

# Parish News from Caritas Westminster

## Upcoming Events

Please include the following in your parish newsletters when appropriate.

### **Event for anyone interested in supporting or hosting a Ukrainian family or others seeking sanctuary.**

**Ukraine Hosting Scheme - Supporting people seeking sanctuary**

18<sup>th</sup> May, 6.30 - 8pm via Zoom.

Join Caritas Westminster and the Jesuit Refugee Service for an information session on hosting refugee guests. This session is open to those who are hosting, would like to learn more, or would like to join a group to discern what a wider welcome could look like.

This session is a part of the wider Diocesan Community of Support. It has been set up in response to the government's Homes for Ukraine Scheme, the Afghan Refugee Response, and the wider situation of asylum seekers and refugees in the Diocese of Westminster.

Sign up by visiting <https://www.caritaswestminster.org.uk/ukraine-hosting-scheme-supporting-people-seeking-sanctuary-1340.php>.

or Caritas Westminster's Eventbrite Page

## **The Caritas Volunteer Service**

**It is National Thank you Day for Volunteers Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June!**

The Caritas Volunteer Service can support you to manage these volunteers, and recruit new volunteers.

All parishes rely on volunteers. Those who lead our music, help with children's liturgies, Eucharistic ministers. In addition, many parishes provide outreach to their communities through volunteers who generously share their time, gifts and skills.

Our Volunteer Management Training event on the topic of **Planning for Volunteer Involvement** aims to help you recruit the right volunteers for the right roles, safely, and to nurture volunteers to encourage them to stay involved.

This online event will be held on the morning of **Tuesday 17 May, 10:00-11:30**, with guest speakers: Arianna Sommariva, Diocese Safeguarding Support Officer and Fulvio Ornato, Head of Volunteering at CAFOD.

Find out more and sign up on Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/volunteer-management-planning-for-volunteer-involvement-tickets-256749433467>

Do not miss this opportunity to find out how the Caritas Volunteer Service can support you in your mission. Please pass on this information to anyone in your community who manages volunteers in any setting.

The 2022 Social Justice awards for volunteers within the diocese of Westminster will be launched next month – so do start thinking now of any outstanding individuals or groups in your community that you could nominate. Look out for the announcement listing the categories in our next bulletin or follow us on social media to be the first to know.

## **Diocese of Westminster Quarterly Meeting of Diocesan Homeless Projects**

**Thursday 26 May, 3:30-5:00pm  
Online**

Join our growing community of volunteers and professionals who want to see the end of homelessness.

Find out more and sign up: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/diocese-of-westminster-quarterly-meeting-of-diocesan-homeless-projects-tickets-251110527347?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

## **Financial Resilience and Cost of Living**

### **Cost of Living Hub**

The Mayor of London has launched a new Cost of Living Hub, which helps people access information, support and advice about claiming benefits, dealing with debt, financial management and mental health support. To explore the hub, please visit <https://www.london.gov.uk/cost-living-hub>

### **One-stop information for people in Herts**

Useful links and resources for people living in Herts [Hertfordshire County Council | Help to manage the cost of living](#)

### **HertsHelp**

Call 0300 123 4044 to speak to an adviser, email [info@hertshelp.net](mailto:info@hertshelp.net) or visit <https://www.hertshelp.net/hertshelp.aspx>

### **Grants to help pay off energy debts**

People who are in debt to their energy supplier might be able to get a grant from a charitable trust to help pay it off.

More details on this link – plus links to several advice providers <https://fuelpovertyresource.org.uk/focus-on/fuel-debt-and-trust-funds/>

### **National Energy Action**

Their Warm and Safe Homes helpline, 0800 304 7159 is open daily, 10am-12pm, to support clients with energy advice around topics such as reducing energy consumption, Warm Home Discount and Priority Services Register, fuel debt, water rates and benefits advice.

### **Green Doctors London**

A charity that offers free and impartial energy advice to help residents stay warm, save money and live greener <https://london.greendoctors.org.uk>

## Firm Foundations

If there is anyone in your parish keen to train as a Money Champion, providing practical and effective support to people facing financial difficulties, and building up resilience in the community, contact Sr Silvana Dallanegra [silvanadallanegra@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:silvanadallanegra@rcdow.org.uk)

## Stepping Stones – supporting people back into work

Caritas Westminster is partnering with Homelessness Charity The Upper Room to deliver a training course for those working with people who are homeless or otherwise struggling and finding it hard to get dignified, decently paid work. Participants will learn useful information and skills to enable them to help people back into work. This is a one-year course with sessions once a month. Find out more here: <https://www.caritaswestminster.org.uk/stepping-stones-1310.php>

## Data- we really need your help

In 2021, Caritas Westminster began sending out surveys to parish and school social action projects to help us better understand the outreach work that is happening across the [Diocese of Westminster](#), the need parishes and schools are seeing and how we can continue to best support them. Thank you to those of you who took the time to complete these surveys. The stories and data that you have shared with us have already been hugely informative in telling us about the scale of need in the Diocese and how we can support parish and school projects going forward.

**We would now like to remind you to take part in the Quarter 1 survey, which you can complete here - <https://www.tfaforms.com/4976789> - before May 9th. This is to cover activities that took place from January 1<sup>st</sup> - March 31<sup>st</sup> 2022.**

In our most recent survey – which focused on the period between July and September 2021 - we heard from **30 projects** who had collectively **supported more than 4300 people each week** and **distributed over 28,000 meals and food parcels**. This amazing work was supported by **over 900 volunteers**. This information has been used to further our advocacy work, as well as seeking out funding opportunities to best support social action projects and initiatives across the Diocese. We will continue to build on this feedback to ensure we are using our collective voice to speak out for those in need.

We would really appreciate your support in filling out the [Quarter 1 survey](#) for any social outreach projects in your parish, or asking the relevant person to do so, by **May 9th**. If you have any questions about this work, please email your Caritas Development Worker or [caritaswestminster@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:caritaswestminster@rcdow.org.uk)

Thank you again for supporting us in this endeavour!