



# St Vincent's Leeds

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## Annual Report 2024/25

Supporting local people

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# St Vincent's Leeds

## Overview

### Food

- 150 free meals per month
- 1164 food parcel this year
- 12 café volunteers

### Education

- 13 English Classes per week
- 15 people into work
- 8 people received Tablets & data after completing Multiple maths skills
- 2 Financial skills courses

**For more info,  
contact:  
[hello@svp.org.uk](mailto:hello@svp.org.uk)**

### Activities

- 72 people visited the seaside
- 102 children enjoyed Christmas party
- 238 people attended our community Panto

### Trading

- 12 volunteers per week
- 19 home furnished per month
- 1 visit from Father Christmas
- 1895 people per month

# Centre Manager's Report

Caroline Kelly

**The centre grows ever stronger, and I'm proud that my third year in post has contributed to its resilience and increasing recognition within the community.**

We've faced many challenges particularly around income generation as the funding landscape has become more competitive. We've responded with innovation, flexibility, and determination. More of my time has been dedicated to sustainable funding, ensuring we remain accountable and resourceful in how we support our community.

The most rewarding part of my role is the people: our compassionate, generous volunteers and staff, the individuals and families we serve, and the wider community we welcome through our doors. Every month, we support over 3,000 people—some with a hot meal, others with advice or practical support. Many leave with more hope than they came in with. In December, we give the gift of Christmas—presents, food, and joyful visits from Father Christmas. Most don't leave with a tree (though it's happened), but they leave feeling part of something.



We deliver our services with care, confidentiality, and dignity. At our heart is a Christ-centred mission: to serve with love and purpose.

This year, we said goodbye to cherished colleagues and welcomed Stewart, who has strengthened our wellbeing work and deepened our connection to Asygarth Green.



# Chair's Report

Ros McMullen



The management committee of the centre have been once again humbled by the amazing work we have seen the staff deliver at St Vincent's, Leeds. It has not been an easy 12 months for any of them, with increasing client need coupled with significant pressure on budgets, but nonetheless the work to support the most vulnerable in our community has continued and developed. New ways of raising money to support the work have included the highly enjoyable 'Beer, Curry and Quiz' nights which I encourage all our friends and supporters to attend. We also saw a very successful sponsored walk organised by St Joseph's in Wetherby which had more walkers this year and raised a significant amount. Without any doubt we require all parishes and the whole SVP family to consider how they can contribute to fund-raising for the centre, as the financial outlook remains challenging. I want to highlight in this report the nature of the work undertaken by the Education and Migrant Support Department. The committee invited the manager, Julie, of this department to a 'roundtable' session to outline their work and we learned just how vital their contribution is. During 2024 1,518 people received immigration advice and migrant support from our team who have been working in partnership with the Manuel Bravo Project for over 10 years delivering support and advice free to the people who need it most in our community.

It isn't just advice provided: in May alone 124 asylum seekers reached out for clothing, and we were able to provide 423 items. There continues to be a shortage of men's clothing (men, it would seem do not regularly sort through their wardrobes!) and new toiletries – donations will be gratefully received. Additionally, Julie's department provide an average of 15 education classes each week including 'help into work', English and basic IT. These classes were attended 2,522 times during the last year and over 50% of the attendees are in the age bracket 27-40yrs old. We rely on volunteers to help deliver classes and they contributed 1,500 hours during the year.



# Chair's Report continued

The centre continues to appeal for volunteers: the average number of community learning volunteers each month in 2024 was 23, and this year to date it is 28 – a significant increase but more would be welcome. Please consider in your parishes and conferences whether there are those who can make a volunteer contribution. Outreach work is also a feature of this department, and a total of 691 people (adults and children) have attended 'drop-in' sessions run at the Compton Centre: 414 children have been supported when their parents have reached out for advice.

And of course, all this work is only one part of what the centre provides – next year I will focus on another department in this report.

Our management committee oversees the work of the centre, particularly looking at how it operates and utilises networks; how it works within our catholic ethos, paying close attention to catholic social teaching; how it demonstrates Vincentian values, and critically, the overall financial health and strategic direction of the centre. Unfortunately, the committee have had some departures this year: Freda Rockliffe is relocating to Edinburgh; Nigel Kilgour is stepping down from his position as Central Council President which means he leaves our committee, our vice-chair, Ros Ives, is off on exciting travels, and after more years than he can care to remember Paul Grafton is looking at a well-earned retirement. This means that I am ending my report this year with a plea for committee members. We meet quarterly for 90 minutes, and members also serve on one of the committees, which also meet quarterly for 60 minutes. It is not a massive time commitment in meeting attendance, but I can assure you it is rewarding work. If you would like to contribute in this way, please contact me through our centre manager.

# Debt Advice Report



Luke Dennison, Debt Manager

The 24 – 25 financial year saw an increase in demand for debt and benefit advice across the entire country. All debt advice services have felt the strain of huge numbers of enquiries, with our client's biggest concerns regularly being energy debts and struggling to budget.

In response to the sheer number of enquiries, we implemented a call back system as to not turn people away when we had no available appointments, to allow us to proactively call people as soon as we had available appointments so no one was without help.

Our partnership for providing debt advice to people in prison in HMP Leeds + Wealstun continues to be strong and effective with continuing referrals, and many people now leaving prison with a fresh start, free of the problem debt with entered prison with.

Over the last 12 months we've kept many families in their homes by preventing evictions. We've stopped bailiffs, we've defended court claims, we've helped clients navigate through what can be one of the lowest points in their lives and get them to the light at the end of the tunnel.

We pride ourselves in the levels of support we offer to some of the most vulnerable people in society, and the team are a shining example of best practice and quality of advice in our industry.

**446** clients were fully assessed and helped by the debt team, and the amount of debt written off was an incredible **£1,695,947.86**. Our highest amount ever in a 12-month period!

We'll continue to be there for our community, and we'll continue to innovate and adapt to the climate to best help those affected by poverty in all its forms



# Centre Trading

Leigh Bradley, Trading Manager

**Over the past year, the trading team has focused on meeting the increasing needs of the people in LS9, driven by a rising demand for the services we provide. These include daily coffee specials and affordable food at Vinnies Mini Market, as well as furniture referrals and access to budget-friendly furniture and food options.**

The shop has also seen a rise in donations, allowing us to offer more quality clothing at low prices for individuals in the LS9 area and beyond. Not only does the shop offer a treasure trove of items, but it has also become the first point of contact for service users seeking assistance from other departments within the centre. This year, the shop generated over £80,000 in income through various revenue streams. A notable addition was the Vinnie Mini Market, which helps bridge the gap between food support and the rising costs of local supermarkets. In partnership with Fareshare, the shop now receives fresh food deliveries twice a week to meet local demand. The LS9 community has greatly appreciated this fresh food offering, finding it a helpful way to stretch their budgets further.



In addition to trading, the team also organized Easter and Christmas festivities, with all children receiving an Easter egg and participating in a snowball hunt and a visit with Santa Claus. Over 130 children—our largest number to date—received a free present from Santa, made possible by the generosity of the Cash for Kids appeal.







The trading team has undergone a restructure to align with the values of SVP and drive positive change management. As part of this transition, we bid farewell to Helen (Shop Manager) and Jason (Depot Supervisor).

Food Provisions The pantry has had a busy year, which wouldn't have been possible without the generous support and donations from schools, local conferences, and parishes. Over **1,420** food parcels have been provided to those in need through referrals, along with Christmas hampers for service users of the centre. The food pantry remains an essential service for people in LS9 and the wider Leeds area.

The rising cost of living has led to an increased demand for the food pantry, and our focus for the upcoming year is to expand our membership to help stretch people's budgets just a little further.

Café Vinnies Café has become the vibrant heart of the centre, with Dermot (Café Manager), Michelle, and their team of volunteers serving affordable daily meals while also supporting the Debt and Immigration teams by providing drinks for their clients. This year, the café generated over £55,000 in income and created a social value of more than £10,000 by offering free meals and drinks to those in need. The café team also played a key role in combating social isolation, delivering over 60 Christmas dinners on Christmas Day and hosting a festive lunch for all 63 volunteers, as well as a community Christmas meal for 60 of our regular service users.



The café continues to thrive, regularly hosting popular events such as corporate curry quiz nights and events for local businesses in the area, which have been incredibly successful in raising the cafes profile and creating an enjoyable night for all.

# Counselling Service



Stewart Barlow, Counselling Services Manager

The Counselling Service opened its doors in February 2024 with a remit to develop a free service that meets the needs of St Vincent's service users. Referrals are taken from other internal services such as the St Vincent's debt team, Inreach and from external stakeholders to support specific populations, such as dads with children under 18 and women 55+. Our challenge is to develop and resource free services that meet the wide variety of often-complex needs of our service users. To increase our offering, we have taken a broad definition of therapy and wellbeing. We have a team of 10 trainee counsellors covering an average 110 counselling hours per month of one-to-one counselling. Specialist support for Neuro divergent service users is also available. We run a weekly men's group consisting of part social, part structured wellbeing courses that include days out, mindfulness and creative crafts. Facilitators encourage and support the personal develop of members with the aim of becoming a self-managing group.

We have taken over a local park as a focus for the development of nature and environment-based activities for volunteers, families, local schools and the local community. The initial habitat restoration phase was supported by Leeds City Council, but the space has recently been designated as a Groundworks Community Green Hub, attracting further funding to focus on community engagement for the coming year.

An in-house green engagement officer has been enlisted to develop and support environment-based activities for St Vincent's within the wider project, such as our gardening group. We are hoping to further extend counselling service group activities this coming year, to include bicycle maintenance and riding, balance bikes for toddlers, walking and walking football.





# Volunteering



**Volunteers are the heart and soul of St Vincent's.**

They make the Centre feel kind, safe, and welcoming in a way I've never experienced elsewhere. Volunteering is a truly selfless act giving time, energy, purpose, and connection. Throughout the year, I've seen an incredible mix of core volunteers, students, and corporate supporters all working together. They enrich the Centre and each other helping others grow and succeed.



As Centre Manager, one of my favourite things is talking about “moments” Those times when I know we've made a difference. It's a single often fleeting moment.

One such volunteer moment was seeing Katie, a long-standing volunteer, support Basharat in repurposing our depot. She didn't just get stuck in, she led, mentoring Diego and William on placement. This is a demonstration of true leadership: helping others grow and succeed.



# Annual Stats:

**2932**

**People Fed**

**Bus trips**

**3**

**407**

**Christmas Presents**

**Scarborough  
Whitby  
Denton**

## **OUR TEAM:**

Serena, Julie, Dermot,  
Lenora, Basharat,  
Celia, Jason, James,  
Leigh, Vicky, Luke,  
Sheena, Rolinde,  
Faye, Andrea  
Michelle, Natasha  
Helen, Bernard,  
Stewart, Steve, Andy,  
Caroline, Tim, Nicole,  
Debbie, Lisa, Jack.

**£1,695,947**

**Debt Written off**

**2522**

**Education Class attendees**



# Immigration and Education

Julie Linley, Immigration and Education Manager



**The CLD staff work together with a team of 33 volunteers to help everyone live with dignity, have a voice and actively participate in the community. We do this through providing classes, activities, volunteer opportunities, immigration advice and support.**

Learning opportunities at St. Vincent's include ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), IT support, Help into work and more. In the last year, 15 weekly classes took place over 3 terms and were attended 2,522 times. 100% of students asked said they felt better because of new skills learned and support received. Future of some students include: 'I would like to become a teaching assistant,' 'I want to write and publish books. I also want to go to university,' 'I would like to open up to the language and find a job' and 'I would like to learn and be more confident when I speak.'

The migrant support and immigration

The migrant support and immigration advice service supported 1,422 people last year. Through this service, we helped people in crisis, helped address immediate issues and worked to prevent problems. We helped people be seen, heard and have hope at the same time as providing immigration advice, improving general wellbeing and challenging injustice.

Working to address the root causes of inequalities related to poverty and destitution, we continued to be a major partner in the CAREWELL Project and contributed towards the publication of resources to help others follow our example and become 'spaces of care' for migrants and refugees.

**"I would like to thank all the teachers very much. They are very friendly and good. They make a great effort to help us learn. The lessons are fun." – 2025 Student Testimonial**

# Activities and Engagement

Tim Dawtry, Activities Coordinator



## Year of Connection and Growth

This year, approximately 3,300 people took part in our diverse programme of activities, from weekly hula hoop and craft groups to our popular “Holidays at Home” sessions for children.

We also supported digital inclusion by distributing 260 free SIM cards to those experiencing digital poverty.

Beyond the numbers, participants tell us how much they value the opportunity to connect with others, learn new skills, and improve their wellbeing in a welcoming, supportive space.

### Alice Through the Ballot Box,

Our fourth major community show, was perhaps our most successful yet. Thirty drama and music group members rehearsed for four months to deliver music, laughter, and surprises to 350 local attendees. Audience feedback was glowing: “Hilarious from start to finish” and “A wonderful thing for our community – more!”

### The St Vincent's Song

As part of Opera North’s sensory trail, we created and recorded “Come Along to St Vincent’s”—a catchy pop tune capturing the spirit and services of the centre. Designed to represent us in audio form, it’s a lively track with a chorus that’s hard to forget!

### Here to Help Drop-In

Launched in late 2024, this new service offers friendly, informal support to anyone who drops in needing help, advice, or information. Whether it’s attaching a letter to an email, filling in a form, or finding the right service, our volunteers and staff are here to assist. Simple and inclusive, it’s already making a real difference to those overwhelmed by life’s increasing complexities.

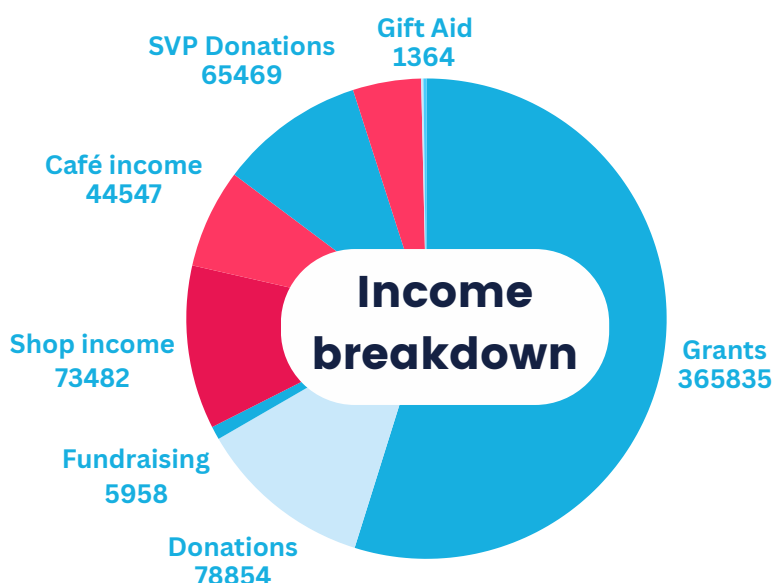


# Financial Information:

In 2024–25, St Vincent's Leeds generated over £668,000 in income, enabling us to provide essential support to thousands of individuals and families across Leeds. Our funding came from a wide range of sources, demonstrating the trust and commitment of our community of supporters. These included over £365,000 in core voluntary grants, £78,000 in individual donations, and an incredible £65,000 from internal SVP donations, showing continued belief in our mission and work.

Our social enterprises also made a meaningful contribution:

- Our shop generated £73,482, providing affordable clothing, furniture, and household items.
- Vinnie's Café brought in £44,547, all while offering free meals and reducing isolation for many.
- Fundraising and events raised almost £6,000, thanks to the creativity and generosity of local supporters.



Together, our spending provided excellent value—delivering frontline services, meals, education, advice, and hope for just £36 per person supported. With over 3,000 people accessing our centre each month, this represents a cost-effective, life-changing investment in our community.

None of this would be possible without our dedicated staff, volunteers, funders, partners, and advocates. Thank you for helping us create a more just and compassionate Leeds.

# THANK YOU

## Gratitude



This report closes another impactful chapter at the centre, we want to express our heartfelt thanks to everyone who makes our work possible. From our dedicated staff and tireless volunteers to the incredible fundraisers, SVP conferences, corporate teams, supporters, funders, and passionate advocates your commitment and compassion are the driving force behind everything we do. Together, we've made a real difference in the lives of those who walk through our doors, offering support, dignity, and hope when it's needed most. The positive change we see every day is a testament to your generosity, kindness, and belief in our mission. Thank you for being the heart of the centre—this wouldn't be possible without you.



**£5**

pays for a  
hot meal  
with pudding

**£20**

Covers the  
cost of a  
weekly  
support  
group

**£10**

pays for a child to  
visit the seaside

**£15**

Provides  
a three  
day food parcel

**£36**

to support each  
person in the  
centre



*St Vincent's*  
growing people, changing lives