



***'Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.'***

– Saint Theresa of Calcutta

Communication makes the world go round.

It facilitates human connections, and allows us to learn, grow and progress. It is not just about speaking or reading, but understanding what is being said – and in some cases what is not being said.

Here, at the centre we communicate continually, we all do. It is a very important part of our every day. From the moment we open our doors, we greet one another, we moan, complain. We spread good news and bad. We encourage, we enquire, we sympathise, we disagree, and we care, all through communication.

We have a lovely open door policy, and very open in our communication. Sometimes we love what we hear and discuss, sometimes we most certainly do not. Everyone communicates in very different ways. Some people will give you very elaborate and long winded explanations, some will say very little. Some will get angry, some will cry. Some communicate their frustrations, emotions loudly, but also some people in a very quiet and desperate kind of way will communicate their pain, or despair.

The staff at the centre, deal with everything, from joy, happiness, sadness, grief, pain, loss, confusion,

hatred, utter despair, loneliness and the relief of finding a place to live, or job.

Losing a home or loss of work is like the end of the world to people, they need a listening ear that understands and can empathise. We hear the distress of fragmented families, and the enjoyment and complete satisfaction of contacting loved ones after a complete breakdown of communication.

You cannot communicate effectively without listening. When learning counselling skills you first learn to listen. We learn to give people the space to explain, to get their feelings and words out. When you have somebody in front of you, desperate for help, to be understood, they need you to listen to what they are saying or trying to explain to you. They do not need you giving your experiences or how you dealt with the same situation in your life. That will perhaps come later, or maybe not.

Communication is not just speaking. Often it is lending a hand. An arm around someone's shoulder, holding a hand, praying with someone. Finding out a piece of information that they really need, tells that person you care.

Here at the Methodist Centre we try to give over and above. We communicate with our guests in many, many ways, but we hope every person that comes through our doors, feels an individual, feels we care and knows we will do everything within our power to help them.

**Debbie Green**  
Senior support Worker



## We are the talk of the town!

Well not quite but, the BS5 district of Bristol is buzzing with the good news of Street Folk Charity Shop.

A customer reported to Sandi, the shop manager, that at a recent group meeting they had been at, the main topic of conversation was about the shop! Comments such as 'Quality bargains to be had, genuine vintage items for sale and above all a very friendly staff.

Thank you all for your continued donations and purchases. We have seen a huge increase in our turnover since relocating and all the profits support the work among Bristol's homeless and vulnerable. If you haven't visited the shop already it really is well worth going and you never know you might pick up a Christmas bargain or two.



## Support Worker Chris Keegan comments on our communication with other agencies

The importance of communication between the staff of the BMC and our guests has never been as important as it is now.

Communication is a central tenant of assisting, helping and supporting those in need in order to offer any kind of resolution of the problems that have beset them. In these days of increasing austerity, political uncertainty and questionable policy many individuals find themselves isolated and trapped in an insular existence where communication with anyone is difficult.

Yet solution to the myriad of issues that blight the lives of our guests does not just lie between the individual and our ever capable staff team. Wider communication across the spectrum of social science is needed in order to fully resolve problems, rehabilitate an individual and offer successful outcomes from situations directly caused by unemployment, poverty, homelessness and poor life style choices often driven by equally poor mental health.

Much has been made of caring in the community over the last 30 to 40 years but for all the sound bites of 'working in partnership', 'joined up working' and more recently 'we are in this together' little progress has actually been made in producing a means of communication that enables various organisations to work together effectively. Since the Bristol Methodist Centre moved to its new location there has been a determined effort by the staff to improve how agencies work in conjunction with one another which has helped not just our guests but also

the centre itself by raising its profile across Bristol.

Most recently the Bristol Methodist Centre has been involved in complex communications with a variety of different agencies in order to secure positive outcomes for our guests. This goes beyond simple 'sign posting' where an individual is directed to another agency but involves instead a system of referrals and extended care beyond the centre where staff of several organisations communicate to develop a consensus of support that is not just appropriate but specifically applicable to the individual and 'tailor made' to serve their needs and produce a successful outcome.

Communication between agencies and the Bristol Methodist Centre has always been a priority but now here in our new building we are seeking to establish an even greater sense of co-ordinated working through a more direct practice of referral. In this way we hope to further the great work already being done by the centre to achieve the very best for our guests whilst also establishing a reputation of professional excellence with other agencies.

Now more than ever the style and necessity of communication both locally and globally is crucial to achieve the kinds of successful outcomes that can produce not just better lives but a larger notion of social cohesion that defies media expectations of increased fear and division. In this way we all can play a part in translating our ideas of communication into a brighter and more united future for all.



## A Visit by the President and vice –president

On July 23rd we welcomed to the Bristol Methodist Centre the Methodist Church President Revd. Dr Roger Walton and the Vice-president Rachel Lampard. The tour to the district was their first official visit and we were delighted to be part of it. We hosted a lunch for the district and after informal conversations and guided tours of the building we gathered as they spoke to us on the Theme of Brexit – what next – speaking from Isaiah. Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

