



Registered Charity 1177771

Christmas is a time for giving, and it's in this spirit that the charity, **Splott Community Volunteers**, would encourage the people of Splott to give a little of themselves to the less fortunate throughout the Christmas season, and embrace the true joy that Christmas brings.

**Splott Community Volunteers** was created by the need to support the local community on an economic and emotional basis. We provide meals for the disadvantaged, homeless, financially challenged and refugee community. Our volunteers come from many walks of life and offer support, guidance, encouragement and acceptance to people who feel socially isolated because of their particular problems. We help our volunteers by providing opportunities for skills and training which allow them to seek work opportunities when they are ready. We have found that the social interaction is beneficial to both volunteers and patrons.

Demand for foodbank use results mainly from three simultaneous factors:

- **Income from benefits** is insufficient and subject to sudden gaps and reductions.
- Most people experience a **challenging life experience and/or ill health** before needing a food bank.
- **Lack of support.** People either don't have, or have exhausted, support, and have nowhere else to turn.

These factors are possibly more prevalent during this very strange and difficult year than maybe most people have ever experienced.

Accounts of hunger from people in food poverty particularly highlight hunger's negative impact on daily functioning, due to fatigue and a general lack of energy. Some emphasise the negative impact on physical health of eating a nutritionally inadequate diet and many speak more widely about the negative impact on mental health, wellbeing and self-esteem. The impact of living in a severely food insecure household affects children's mental health, while also affecting wider educational, physical and social development.

The aim of **Splott Community Volunteers** is to provide vital services and resources for those suffering this hardship and improve their quality of life by easing the need a little. We believe that a safe, confident and empowered community is essential for wellbeing, welfare, health and happiness, and **Splott Community Volunteers** provide a safe place of social and ethnic inclusion, where we offer food and support to create a positive impact on the health of the community and individuals alike.

Unlike food banks, anyone can use our Breakfast Clubs and a growing number of working people are turning to us for help. As people descend deep into debt, with no savings, broken marriages, a host of creditors seeking payments and an inability to keep up with rising utilities, fuel and food prices, folk who are usually very good at managing finances find themselves in debt for the first time in their life and become really withdrawn and depressed about their situation. Some have had to get a second job to make ends meet. Or use a food bank when things get really tight.

As everything becomes increasingly expensive, every day becomes a struggle. Lights stay turned off, the heating no longer goes on and undernourished people huddle under blankets and become depressed and lonely. Intervention can prevent this happening to families, and places such as Breakfast Club can, and do, work to benefit people and provide support as people gain skills and confidence again, adjust their working conditions, and see improved mental health and wellbeing as a result.

For a small donation, and with the assistance of our many regular volunteers, we offer a healthy takeaway breakfast each Thursday at the Old Splott Library. We have currently had to limit Breakfast Club to this one day due to the closure of our other usual venues due to Covid. Our visitors are offered a hot breakfast roll and a hot drink and a takeaway bag of food, impacting on their health, wellbeing and welfare. Those more fortunate are also very welcome to join us and support their neighbours, or contact us with details of housebound people in need.

We know Christmas to be a time of celebration. It's a time to be with the ones you love the most; it's a time to be selfless. But most of all, it's a time to give. And we hope that the Splott community truly feels the Christmas spirit this year. We would urge you all to give your support to the less fortunate by donating a little money, food, clothes or even gifts to the local people you know who are most in need. If you have nothing else to give, offer your prayers, good wishes and written messages of support and encouragement to let them know that others do care.

**Splott Community Volunteers** wish you all a blessed Christmas and an extra measure of comfort, joy and hope for the New Year.