



**st martin-in-the-fields
christmas appeal**

**annual review
2007/08**

**6 st martin's place
london
wc2n 4jj**

registered charity no 261359

www.smitf.org/christmas

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The Christmas Appeal is a unique partnership between St Martin-in-the-Fields and the BBC that dates back to the 1920's. At Christmas 2007, some 10,000 people generously gave a total of nearly £750,000. Some gifts were large, many were relatively modest; but all were given in the knowledge that "there but for the grace of God go I". In so doing they gave what has often been life changing help to thousands of people in great need, here in central London and around the country. This help is given either through The Connection at St Martin's or through the Vicar's Relief

Fund. Time and again those who have been helped, who are always in pretty desperate circumstances, say that it's not just the financial gift that matters but knowing that someone cares about them.

The Christmas Appeal is a huge voluntary effort. Grateful thanks to all those who make this one of the most efficient and effective charities in the UK. The success of the Appeal also depends greatly on Sally Flatman, the Producer of the BBC Radio 4 Appeal in which the Appeal is broadcast, and *Received with Thanks*, the programme about how money raised by last year's appeal was used. Sally's professionalism combined with her passionate personal commitment to making the Christmas Appeal a success make an enormous difference. For some years, Craig Norman has administered the Vicar's Relief Fund. As the Charities Manager at St Martin's, Craig is the new organiser of the Christmas Appeal. His technical competence has made significant improvements this year to both the collection and distribution of the Appeal.

The Christmas Appeal is not much short of an annual miracle and it is not to be taken for granted. Thank you to everyone who gave time and money to it in the last year. The level of need is as great as ever, crises in peoples' lives will happen and can't be predicted. The Christmas Appeal remains committed to providing critical support at such times through the work of the Vicar's Relief Fund and The Connection at St Martin's. Our aim in the coming year is to continue to offer speedy and targeted support in the most desperate of circumstances.

about this annual report

One of the principal beneficiaries of the Christmas Appeal is the Connection at St Martin's. The Connection at St Martin's helps homeless people in central London and is open every day and night of the week. They provide specialist services to 200 people every day, offering advice, care and support in a welcoming, accessible and friendly environment. Services include a day centre, outreach for rough sleepers, skills training, activity programmes and specialist support for complex needs. By encouraging each person to address the issues which caused their homelessness, The Connection helps them to gain the skills and confidence to make lasting changes in their lives.

Although the Connection shares its premises with St Martin-in-the Fields and works closely with us in the preparation for our annual Appeal, it is a separate charity with its own published annual report and accounts; we will not, therefore, attempt to summarise their activities in this report. For more information about the work of the Connection, or to obtain a copy of their annual report, contact:

The Connection at St Martin's
12 Adelaide Street
London
WC2N 4HW

☎: 020 7766 5544

e-mail: info@cstm.org.uk

www.connection-at-stmartins.org.uk

Registered Charity Number: 1078201

Company Registration: 3852519

Throughout this report, we have printed quotes from those who have benefitted from a grant from the Vicar's Relief Fund, or from support workers who were sent grants on behalf of one their clients in need. We are extremely grateful for this feedback - it is always helpful to remember who we are raising and distributing money for. We hope it is helpful for you to see beyond the words and numbers to the changes we have tried to make in people's lives.

The Saint Martin's Christmas Appeal Fund was established over 80 years ago for the purpose of the relief of poverty. As the detail of our report shows, it is established and operates for the public benefit - and most obviously the thousands of individuals whom we were able to help directly last year.

But perhaps it also operates for the public benefit in a more subtle way: last year some 10,000 individuals (we have no corporate sponsors) responded to our appeal. That is an extraordinary number of people from across the country and beyond - who, perhaps because of the association of the Appeal with the Christmas season, felt moved (consciously or unconsciously) to participate in that generosity which God himself showed to humankind in instigating the incarnation through the birth of Jesus Christ.

You can read more in what follows about precisely whom we help, and hear the moving stories of some of those who have been helped in the programme 'Received with Thanks' which the BBC now generously broadcasts to coincide with each annual appeal. But in principle, we help those who, like our Lord, are homeless, and lack material personal possessions, and who attracted His loving attention while He was with us: the widow, the orphan, the sick and the deprived.

"I have hope for the future ...which I had lost whilst in the depths of despair ..."

This spirit informs our grant-making policy - one which, if we were able to implement fully, and satisfy all proper claims on our resources, would mean raising approximately double the generous total we reached last year.

Our policy is also, like St Martin himself, to share our 'cloak', by which I mean that approximately half of what is raised each year is granted to the Connection at St Martin's, which provides our on-site care for the homeless and those in need in central London. The other half, as you will read, goes to individuals directly in urgently provided and small but crucially important amounts.

Our hope, with the valuable support of the BBC is, year on year, to increase the amount raised so that, as our Lord would have wished, we are able to turn away nobody who is in genuine need of our help.

who we are

During the First World War, St Martin-in-the-Fields became “the church of the ever-open door”, providing a place of rest and support to troops leaving for and returning from the Western Front. In peacetime, the church continued to be a focus for those in need from all over the country. In 1927, Revd Dick Sheppard made the first Christmas Appeal from the pulpit, broadcast on the BBC Home Service. Each year since then, the Vicar of St Martin’s has made a radio appeal to support our work.

In 1939, despite the onset of war, the 13th Christmas Appeal raised over £10,000 for the first time. The 56th Appeal in 1982 broke the £100,000 mark for the first time. In 2007, our 81st Appeal, our total was £725,000.

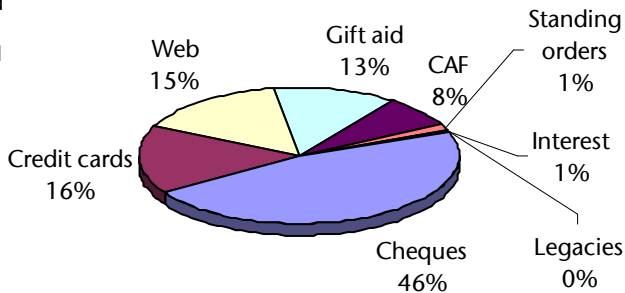
The money raised by the Christmas Appeal is divided between the Connection at St Martin’s (see page 4) and the Vicar’s Relief Fund.

“...although I am not religious I understand such support to be the essence of Christianity. Once again I thank you and everyone who gives their time to help those in need.”

The chart below shows the channels through which the Appeal received money in 2007. For the first time, donations via the St Martin’s website exceeded £100,000.

Following an exceptionally generous legacy which assisted the 2006 Appeal, legacies this year were negligible. The trustees and the Charities Manager have put in place an active policy to encourage legacy giving.

Donation channels and other income sources, 2007 Christmas appeal



vicar's relief fund

The Vicar's Relief Fund (VRF) is part of the St Martin-in-the-Fields Christmas Appeal Charity and is funded solely by donations made in response to the BBC Radio 4 Appeal.

The aim of the VRF is to make grants to 'those who are in need or suffering hardship'. Although the VRF is effectively a church fund, it is intended for the whole community of need: we make no distinction for gender, ethnic group, sexuality, origin or legal status. It is hard to define a 'typical' grant: our aim is to help with the basic necessities of life that many of us take for granted such as beds and bedding, clothing and domestic appliances. Debt is a particular problem for those on low income, so we also assist with repaying rent and other arrears, often allowing someone to move on from temporary accommodation or prevent eviction. Others may have no income at all, whether because of delays or problems with their benefits or because of their immigration status; the VRF also makes grants for food and ordinary living expenses.

The amount of each grant varies according to need but is, on average, around £170 with an upper limit of £250. Our hope is that in making such grants we will have a positive and immediate impact, helping to alleviate distress or avert a crisis.

Many of those we help have experienced homelessness or are threatened with being made homeless and one of our priorities is to provide rapid support in such cases. We recognise that people in need are in need now, and so aim to respond to applications as soon as possible after we get them. Between April 2007 and the end of March 2008, 34.3% of the 1252 grants we made were dispatched within 24 hours of receiving the request. In total, just over half the grants went out within 3 days. The average response between receiving an application and sending the grant was 5.44 days. Although this may still be impressive compared to other charities, for us it was disappointing. The main reason for this was the large number of requests received (3252, including 347 requests outside the VRF's criteria) overstressing our limited resources. In January 2007, extra staff were taken on and response rates improved towards the end of the reporting year (an average of 3.1 days for grants in February and March).

"Can I please take this opportunity to thank you so kindly for not only your donation of £90.42 in protecting my client from homelessness but also your extremely quick response in this as time really was of the essence...."

public benefit

The Charities Act 2006 requires all charities to explicitly demonstrate that their aims and activities are for the benefit of the public.

The VRF's first priority is to people :

- who are in danger of becoming homeless,
- who are currently homeless, destitute and/or vulnerable, and
- with experience of homelessness attempting to establish or maintain a tenancy.

Between April 2007 and March 2008 the VRF:

- received 2905 applications that met our criteria
- made 1252 individual grants
- the total amount given in individual grants was £216,520 (the funds available were augmented by £5246 in returned grants and £7610 in interest earned)
- the average grant was £172

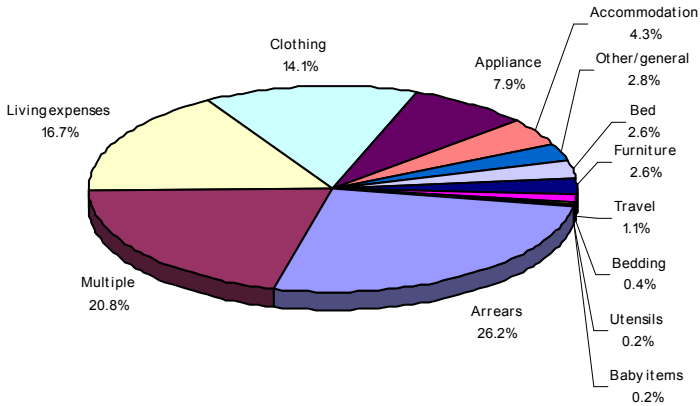
The chart opposite shows the allocation of grants by purpose. The "Multiple" category refers to grants that were made for more than one major purpose e.g. a cooker and a bed.

The VRF currently has on record over 6000 support workers in over 1600 agencies that apply to the VRF on behalf of their clients.

These referrers may be:

- social workers or support workers in housing associations, tenancy support agencies, hostels, refuges, SureStarts and family centres
- key workers in rehabilitation centres
- advisors in Citizens Advice Bureaux
- probation officers or prison staff
- health professionals
- clergy, including prison and hospital chaplains
- and staff in other voluntary organisations and caring agencies.

Distribution of VRF grants
2007 –08 (total grants = 1252)



Application forms, along with the guidelines and instructions for completing the form, are sent on request, and can be sent by post, fax or as an e-mail attachment. It is not mandatory for applicants to use the form: any written request with sufficient information is acceptable.

Occasionally, we are contacted by a member of the public who wishes to apply on their own behalf or to pass the application form on to their support worker to complete. In order to maintain a level of control over the process, it is our policy to send forms only to support workers such as those listed above. Their requests receive a standard response explaining our application procedure and recommending that they get in touch with a support worker, who can advise them and, if necessary, apply to the VRF on their behalf.

“The new tools will really be useful to me in finding employment, I’m sure I will become a better person and not just an ex offender because of your help.”

Block Grants

The VRF also uses key agencies to make grants on our behalf through allocation of block grants.

The agencies can be:

- churches and boards of social responsibility in deprived areas throughout the UK
- hospital social work departments
- charitable organisations working in areas of poverty
- support agencies specialising in working with people in need, vulnerable tenants, hostel dwellers and destitute asylum seekers.

“... drastically improved her quality of life as she would have been street homeless. In our experience, your grants make a significant difference in very tough situations. In particular, we have found that the speed at which it is possible to obtain grants is very helpful....”

In the year ending March 2008:

- 62 block grants were made
- £145,000 was allocated
- Over 800 grants to individuals and families were made through these agencies.

Distributors of block grants have, over time, developed various working methods which they feel are most appropriate to their own or their organisation’s circumstances and their particular area: some work on their own, others make grant decisions as part of a committee. While we have provided them with

best practice guidelines, we have not attempted to impose any sort of working method upon the distributors.

A consultant’s report in 2002 stated that the distribution groups were an efficient way of distributing funds.

impact

Although we sometimes receive thank you's from the recipients of grants or those working with them, it is difficult for us to measure how – and how much – a grant has transformed someone's life. In order to try and understand this, a small survey was carried out between April and July 2007 on some of the 420 grants that the VRF had made in that time. Questionnaires were sent to randomly chosen support workers who had made the initial application and passed the grant on to their client. They were asked to rate to what degree (Significant, Noticeable, Some or None) the grant had helped to improve their service users':

- quality of life / physical / emotional / mental well-being
- access to accommodation or the ability to maintain a tenancy
- access to employment / education / training / social activities
- social / community / peer integration.

Responses were received from England and Scotland; due to the random sampling, no questionnaires were sent to Wales or Northern Ireland. Grants ranged from £39 to £250 and were for primarily for clothing, living expenses, repayment of arrears, and household items.

"...If the grant had not been received then both mother and child would still be in temporary accommodation Thank you once again."

There were also two grants for eyeglasses and one for replacement locks.

30 completed questionnaires were received, a response rate of 86%.

The key findings showed that **100% of respondents replied that the grant had made a significant or noticeable improvement to their service users' quality of life**, and that **89% of respondents replied that the grant had made a significant or noticeable improvement to their service users' access to accommodation or the ability to maintain a tenancy**.

Although access to employment / education / training / social activities and social / community / peer integration were less significant or noticeable (47% and 58% respectively), comments indicated that these were of secondary importance to their service users.

who we help

An ethnic monitoring form is included with the application forms for VRF grants. Although it is not mandatory to complete the EM form, and any information included or not included is not used in the decision to allocate grants, the data derived from this builds up a useful picture of the community in need across the UK.

We ask for:

- date of birth
- country of birth
- ethnic group
- religion
- and also record anecdotal information regarding marital status, number of parents in the household and whether the client is an asylum seeker or refugee.

Where it is provided, this information is collected both for grants made as well as unsuccessful applications. This provides a useful check that all groups have equal access to the fund.

In 2007 – 08, the number of males and females receiving grants was almost evenly divided: 619 males and 632 females. 22% of VRF grants went to one-parent households; 71% went to people without children,

Chart 1: Age of grant recipients

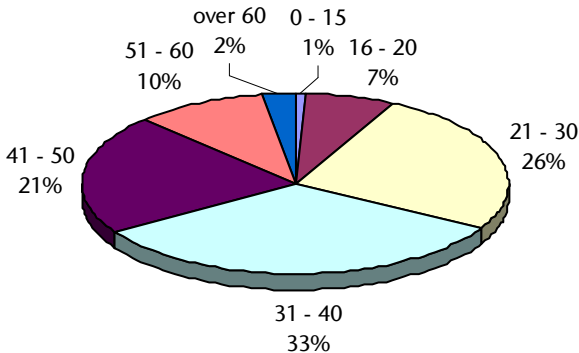
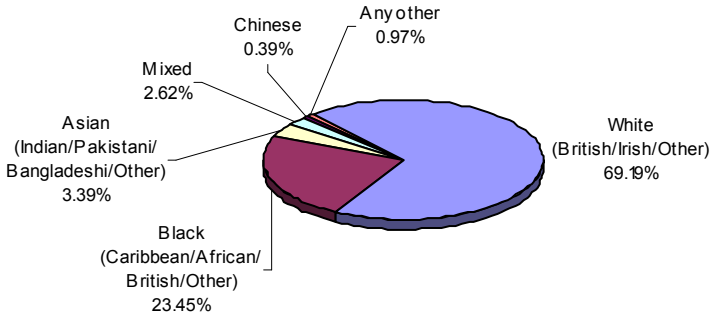


Chart 2: Ethnic group of grant recipients



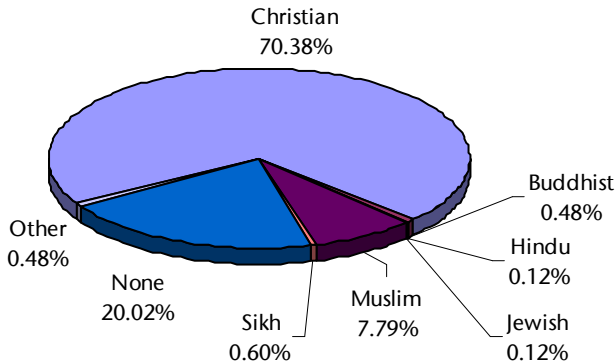
reflecting our priority group of men and women with experience of being homeless, where their sometimes chaotic circumstances often make sustained relationships difficult.

30% of grants went to people born outside the UK, with 15% made to those seeking asylum or having been granted leave to remain.

Grant recipients lived in 103 of the 120 mainland UK post code areas, showing an impressive nation-wide reach.

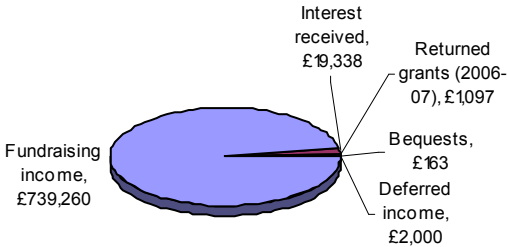
“... your grants give clients a sense that someone cares about them. ... for our Christian clients I think it is meaningful that it has come from a Church source, but also our Muslim clients are always interested to know that a Christian organisation has helped them: I think this sometimes has a considerable impact.”

Chart 3: Religion of grant recipients



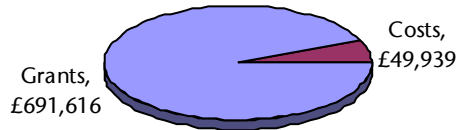
income & expenditure

Incoming resources



“...without your help I do not imagine how life could get any worse. I am very grateful to you and your organisation for being there for those in need, your organisation is God sent.”

Resources expended



For a full set of accounts, contact 020 7766 1125 or craig.norman@smitf.org

When I was growing up in Canada, I used to see a television advertisement for a popular manufacturer of comfortable shoes. The advert opened with a young man sitting despondently against a tree. Dressed in bib overalls, his feet bare, the viewer could quickly identify him as a poor country boy, perhaps even a “hillbilly”. His father appears carrying a pair of shoes. The young man dismisses his father’s gift: “It’s no use, Pa. I can’t wear shoes.” Finally he tries them on and, of course, they’re comfortable. The advert ends with the young man proudly proclaiming: “I can wear shoes! I can go to school! I CAN BE SOMEBODY!”

Like the young man in that advert, the people helped by the VRF are often marginalised and vulnerable, and lacking something – shoes, clothing, a bed, a cooker, eyeglasses, last month’s rent – that stand between them and living a more normal life, of being somebody.

Many of the people who have received help from the VRF during this year have experienced homelessness or are threatened by homelessness. A small grant from the VRF can help a former rough sleeper establish a first tenancy, or prevent a family from being evicted from their home. Recovering substance abusers in rehab find themselves, thanks to a healthier lifestyle, with clothes that that have become too small; those who have gone directly from prison may have only the clothes they are wearing. Asylum seekers who have exhausted the appeal process find themselves destitute; those who have been granted leave to remain face a wait for benefits and housing.

*“In the name of Allah most
beneficent, most merciful
I would like to say thank you
very much for the money it
was appreciated.”*

Why do we do what we do? Because Christ has invited us to join him in transforming his world. We can’t do it all at once: only a little bit at a time. It’s like the man on the beach who throws one stranded starfish among thousands back into the sea. What difference did it make? he is asked. He replies: it made a difference to that one.



“...Here love and conscience sing the same refrain.”

*Andrew Motion
(as inscribed on the lightwell of the
renewed St Martin-in-the-Fields)*

**We are enormously grateful to the BBC who have broadcast the
Christmas Appeal every year since 1927,
to the many thousands of people who respond with donations
to the Radio 4 broadcasts
and to the vast army of volunteers who staff phone lines and
process donations enabling this vital work to continue.**