you (beyond the people in the SVP) without your permission unless we think you are at risk.

First meeting or visit

- We arrange to meet with you to get to know you and how we might help. During the visit, we seek to understand your situation in more detail.
- We arrange a suitable time to visit again if required. It may not be the same two people but, if possible, one will be the same.
- We then meet with our SVP team members locally, to tell them about your specific circumstances (in confidence).
- We agree what immediate help we can offer to you.

Later visits

- Further visits will be arranged with you either at the time of the visit or at your request.

How We Can Help You

Our core work is giving friendship and support

- We will lend an ear to those who need someone to listen to them during the difficult times.
- We can make regular visits to people who need company. These might be people living in their own homes, in residential care homes or in hospital and, in some instances, we can offer prison visiting.

In addition (depending on local resources), we can help to make ends meet in an emergency

- We can call on our Parish or local Community Support Projects (without naming any beneficiaries) to provide specific items of clothing, furniture, or anything else that helps individuals and families get by.
- We are sometimes able to provide financial support on a short-term basis.
- Depending on local expertise, we may be able to give advice in problem areas such as benefits or financial issues.
- We can organise and (sometimes) pay for short breaks for families in difficulty, for carers, or others who may be in need of a holiday.
- When these difficulties are beyond our skills and experience, we can signpost to others with more specialised skills.

How We Use Your Personal Information

We need to collect personal information from you so we can:

- Arrange our visits with you;
- Provide you with support and assistance;
- Keep you informed about SVP activities;
- Respond to any enquiries or complaints from you.

We collect this information during our visits. We may also receive information from others - e.g. should social service make a referral. We may sometimes be required to share your information with others.

If you would like to learn more about our handling of your information, or if you want to see your information, please write to:

**Governance & Compliance Manager
St. Vincent de Paul Society, 9 Larcom Street,
Walworth, London, SE17 1RX.**

Your Agreement

To provide support and assistance, and to understand your situation in more detail, we may need information on your health and other private matters.

We need your agreement for this. Without your agreement, we will be unable to fully support you. Please sign below so we know you agree to us handling your private information:

Signature:

**Name
(PRINTED):**

Date: