



The Slice

JANUARY 2016 | ISSUE 10

Welcome...

Happy belated New Year! I hope you all had a good break over Christmas and have come back ready to help make 2016 an important year in our 're-birth'.

As you're aware now, plans are underway to ensure that our services are sustainable well into the future and we want to hear your ideas. How do we reach out to those women who have made the appointment for an abortion? These are the women we need to support, and urgently. Every year, some 200,000 women have abortions... how many of them would continue their pregnancies if only they could access the right support?

So, the two major questions facing us now are:

- a) how do we target these abortion-minded women, and;
- b) how do we tailor our services to really meet their needs?

We know that we need to focus on outreach work – to get out there and be where these women are. We know that we can't do this alone and that strategic partnerships with other agencies will be crucial to our success. And we know that we need to concentrate our resources in areas where we already have a strong presence.

The next issue of The Slice will include a brief questionnaire providing you all with an opportunity to share your expertise on the best ways to proceed. After all, you're the ones at the coalface with a wealth of experience in caring for the very women we need to target. In the meantime, please have a think about how we can take full advantage of the unique opportunity we have now – to make Life the pivotal organisation in tackling abortion and making it a thing of the past.

Stephen Sharpe, CEO

Hello & welcome to:

- Amy Palmer** – Shop Manager, Helensburgh
- Lisa Clogg** – Housing and Care Support Worker, Doncaster
- Ellen Rufus** – Support Worker, Northampton

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Thank-a-Colleague!

I'd like to thank Clara Watson for all her hard work on Facebook. Her posts have really boosted Life's presence on there.

James Tranter, Education Officer

Can you help?

We have started sending news and updates about the prolife cause and our work specifically to the Catholic Clergy. We need your help to sign up more Priests. If you know any Priests then send them [this link](#) which allows them to sign up in less than a minute. Alternatively, you could ask them verbally and then add them yourself – just click the link and add their details.

Stuart Cowie, Communications



Housing

An excellent service

The support contract for the three Life houses at Chertsey and Woking has been extended for a further 12 months to March 2017. Many thanks to Tracy Norman, Samantha Lawton and Beckie Reeves for their hard work in convincing Surrey County Council that we are delivering an excellent and invaluable service supporting 12 young mothers and their babies.

It has to be Asda!

Residents of the Dartford Life House, Senior Support Worker Bally Majhail (far right) and North West Kent Life Committee Chairman Rebecca Luton (2nd from left) accepted a cheque for £200 from Dominique Bishop of Asda Living in Dartford. Life received the highest number of votes when local shoppers voted for three local charities using green tokens.



Chocolate heaven

"This lovely Christmas hamper was donated to the Oxford Life house from the local Life group," said Support Worker Maria Eveleigh. "The girls at the house were really grateful and got busy making chocolate brownies with the ingredients."



A taste of the exotic

Northampton Life group are holding a fundraising event for the Northampton Life house on 26 February. "We've decided to hold a multi-cultural evening, 7.30pm-10pm, with foods from around the world and entertainment at St Gregory's Church," explained Regional Manager Sue Beades. Tickets cost £10 with a glass of wine or a soft drink. For further information email suebeades@lifecharity.org.uk

Mix96 Toy Appeal

"Every Christmas, Life and a number of other local charities are invited by Mix96 radio station in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, to go along to Perry's Car Salesroom to collect toys that have been donated by the public and local companies," said Support Worker Louise Nichols.

"We're lucky enough to be able to choose presents for our tenants' children in Aylesbury and High Wycombe as well as community service-users and ex-tenants who stay in touch with the Life houses.

"Christmas is such an exciting time of year but money can be tight, so when we are able to help our tenants with toys for their children it really makes a difference. The tenants are so grateful and often think about the people who have donated toys even though they don't know them - they can't believe people have been so kind."



Louise Nichols & Lexy



Big thanks to Walsall Youth Homeless Team who passed on donations (above right) from TK Maxx to the Walsall Life house.

Shops



Heading south?

We need your help in moving donated stock from Head Office to the shops at Basingstoke, Eastleigh and Weymouth. If any employees or volunteers are visiting that region please consider taking some items from the small storage room on the ground floor.

Heading north?

The Worthing house is currently storing a lovely donation of new items, from baby clothes to buggies, which need transporting to Head Office for distribution to shops. If you're travelling from that region to the Midlands, could you help? For further information please contact Tracy Norman:

tracynorman@lifecharity.org.uk

Well done Wendy!

Wolverhampton shop worker, Wendy Gubbins, has had her kindness rewarded with this heartfelt letter from a customer:

“ Hi,

I just wanted to take a moment to praise a young lady who works at the Wolverhampton branch of your charity shop.

I expect that, too often in life, people are quick to complain and criticise. I like to praise those who have made my life a little brighter. The worker in your shop brightened mine a great deal!

I came into the shop looking for a dress - I have absolutely no problems as a man asking for help and buying one - it is for me. I am attending a Gay Pride event later this month to which I will be wearing a dress and I do not see why, in 2016, I should have to be ashamed of this.

Unfortunately, the charity shop I had visited previously did have a problem with it and I left there feeling embarrassed, belittled and, to be honest, almost in tears.

The assistant in your shop was just the opposite - she was wonderful, absolutely lovely and treated me with nothing but the upmost courtesy, respect and most importantly - without a hint of prejudice.

Thank you, it put a bad day right again! Please pass on my praise to the shop. ”

Confused about donated goods?



We're lucky to be given many items of equipment and clothes from our generous donors through our care centres, houses, shops and Head Office – some of which do not have adequate storage space. There is always a demand for the equipment somewhere in the country, but it's not always in the place where the item is being stored. We also know that there is confusion about when donated items can be sold in shops if the donor has given them for a specific purpose. The following policy brings more clarity and should help overcome some of these issues:

Any baby equipment or similar goods donated to care should be given to care clients in the first instance. As a general rule, no care centres should store donated goods for longer than three months. At the end of that time, check if the items are needed by any geographically close care centres. If not, the items should be passed on to shops for sale. There is discretion to pass surplus items on more quickly if storage space is limited or if there is a regular supply of donated items.

Donors should be told of this policy at the point of donation. They may decide to take the goods elsewhere as a result.

Margaret Coward, Operations

Care



Stoke care centre has moved to new premises at Burslem thanks to the generosity of the local Catholic Diocese who have made available premises on very reasonable terms. The new centre has much more space for counselling, equipment and other activities than was available when it was based at the Stoke Life shop. A well-attended launch evening on 30 November showed how local partners and the community are supporting the venture.

Vacancies

We currently have a number of vacancies on the Jobs page of the Life website. Go to www.lifecharity.org.uk/jobs for full details and please pass on to anyone you think might be interested in working for us.

Heather's story:

"Being a single mum can be difficult but I wouldn't have it any other way."

My circumstances had been difficult before I moved into the Life house. I had been living with my mum but it was not a good environment for me to look after my new son. Social Services told me that if I chose not to move to the Life house they would have to remove my son, Daweson.



It took me a while to get used to living in the house; I made some good friends there but also had some difficult relationships. Unfortunately, during my year at the house my son was taken into foster care. This was the hardest thing that has ever happened to me. Looking back, I can see that I was not in a good place - I had not been responding well to the advice and support offered to me.

During my time at the house I got pregnant again and I was worried that Social Services would judge me.

Eventually, I decided to move out of the house and into a rented property with my partner. I thought things would be better when we had our own space but after

I gave birth to my daughter things became very difficult. There was a lot of tension between my partner and I and home conditions were not what they should have been. I was worried that I would lose Olyvia too.

Since this time I have learnt so much. I have had help and advice from Social Services and Life Community Support as well as other services. My ex-partner has moved out and I have found myself able to take information on board and change how I look after my home and my family. I have learnt about budgeting, home management, nutrition and how to cook good meals for myself and my family. I have learnt how to be a good protective parent and feel that I am making good decisions for my children. I have started to go to Parent & Toddlers at a local church and have got to know some of the other mums in the area.

Last month, my son Daweson was returned into my care so the three of us are at last living together again. I'm so proud of what I have achieved and so happy to have my children living with me. I still have to work hard to stay on top of things - being a single mum can be difficult - but I wouldn't have it any other way. I still have the support of different services; they have been key in turning my life around and I know that one day I will be able to do it without them.

I want to do my Maths and English so that I can help my children with homework when the time comes. I would also like to do a childcare qualification as I would love to work with children. I want to get a job so that I can provide for my family.

I have changed so much in the last 18 months - I have grown a lot in confidence and feel that this is how life should have been from the start.

Are you interested in gaining an essential life skill?

Life is registered (under QUALSAFE) to deliver a one-day, Level 2 award through an 'Emergency First Aid at Work' course to Life staff, volunteers and tenants. There are three registered trainers who work for Life who would complete the training in-house. The course is fully accredited by QUALSAFE.

As a champion for H&S, I believe that it's important people understand the basics around First Aid and how to react in an emergency situation. The skills that you learn on the course could help save lives, not only in the workplace but also in everyday life.

There will be no direct cost to you for this training as it will be funded through existing training/life skills budgets. Training would be completed regionally (if there is enough interest) so travel costs and time are kept to a minimum.

The basics covered include the roles and responsibilities of a First Aider, CPR, Choking, Shock, Bleeding and Minor injuries.

If you are interested in completing the one-day 'Emergency First Aid at Work' course, then please register your interest by emailing me: emmaturner@lifecharity.org.uk

Emma Turner, Health & Safety and Facilities Manager

Key contacts

Head Office is here to help – so if you have any queries please don't hesitate to get in touch. Our main number is **01926 312272** or you can email the admin department at **admin@lifecharity.org.uk**

Email addresses follow this format: **firstnamesurname@lifecharity.org.uk**



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