

How a Community Organisation Adapted During the COVID-19 Crisis

September 2020

By working with our colleagues in the Voluntary and Community sector, we have a series of reports on our website that capture the experiences and issues from the point of view of services and groups that support local people in the community.

This is an independent case study showing an example of one community organisation's story of adapting and what the future holds.

About the organisation



Christians Against Poverty is a UK Christian charitable company. Founded in Bradford, West Yorkshire by John Kirkby in 1996. It is a national organisation specialising in debt counselling for people in financial difficulty, including those confronted by bankruptcy or insolvency.



We are on a mission to release thousands of families from grinding poverty through award winning debt counselling and community groups. By equipping and empowering local churches to reach out on their doorsteps, we're bringing hope to thousands of people every year.

Liddy Blunden Centre Manager



What were the immediate challenges?

Christians Against Poverty cover the Bognor area and had to rethink everything so it was 6-8 weeks before they were able to speak with any new clients. Demand has been slow but are averaging two new people each month during COVID-19 instead of four. Working from home has been harder than appreciated, for staff and volunteers.

At the start of the pandemic they provided food to those in need through Fairshare- they have a good donation relationship with the foodbanks and other Churches - as they were not able to visit clients. They do not know the scale of the issue as people call an 0800 telephone number.

“ Being able to meet people face-to-face is so much better, as debt has so many different issues: hard to face, accept and could be dealing with a breakdown. ”

The need for their services is anticipated to increase as the anticipated recession and unemployment rate increases.

How has COVID affected their finances?

Christians Against Poverty are supported by donations from church members. They did secure a £500 grant from the Police fund for help with food. The debt centre in Shoreham has awarded a 2-year grant and they are applying to the Henry Smith Foundation for salaries and office costs funding.

“ We dream for a second person in the Bognor area who can support with debt advice. The Chichester area has just trained someone and there is no-one currently covering the Littlehampton area. ”

They work with other members of the voluntary and community sector: in the Bognor area such as [My Sister's House](#) and [Grandad's Front Room](#).

What are the concerns for the future, post COVID?

Christians Against Poverty are expecting to see a gradual increase in clients needing their help. People may be turned away *which is heart-breaking* as it takes courage to make the call.

“ We recently re-opened one case of a women who had mental health issues and was at rock bottom. ”

Due to a backlog a year ago, they could not take on any new clients but have now re-opened. Grandad's Front Room supports their work by giving out leaflets. They work through referrals from others and self-referrals. They are currently supporting clients by telephone but hope to resume face-to-face as soon as safe to do so.

“ One person who was going through bankruptcy, we spoke with them face-to-face and provided support. Some people just find it hard to ask for help. ”

Contact details

To learn more about Christians Against Poverty:

Call **01274 760720**

For new enquiries helpline call **0800 328 0006**

Email info@capuk.org

Or visit their webpage <https://capuk.org/>



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If you have questions about the content of this update, please either call 0300 012
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