

**welcare**  
*strengthening families since 1894*

# Welcare: 1894 to 2019

125 years dedicated to giving children a brighter future



# welcare

*strengthening families since 1894*

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**Our vision is of a world where every child and family is respected, included and resilient, and able to overcome challenges in life.**

**We believe that by working together we can create a society where parents and children have the confidence to recognise and seize every opportunity to flourish.**

**Our mission is to work alongside parents to give children secure and confident childhoods and to enable them to thrive in the future.**

## Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark, President of Welcare

**Rt Revd Edward Talbot, 100th Bishop of Rochester, 1896:** *'The work which the Association seeks to assist and develop is one for which we have the special example and authority of our Master: and it needs for its doing, those things which come most directly from Him: delicacy, compassion, courage, patience, prayerfulness.'*

Thus The Rt Revd Edward Talbot, Bishop of Rochester, describes the Diocesan Association for the Care of Friendless Girls, founded two years earlier by his predecessor, The Rt Revd Randall Davidson, and his wife Edith. The new Association was an extension of the work Bishop Randall and Edith had long been doing locally to help unmarried mothers, and in it lie the roots of Welcare. The Diocese of Southwark was created in 1905, when Bishop Edward became the first Bishop of Southwark. The Association later became the Southwark Diocesan Association for Prevention and Rescue Work (1914,) transitioning to become the Southwark Diocesan Council for Wel-Care in 1970, now shortened to Welcare.

Bishop Randall himself went on to become Archbishop of Canterbury in 1903, having previously been Bishop of Winchester. Bishop Randall and Bishop Edward were united in their determination to support women forced to the margins of society by their circumstances, through interventions to enable them to support themselves.

Society may have moved on in many ways but there remain all too many children in our Diocese today who are damaged by social isolation, domestic abuse, financial hardship and other disadvantages. They desperately need the key preventative actions and support Welcare provides to help families develop the life skills to manage financial, social and health issues. Families and children need early intervention and preventative services to address problems before they become crises.

It is here that the voluntary sector can be particularly helpful. In a recent report from the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, MPs described children's services as being 'at breaking point.' In 2017-18 England's local authorities were spending 75 per cent of their children's services budget on statutory services at the severe end of need, where they are obliged to act through legal requirements, rather than on key preventative actions. Welcare, on the other hand, is able to help parents who face difficulties to strengthen their family relationships and properly support their children, also providing vulnerable children with safe spaces to develop and grow – thus enabling them to avoid crisis in the first place.

We will continue to work together with the communities of South London and East Surrey to meet the needs of the disadvantaged, and are thankful to all those who offer their time through volunteering, fundraising and prayer, enabling us to continue to fulfil the mission and aims that marked our beginnings 125 years ago.



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*Christopher Southwark*

## Stories from Welcare – 125 years helping children and families

Welcare is a charity working with families and children up to the age of 13 in South London and East Surrey. We are proud of our Christian heritage and identity and derive our values from our Anglican origins. We believe that the essence of these values is shared by those of other faiths and none.

Welcare's mission is to work alongside parents to give children secure and confident childhoods and to enable them to thrive in the future. Today Welcare provides practical and emotional support and advice for families impacted by anything from domestic abuse and relationship breakdown to financial crisis, illness and behavioural problems. We do this by one-to-one family support, direct work with children, group work programmes for parents and children, and volunteer support including mentoring for children aged 8-13.

In 2018, in preparation for our 125th Anniversary, staff and trustees worked together to refresh Welcare's vision, mission and values to inspire the next generation of supporters and to enable the charity to serve even more children and families.

Anna Khan,  
CEO 2019

### The streets of London in 1894

In 1894 life for young women from often very large families in London could be very harsh. Some were born in the city but many others came to the capital looking for work as their families could no longer support them. If they couldn't find a job, or lost their employment, the unhappy alternatives were the workhouse or prostitution, until the then Bishop of Rochester, Randall Davidson, and his wife Edith, founded the Diocesan Association for the Care of Friendless Girls. 125 years later Welcare is continuing the work they began.

**1896, Richmond annual report:** *Miss Tavender considers that fewer girls are leading an evil life, but that those now on the streets are more abandoned and lawless than formerly.*

### 'Indoor' and 'Outdoor workers'

Back then **Indoor workers** went into workhouses to help young women and their children while **Outdoor workers** scoured the streets day and night seeking those who might be at risk of hardship, poverty and exploitation. One such **Outdoor worker** was Miss Mary Smithson, who kept up her relationship with the girls she met over the years, encouraging them to 'turn over a new leaf.' The Kingston annual report describes her work at the Kingston shelter: 'for the most part' girls came to the shelter 'of their own free will' and sometimes 'beginners in evil' were brought there by 'very bad girls.'

**1910, Kingston annual report:** *Many very wild girls have this year promised to go to 2 Years Homes and have settled down determined to stay out their time, because they have promised Miss Smithson.*



## Moral Welfare Workers, 1950s and 60s: 'The indefatigable Miss Parsons'

Reports from the Reigate Ruri-Decanal Association for Moral Welfare throw a spotlight on the role of a **Moral Welfare Worker**, as today's social worker would then be described. In 1949 an afternoon meeting about **Moral Welfare and how best to serve the community** concluded that the time had come to try to reach 'those outside the influence of the church.' It was therefore decided to employ a worker who could give 'Christian educational talks on sex wherever she can get a hearing.'

In 1954 the **indefatigable Miss A A Parsons** began her work, staying in post until 1966. She gave more than a dozen talks to outside groups and was reported to be 'always ready to help and advise those in trouble and puts in much overtime.' One grateful young woman remarked that: 'she had never known so much kindness existed in the world.'

To reach the growing local population she relied on her bicycle or public transport, limiting what she could do. A fund was launched to buy her a car, and in 1962 she finally received a Mini-Minor. This enabled her to handle an impressive case load of 83 that year, but in 1965 this reached '104 fresh cases in addition to 49 held over from 1964.' She began an undoubtedly well-earned retirement in 1966.

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**1967, Moral Welfare Workers Association and Social Work Advisory Service (SWAS):** *Moral Welfare Workers are expected to have 'a particular commitment to work with illegitimate children and their parents and families.' This involved discussion of adoption, with many moral welfare agencies being registered adoption societies. Preventive work included talks to schools and other groups: '...in an attempt to help young people with the problems of personal relationships before the tragedy of an illegitimate child occurs.'*

## Working with children

In 1914 Welcare's first Children's Worker was appointed and recognised by the London County Council district Organiser of the Children's Care Committee. In 1919 a report of the Diocesan committee for Work Among Children calls for 'at least three more Children's Workers.'

Between the first and second world war the focus was increasingly on family support and some branches of the organisation amalgamated. Despite the challenges of bombing, this support continued, with Mother and Baby homes moving out of central London to Sutton, Surrey, and to Fair Acre, a house in Limpsfield, owned by a Mrs Preston, which was itself closed in 1944 because it was in an 'active defence zone.' But Welcare's work went on.

**1943, Bishop of Kingston:** *'There are times in the history of a work when to hold on involves more sacrifice and effort than the startling progress of earlier days.'*

**In 1914 Welcare's first Children's Worker was appointed and recognised by the London County Council...**

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## Welcare in the 1970s and 1980s – growing involvement with social services

In July 1968 a report from a committee chaired by Mr Frederick Seebohm was published to review services in England and Wales and 'to consider what changes are desirable to secure an effective family service.' It called for urgent action: rather than concentrating on a 'series of isolated maladies, like mental illness, homelessness, or physical handicaps' we should 'instead concentrate on helping families.' As a result of this report Welcare's workers were officially re-named **Social Workers** and its approach to care recognised.

Long term supporter, volunteer and former staff member of Welcare, Janet Wells, worked with Welcare in the late 70s and 80s, although she first heard about it in the 1950s, as her mother helped with her church's Moral Welfare Council, supporting unmarried mothers.

After gaining a degree in social administration and teaching in Papua, New Guinea, Janet returned to England and renewed her support for Welcare through her local church. She mentioned it was seeking a new director to a fellow chorister from the church choir, Janet Evanson, who successfully applied for the position.

Janet Wells herself took on a series of projects, including supporting mother and baby groups, and visiting around 20 people from Southwark to Surrey, 'trekking from flats in Clapham to a caravan in Coulsdon,' to help them to manage their budgets. Later she worked with a solicitor colleague to run staff training on the then new legal requirements allowing people access to their personal records.

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**1980, The Reigate Deanery Wel-care Report:** *Welcare has a flat and a house rented from the Local Authority and administered by a sub-committee. This provides accommodation for four mothers and their babies while they wait for their turn on the Local Authority lists.*

Welcare's role interfacing with social services became increasingly important, with debate about how dependent on the voluntary sector the statutory sector should become. A 1988 annual report raises the question: 'How far should statutory service be reduced to safety net proportions leaving the voluntary agencies to supply most personal social services ...where should charitable bodies fit into the continuum of services?'

Former Vice Chair of Welcare, Marion Parsons, began her career working as a social worker in a Liverpool Mother and Baby home which, like many others, later became an adoption agency. Her relationship with Welcare began in the Lewisham branch, initially as a Parish Rep, and later becoming Branch Secretary. Welcare's current Chair, Cherry Murdoch was on the same committee.

In the 1980s and 1990s Lewisham was one of the then 12 independent Welcare organisations, and employed two professionally qualified case workers, offering services to the local authority. Contact centres for the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) were pioneered during this period; Lewisham Welcare provided this service at a local church in Catford. With the help of volunteers, Welcare also offered Summer holiday trips to the seaside, Harvest food collection, and the provision of high quality second hand baby clothes.

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**1980, annual report:** *The social workers have again drawn attention to the higher proportion of difficult and time-consuming cases referred to Wel-Care by Social Services Departments.*



## Welcare evolved... to offer services to children in need with their families, especially young children under 8...

Revd Liz Newman is a former social worker and team leader at Greenwich Welcare. She qualified as a social worker in the early 1980s, beginning her career in the mental health sector, joining Greenwich Welcare as a social worker on the Woolwich Common Estate in 1997, and becoming a team leader in 2000. She returned to work for Greenwich Welcare between 2005 and 2008.

At Greenwich there was a heavy emphasis on group work, helping to equip parents with the skills they needed. Local authority funding covered a contract to support families with children at risk of significant harm, working closely with children's services. Complex needs, such as poor mental health and disabilities, made it hard for some to achieve group attendance. As a result, services were shaped to meet their needs, including home visits.

Liz stresses that it is always important to provide support without creating dependency. She described a woman who had come to Woolwich to escape a violent relationship. This woman had very little English, and was socially isolated, with a little girl who was one year old. She needed practical support with benefits, as well as help to integrate socially. Although she initially 'came to everything on offer,' over several years she built up her knowledge and language skills, and was very ambitious for her daughter, who has now become a health care professional.

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**1994, Rt Revd Roy Williamson, Bishop of Southwark, Centenary Appeal\*:** *'The focus remains on young families in crisis or great need. We have branches of the Service throughout the Diocese, working with more than 1,000 parents (and many more children in a preventive way,) to avoid breakdown in family life. (\*The Centenary Appeal raised funds essential for purchasing the premises Welcare needed for service delivery. This vital legacy helped the charity to survive into the new millennium.)'*

Welcare evolved through the 1990s to offer services to 'children in need with their families, especially young children under 8,' with an emphasis on early intervention and a belief in self-help. The services recorded in the annual report of 1994 continue today: 'counselling, groupwork, advice and advocacy, practical help, outings and holidays.' It provided specialist services including parent and children centres, contact centres and mediation, skills training units and social work student training. It also pioneered one of the first projects to support women and children with HIV/AIDS in Lambeth.

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**Welcare Review, 2001/2002:** *'Welcare has always been there for me through thick and thin ... they are worth their weight in gold,' – service user.*

Although core funding from the Diocese remained consistent, it was clear a change in strategic direction was essential if the charity was to be sustainable after the millennium. Marion Parsons was one of the team who led a long and in-depth consultation with the 12 different Welcare organisations to agree on the best way forward. By 2006 the 12 local organisations had merged to create a larger charity with centralised management functions capable of tendering for contracts in a new commissioning environment increasingly favouring larger suppliers.

Marion is pleased to have been able to help to facilitate this change. She says: 'Welcare was trying to do too many different things in too many different centres, and it was time for a brand-new start. Rather than trying to be a full social work agency, Welcare needed to move back to its roots in family support work.'

## Generation Link – 1993 to 2013

In 1993 Welcare launched a ground breaking scheme for single parent families harnessing the skills of specially trained volunteers who became their surrogate grandparents. Generation Link, which continued to 2013, recruited older people as volunteers and matched them with lone parents. They did things that a grandparent might do, such as helping children with reading or homework, playing with them at home or taking them out, and generally acting as a listening ear to parents, signposting them to where they might find any help they needed.

The initiative was run in Lambeth, one of the most deprived boroughs in London, where at the time it was estimated that around a third of children under the age of 16 lived in poverty. Around 14 per cent of families were single parents, two per cent higher than the inner London average, and nearly five per cent higher than in the rest of the UK. The majority (95 per cent) of these families had no wage earner, with some having no access to public funds because of their immigration status.

**Generation link parent, 2013:** *'Welcare in Lambeth has helped me to the point of coming back to reality. Before, I could not function until I was given help from a volunteer grandmother. Without their help, I would not be where I am at present; when I came to Welcare, I was 20 per cent, now I am 100 per cent.'*

### Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

In 2012 the project helped 69 client families and a total of 173 children, using the services of around 70 volunteers, who each gave between two and five hours of their time to their particular family each week. Results were outstanding, with an average of 20 per cent increase in educational attainment one year from the start date of a volunteer with a family.

Despite winning the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2007 and being recognised by the Cabinet Office as an **Approved Provider – Mentoring + Befriending Foundation**, in January 2013 the scheme was forced to close due to lack of funds. However, the model of blending the skills of Welcare's professional staff with trained volunteers, thus enabling longer-term support, had been established. The legacy of Generation Link is the child and family support service Welcare delivers today.

Welcare now uses the widely recognised outcomes star evaluation system to provide evidence of its impact, and the difference made to the lives of those who use its services. Experience with Generation Link enabled the development of volunteer recruitment and training, and the successful achievement of the Investing in Volunteers quality standard for good practice in volunteer management.

In 2019, with ever increasing concerns about the rise of gang culture, the need for services blending social work oversight of safeguarding and risk with volunteer mentoring services for young people has never been greater.

**Welcare Bromley, 2013:** *'Welcare's intervention was crucial to the parents' progress, helping to promote good, healthy lifestyles and supporting both parents.'*  
**Jenny, local health visitor**

### Domestic abuse programme

In July 2010, Bromley Welcare merged with Southwark Diocesan Welcare, extending the area served to include the deaneries of Beckenham, Bromley and Orpington. The inclusion of this part of south London enhanced links with The Church in Society in the Dioceses of Canterbury and Rochester and modelled a Welcare Link group to develop relationships with the church and the local community on which the charity depends.

Early in 2013 the Bromley team recognised that there were no suitable services for children in families where domestic abuse had occurred, despite the fact that 1 in 4 families nationally are affected. Two thirds of children placed on child protection registers have been exposed to domestic abuse, which can have serious consequences on their emotional development, as well as putting their overall health and progress at risk.

Following specialist training with Against Violence & Abuse (AVA) Welcare's Bromley family support workers pioneered a new programme with activities and workshops designed to support affected children aged 8 – 11, called MySpace. Independent evaluation confirmed that the project had successfully met its objectives to help children to process their experiences, increase their safety skills, identify and learn positive ways of dealing with negative feelings and increase their self-esteem. MySpace is now delivered in all Welcare centres.



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## 2018, from Lambeth to the Lake District

As it approaches its 125th year, Welcare is evolving to offer new programmes and courses to meet emerging needs in local communities. This includes work with young people aged 11-13 aimed at building emotional health and well-being, to help them cope with personal safety issues in areas where youth violence is prevalent. Inner London centres in Lambeth, Southwark and Greenwich face the impact of gang culture and crime, as well as domestic abuse and other financial and social issues, which affect both adults and children.

In 2018, Welcare organised a week-long trip to the Lake District in partnership with the Outward Bound Trust for some of the young people who had been supported through Welcare's weekly drop-in group in Lambeth, OurPlace. Children were selected because they had worked particularly hard to overcome significant personal challenges, such as being excluded from trips organised by their schools, and could build confidence and resilience through the experience.

In a beautiful lakeside setting, the young people were encouraged to test themselves by climbing mountains and waterfalls. They supported each other physically by using ropes and harnesses, and emotionally with encouraging words and honesty about their deepest fears. The challenges took courage and determination, ranging from wading through mud and icy water, crawling through tunnels, coping with insects to eating 'disgusting' ration packs by a camp fire. Learning in the outdoors provided direct and practical experiences that cannot be achieved elsewhere, and learning through adventure provided a visceral experience of risk.

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**Welcare CEO Anna Khan, comments:** *'I was so impressed by the young people, especially when we spent our first night camping, and then kayaked back to the centre across Ullswater Lake. They discovered for the first time how very dark it can be without street lights. I was also extremely proud of Welcare, as we successfully managed the risk of taking a group of young people away, providing them with their only chance of leaving a long hot summer in Lambeth behind, and giving them the opportunity to grow in confidence.'*





**'Early intervention is crucial for children with special needs and I'm now able to understand the journey.'**

## Hosanna and her family – Welcare working in partnership

It was through a friend that Hosanna, a mother of two, first heard about a local support charity for children affected by disability and additional needs, and Welcare was working in partnership with them to deliver a parenting group programme. Hosanna's friend told her about a class entitled Parenting a Violent Child. This struck an immediate chord with Hosanna because of the difficult behaviour of her seven-year old son. Although he was later given a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), he had not yet been diagnosed when Hosanna met Senior Family Support Worker, Debbie, at Welcare in south-west London.

She said: 'I really needed help and was open to suggestions for anything that might improve my relationship with my son. I thought I'll give it a try.' As Hosanna said, openness is the first step of learning how to change things for the better.

Debbie explained that there were seven sessions in the parenting course. In the first one Hosanna learnt about the importance of self-care, and in the second why it mattered to establish a support network. She says: 'Whatever Debbie suggested in the class I tried to implement on a weekly basis.'

Through the course Hosanna realised that while focusing on her son she also needed to spend time with her teenage daughter and her husband. 'I realised that while my son with autism needed attention, so did my daughter. It is so important to give one-to-one time to each child.'

Hosanna's relationship with her husband also benefitted: 'Having someone like Debbie to talk to made me realise that I was so engrossed with my son that I had forgotten about my relationship with my significant other. Now we make a point of spending time together – going out to dinner on our own, with no children around.'

Her husband is now taking time off to help his son. She says: 'Now there are two of us are caring for him. There are a lot of practical needs at home and we are also fighting for the school to allow our son access to the additional help he needs.'

Hosanna says 'Help from Welcare came along at just the right time, as though a higher hand were involved.' Debbie continues to stay in touch with Hosanna and her family, and has been available whenever help is needed the most.

Hosanna says that the parenting course taught her that: 'Early intervention is crucial for children with special needs and I'm now able to understand the journey.' Her advice is that the most important thing is commitment: 'Sometimes you can have all the intentions to brush your teeth but if you don't get up and get the toothbrush and do it, nothing will change.'

Welcare offers a range of practical and emotional support and advice services, focusing on preventative work and life skills development. Welcare provides help and support to strengthen families who are experiencing difficulties by providing non-judgemental advice and guidance, helping to empower families to overcome any challenges they face.

### 2019, parenting courses that improve family life

**Welcare, Richmond 2019:** *'Early intervention is crucial for children with special needs and I'm now able to understand the journey.'* This parent's advice is that the most important thing is commitment: *'Sometimes you can have all the intentions to brush your teeth but if you don't get up and get the toothbrush and do it, nothing will change.'*

**Hosanna, Richmond parenting course**

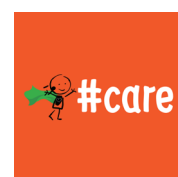
Thrive  
Care &  
Inspire

## 2019, New #CapeAbility programme

Anna says that the resilience shown by these young people in the face of multiple challenges is testimony to their inner strength and was the inspiration for a new Welcare programme, the **#CapeAbility** campaign. This digital campaign shows how young people are **cape-able** of doing and being anything they want to be, using their personal strength to look after themselves and others.

**#CapeAbility** uses the themes of Capes and Super-Heroes. It is aimed a schools and junior church groups to show how Welcare can help children to thrive by building emotional well-being, to care through a focus on mutual respect and positive relationships, and to then go on to inspire their peers and families to have healthy relationships themselves.

**Thrive, Care** and **Inspire** are the key themes for the 125th anniversary celebrations and will run through Welcare's work in 2019 and beyond.



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## Welcare's supporters and volunteers tell their story

Welcare has always been reliant on the many people from a wide range of backgrounds, ages and experience who have given their time and skills to volunteer. A few of their stories are recorded here – there are many, many more. We are very grateful to all who give their time or help us to raise funds for our work in an increasingly difficult financial climate.

In the last 12 months alone Welcare has been able to help more than 900 children which would not have been possible without the help of its many supporters and volunteers. Whether offering one-to-one support with families and children, administrative help, or anything from odd jobs and gardening to IT expertise, each and every one plays their part.

**East Surrey Churches Wel-Care Association Annual Report, 1989:** *'Among requests for help given out at the last AGM was for someone to keep things ticking over by answering the phone and opening the front door at Chapel Road during the permanent secretary's well earned days off... There is no lack of variety of jobs for the 'temp' to do. Occasionally, after a particularly large windfall of donated clothing, help is needed to sort it. After the Harvest Festival season the gifts from the churches have to be stored away in fairly limited space.'*

Lisa Booth

### Supporting fathers

'I didn't feel I needed help but I thought it would be good to meet other single parents in my position,' said Billy, one of the fathers who attended a parenting course run by Welcare in Tooting in 2008. Single dad Billy was bringing up his son on his own when a friend at his son's nursery mentioned the course to him.

The courses were run by a clinical psychologist and family support worker for Welcare, Sandra Rotenberg. She said that the aim is to help fathers, not judge them. 'They talk about their difficulties and we help them become more focused when they're dealing with children. We also teach them the importance of play because that's a very important tool to create a positive relationship with their children.'

They used discussion and role-play to work through different scenarios and were trained to control their temper, praise good behaviour and set effective limits.



Ultimately they were taught to bond with their children so that they can make them feel secure and loved. Billy in fact made so much progress on the 10-week course that he was selected to be trained as a course facilitator himself and went on to work as a volunteer facilitator at Welcare.

Billy, while volunteering at Welcare Centre in Tooting, 2008: 'I wanted to know that everything I was going through was normal. I just wanted to share my experiences. Men deal with things in a different way. Women find it easier to meet other mothers and chat but men are less likely to open up, and communicating with children can be a very difficult thing.'

**'I just wanted to share my experiences...'**



### Support for mother with breast cancer

Angela was paired with single mother of three young children, Polly, who had been hit very hard by a diagnosis of breast cancer. Polly said that she felt as if she 'had been kicked in the stomach' but was determined to keep family life as normal as possible for her boys of seven, four and two. Her first chemotherapy treatment left her 'feeling as if there was no life in me' and she realised she must get help if she was going to get through the next six months of treatment.

Polly already knew Welcare through groups like Stay and Play and cookery courses. The Welcare team introduced her to Angela, who for the next 18 months provided weekly after school support to the family. She played games with the two youngest, using toys from Welcare's Toy Library, and helped the oldest with his homework. Welcare also arranged twice weekly support from a child-minder, and helped the family to enjoy outings to a farm and a pantomime.

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**Angela, volunteer at East Surrey Welcare, 2014:** *'I will never forget having to look up the answer to a geometry question on line at home, and then phoning it through to Welcare to pass on to Polly. Luckily the answer was correct, and her son got top marks.'*

### Administration skills

Olivia has been volunteering for Welcare East Surrey for some seven years, beginning shortly after moving back to the UK from abroad. She had heard about the charity from a friend at church and wanted to support its work with families and children.

Olivia started off in an administrative role. She explains: 'I wasn't sure exactly what I wanted to do, whether I would be best helping to support or mentor a particular family, or with other activities, so I decided to start off in the office so that I could get an overview.' She found that she in fact really enjoyed spending the two or three hours she could offer each week in a variety of administrative tasks, and also made time for an eight-week stint with the music group.

Over the years she has picked up a lot of knowledge, and so really enjoys the variety of being on reception, from meeting and greeting people to answering the telephone or data entry. 'I love being really busy and having the buzz of activity,' she says. She finds it very satisfying to help in the evaluation of courses, and also phoning around families who have not been in contact for a while, to update them and to offer 'a friendly voice and a listening ear.' She feels that there is something for everyone in the many tasks that need to be done every month. Olivia really likes the people at Welcare, and always leaves feeling very positive.

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**Olivia, volunteer at Welcare East Surrey 2019:**

*'The people you work with are always so encouraging, supportive and patient. I love the fact that I can be totally honest about what I want to do.'* Olivia feels that this openness is rare: *'It is really unusual to be able to be honest and I am impressed that there is no work that the Welcare team asks you to do that they don't do themselves.'*

## Artistic talent

Edna came to the UK from Indonesia in 2004 having completed a Masters Degree in Early Childhood Education, and being deputy head at the Early Childhood Centre in Bogor, Indonesia. Her husband was in full time work, and her son at school, so she decided to try to find a local charity where she could use her skills, practice her English and meet people. Welcare was suggested by the local Volunteer Advice Centre and her 15 years' association with the organisation began.

Through a part time evening course Edna gained Froebel Early Childhood Years certification at the University of Roehampton. Despite her studies, and while also working as a Food Service Assistant, she kept up her volunteering at Welcare. Over time Edna has helped with everything from the Toy Library and creche, to routine and regular tasks, such as sorting food and clothing, and general administration. However, she is particularly gifted in art and craft and in design and display.

The colourful notice boards at East Surrey are her domain, and she continues to design and update them every month, fitting this task in with a new full time role as a House Tutor at a local Boarding School. She explains: 'One of the things that's good about Welcare is the flexibility, which means that I can still fit it in. I can come in at 8.30am to do the notice boards if I need to.' She hopes to be able to increase her hours again when she has settled into her new job.

**Edna, volunteer at Welcare East Surrey, 2019:** *'I don't know why, but even though I'm tired, when I come out from Welcare House I feel happy – you get happiness from volunteering.'* *Coming from a foreign country, the friends Edna has made and support she has received through Welcare are particularly important to her. 'It is good to have somebody to talk to and be welcomed by, especially as I am a Muslim, even though it is a church organisation. I feel safe and appreciated. I have been asked why I volunteer for a church organisation and I say it is humanity that is important – and it is about my interest in children and family.'*

## Looking Ahead

Welcare has an esteemed history and has achieved so much over the last 125 years. Just as our services have broadened to include the whole family the focus of our direct work with children now includes a greater emphasis on building emotional health and well-being. This is especially important for young people as they make the key transition into secondary education and adolescence. As the charity looks beyond 2019 to imagine life for future generations of children and families we are proud of the work to give children secure and confident futures and to build long-term resilience. We hope that through reading these testimonies and illustrations of our work that you will wish to help us in our ambition to reach more children and families and help them to thrive.

**...we are proud of the work to give children secure and confident futures and to build long-term resilience...**

# welcare

strengthening families since 1894

Welcare would like to thank the staff, volunteers and supporters who have made our work strengthening families possible over the last 125 years and who will contribute to our work in the future.

**Jo Josh:** Narrative

**Rachel Thornhill:**  
Photography

**Fran Stevens:** Design  
and artwork

June 2019

Find out more about Welcare from [welcare.org](http://welcare.org)

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If you would like to keep up to date with Welcare's latest news then sign up to the newsletter at [welcare.org/newsletter](http://welcare.org/newsletter)

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