

# The Vine

## The Vine Spring Newsletter

A snapshot of 2014



**The Vine**   
debt advice centre

**The Vine**   
child contact centre

# The Vine annual report - a snapshot of 2014

Leeds Community Development (The Vine) exists to help transform lives in and around Leeds. As a supporter of The Vine, we want to let you know what's been happening through our two projects, the Debt Advice centre and the Child Contact centre, over this past year. With your support, we really are able to make a life changing impact on many families and individuals struggling with relationship breakdown and financial debt.

Thank you!

## Matt Button

Trustee

### Fundraising

Raising funds is so often the main cause for concern for the board of trustees. 2014 was no exception, but with the efforts of a number of individuals, we secured funding for the year.

A few highlights were:

- Rob Hardy cycled the first stage of the tour de France  
Rob tweeted after his ride "... My ride in numbers: 122 miles, 6600ft climbed, 8hrs in the saddle, 8 water bottles, 3 pots of tea, 27 toilet stops, £1400 for The Vine..."
- A small team ran the Leeds 10K on a hot and humid day in July
- Roger Turner helped secure a number of grants
- We were one of Waitrose's Charity of the Month in Meanwood Waitrose
- Jason Procter ran The Vine celebration evening which was tremendously successful
- We successfully bid for funding from Children in Need

Thank you to all of you who attended the celebration and to all these people and many more who work tirelessly behind the scenes for The Vine - you are not forgotten!



## The Trustees' view

### Looking back

2014 has been so exciting as we've seen our Child Contact Centre services double and the number of lives that we now impact growing substantially.

The Child Contact Centre had 67 new enquiries, 27 new families started contact and 17 families successfully went on to maintain contact outside of our centre. With the opening of a second session, our waiting time dropped from 4 months at the start of the year, to 4 weeks in the second half of the year.

The Debt Advice Centre has also continued to flourish. We received 43 new bookings in 2014, with 34 clients being helped on their way to becoming debt free and 11 actually clearing their debt and being released from its crippling effects. We managed to support anyone who came to us for help and no one was turned away.

### Looking forward

So far in 2015 The Vine has proved to be an exciting, life-changing charity to be a part of. There have been food parcels delivered, a pamper evening, relationships being forged and burdens of fear lifted.

Gwen Procter and Elaine Sadler are continuing to do a great job of running their respective centres. They are always on the look out for extra volunteers so that we can make a difference in more lives across Leeds so if you know anyone who might be interested in getting involved please do get in touch!

As a board of Trustees we are in the process of considering our next steps. There is lots to be done and we are full of ideas of what could be done! There may be scope to expand the work of our current projects or look to add an extra project and coordination to the work of The Vine. No doubt there will be some updates in subsequent newsletters.

Last but not least, thank you again for your essential support. Without the generosity of our supporters none of this would be possible. The trustees, staff, volunteers and clients of the Vine are incredibly grateful for all that you do to support us.

*Howard King*

The Vine, Chair of Trustees

# The Vine

child contact centre



*Volunteers ready for the session to begin*

The Vine Child Contact Centre provides an opportunity for children to spend quality time with the parent who they no longer live with. We offer a safe, fun, neutral and supported environment for the children to play and reconnect with their non-resident parent. Because of your generosity, this service is offered **free of charge**.

For more info:

[www.thevineleeds.org/childcontactcentre](http://www.thevineleeds.org/childcontactcentre)

**The Vine Child Contact Centre is run by Elaine Sadler along with Deputy Manager, Fi Brazill. They have had an exciting year with the opening of a second session, and the opportunity to help even more families reconnect.**

Elaine says, "2014 at the Vine Child Contact Centre started off with the opening of the second session in February. The sessions are going well and, with the opening of the extra session, we managed to help 35 families this year - brilliant, wish it could be more! Consistently, there are families that have met at the centre and then gone on to have their contact outside in the community.

Overall it never fails to amaze us when children fly into contact every fortnight to see either their mum or dad, usually dads, and have a great time during their contact. Faces smiling and excited, running into dad's arms, dad's smiling. It really is a life-changer for these children.

I am delighted to work for The Vine in facilitating Contact, for children especially, and their parents. It is a great pleasure to see children reunited with their parents every fortnight, even for a short time. Instead of not seeing their separated parent they will build up memories of time spent with them for the rest of their lives!"

## In 2014 there were:

**67** new enquiries made

**35** families helped

**27** New families started contact

**7** families waiting each month to be assessed for contact on average

**17** families progressed to having contact outside the centre through help from CAF/CASS or Solicitors in moving it forward

**4 months** waiting time from first enquiry to first use (January-June 2014)

**4 weeks!** waiting time from first enquiry to first use (July-December 2014), thanks to a second session opening in February 2014.

## What the Families Say!

"I love it here", child drew a heart and kisses

"It's been a great help, I wouldn't see my child without it"  
- a non-resident parent

"Staff is fair to both sides. It's a great Contact Centre, all staff are lovely as well."  
- a non-resident parent



*Home baked treats!*



## Just one story of many!

A 2yr old boy started coming to contact with his dad just before Christmas. Mum was very emotional due to previous hurts and dad, very emotional at the beginning of contact, couldn't believe he was actually seeing his son for the first time in a long while. The contact has been nice and steady since Christmas. Solicitors arranged a day for dad to take his son sometime in February, to see his mum who was dying of cancer. Dad was helped by his sister in law supervising contact that day outside the centre. The trip went well and everyone was happy.

In March, mum was putting little one to bed when he started crying saying he wanted his daddy; this broke mum's heart and so she decided that on the day of contact, dad could see his son all day. With the help of dad's sister in law, this was put in place.

Handover takes place at the Vine and the bond between dad and son has developed and strengthened. It is significant when watching the two of them together in the centre, the son runs in to see his dad and both are happy to be around each other.

"I felt reassured that I had made the right choice in volunteering for the CCC. The team were warm, friendly and welcoming and put me at ease. There felt to be a calm atmosphere and the room was light and spacious. Everything was ready for when the families arrived."

"I was made to feel part of the team from day one."

## What the volunteers think!

"I feel that where possible it is very important for children to see both their parents, the Vine facilitates this and can change lives. I am glad that I have the opportunity to help this happen."

# The Vine

debt advice centre

The Vine Debt Advice Centre provides a highly personalised service, making home visits to help support our clients as they wrestle with bills, threatening letters and making ends meet. We work out a fair budget, negotiate with those who are owed money and can take people through insolvency procedures where necessary. This service is also offered free of charge.

For more info: [www.thevineleeds.org/debtadvicecentre](http://www.thevineleeds.org/debtadvicecentre)



*Boxes of treats!*

*"Throughout this journey, we sometimes provide additional food, occasional gas to heat their homes, we have given away carpet and sourced furniture"*

**Gwen Procter has been working her socks off in 2014 bringing love, care and much needed debt advice to those who need it most. Of 2014 she says,**

"Reflecting on the past year, it is wonderful to consider the number of households that have got debt free or are in the process of working towards clearing their debts. In each case the clients have been incredibly determined and courageous - firstly to admit they need help and secondly to stick very often to an extremely tight budget. It is a privilege to not only provide first class debt advice but to walk out the journey of getting debt free alongside them.



*New Carpets*



*Christmas Hamper*

**43**

new bookings

**14**

volunteers from 2 churches helping befriend clients as they become debt free, supporting them in a variety of wonderful ways

**16**

clients received the gift of an emergency food shop

**34** clients

helped with debt support

**0**

clients were turned away who needed debt advice and support

**6 weeks**

Current waiting time from first enquiry to the initial visit

**11**

clients became free from the burden of debt!

**In 2014 there were:**



*Emergency Food Shop*



## Highlights!

Gwen celebrates some of the many achievements in 2014:

- Supporting a client during a visit to court. It was wonderful to stand before a judge and have him halve our clients fine due to the fact that he was working with us and was therefore supported with a budget in place.
- Another golden moment was being able to tell and reassure an elderly gentleman that we were speaking to the bailiffs and that they wouldn't be bothering him again so he could sleep peacefully.
- We have also continued to build good relationship with some local Children's Centres and the DWP in Leeds - it is encouraging to work in partnership with these organisations to see people's lives transformed.

## What the Clients Say!

### BEFORE...

...Worried stressed not sure what to do...

*... I was just scared all the time, I never used to want to answer the door to people because I thought every one was a debt collector. I also did not want to speak on the phone because everyone just wanted money I did not have...*

**...Low, moody, not sleeping, crying all the time, depressed struggling at times, (suicide at times)...**

...Somebody used my Debit Card details fraudulently. The resulting chaos meant I was facing very difficult times...

...I was finding it difficult to cope with everyday life...



### AFTER!

...relieved that CAP (Christians against poverty with whom we work to provide debt advice) was there to help with all our problems...

*...Since dealing with CAP everything has turned out fine. I do not worry any more because CAP has helped me a lot...*

**...Sleeping well at night, don't worry anymore, more calm and happy. If it wasn't for CAP I would be dead...**

...Plan to repay all my creditors quickly established. My position was made clear. Positive results followed...

...I found with having somebody there gave me a lift. I've become debt free and have met many friends which are very lovely people. I hope to become more involved socially as I get better. I am blessed to have been given this help...

*"The Vine provides much more than free debt help—where desired, we will provide friendship and a route out of isolation through regular social events from picnics to pamper evenings"*



## child contact centre

## debt advice centre

**The Vine Child Contact Centre** provides a neutral location for children whose parents are separated, to meet with the parent with whom they no longer live. We offer a fun and supported environment for the children to play and spend quality time with their non-resident parent. This service is offered free of charge.

**The Vine Debt Advice Centre** provides a highly personalised service, making home visits to help support our clients as they wrestle with bills, threatening letters and making ends meet. We work out a fair budget, negotiate with those who are owed money and can take people through insolvency procedures where necessary. This service is also offered free of charge.

### Contact Details

[info@thevineleeds.org](mailto:info@thevineleeds.org)

[www.thevineleeds.org](http://www.thevineleeds.org)

For regular updates and stories:



Follow us on  
**Twitter**



Join us on  
**Facebook**

## To Give to the work of the Vine

### Regular gifts

A electronic bank transfer using the details below - please add a reference including the word "gift".

**Leeds Community Development (The Vine)**

Sort code: **20-48-46** Account number: **13253147**

### One off donations

Cheques payable to 'Leeds Community Development'

Give via Stewardship at [www.give.net](http://www.give.net) or go to [www.thevineleeds.org](http://www.thevineleeds.org) and give via mydonate

Regardless of how you give, if you haven't already done so and are eligible, please also complete a **Gift Aid declaration online via our website.**

### If you shop online

Financially support us as you shop online: [www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/thevine](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/thevine)