



Dear Friends

As the year draws to a close, the cost of living crisis and its effects are at the forefront of our minds. With UK food price inflation hitting 12.4% this month the rising cost of essentials will disproportionately hit poorer households already struggling with higher energy bills, as they have fewer options to make cutbacks and savings.

As we enter a period of reflection, hope and anticipation this Advent season, our thoughts turn to those who do not find Christmas easy, especially families struggling with rising food and energy prices. We have now launched our [Families in Crisis Christmas Appeal](#). This annual campaign helps families access essential items such as food, toiletries and household items, warm clothes and school shoes that they otherwise could not afford. Each family we work with has different needs, and with the increasing cost of living, donating to this campaign allows our staff to support children and families in the ways they need most and, if we can, to bring a little festive cheer. You can read more about a family we have helped, Amy, below.



If you are still shopping online please remember you can nominate Welcare to receive a donation every time you order. For links to all the digital platforms we are signed up with please visit www.welcare.org/other-ways-to-donate

Also, in this newsletter see how we marked Black History Month and celebrated the work of two members of our team, Fay Morris and James Komeh.

On 16th November friends and supporters in Bromley joined together to give thanks for the work of the charity in the borough and you can read more below.

I would also like to thank you for your prayers, messages of support and encouragement this year and for sharing news of our work on social media. 2023 will be another busy year with the central office team moving on 1 February to a new home within the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education (SDBE) at 48 Union Street, SE1 1TD and the southwest London team moving to new accommodation within the Castelnau Community Centre.

On behalf of the staff and trustees, I wish you peace and joy this Christmas

With sincere thanks and best wishes



Anna Khan,
Welcare CEO

OUR LATEST NEWS

Bromley Annual Service of Thanksgiving November 2022



A wonderful and uplifting service and a very special occasion – a highlight of the Welcare year

We gathered at Bromley Parish Church for the Annual Service of Thanksgiving for the work of Welcare in Bromley on the 16th of November 2022. Reverend James Harratt officiated, and we were honoured that The Deputy Mayor, Cllr Christine Harris joined us and took the time to stay for lunch.

Reverend James Harratt's theme was welcoming the outsider and Paddington's journey from Peru illustrated this point brilliantly for the children who joined us from St Mark's Primary School.

The service, organised by our Bromley Friends and Parish Reps, provided an opportunity to share information about our work and a powerful case study read by Susie Burnard, this illustrated the complexity of our family support work and some of the ways our practical support helps a family in crisis.

We were thrilled that 68 children from the choir of St Mark's CE Primary School (part of the Aquinas Trust) joined us with their headteacher, Mr. Christopher Holland, and their teachers and parents. The children sang a spirited selection of music with several children giving solo performances.

The delicious buffet lunch organised with customary skill by Gillian Scales and her dedicated team allowed time to catch up with friends and supporters and speak with some of the parents who Welcare has worked with over the last year.

Welcare is a charity whose work is underpinned by prayer and survives because of the deep-rooted connection with our local churches and the community we serve – the service enabled us to nourish these connections and sustain us for the year ahead.

Black History Month

Welcare works with a diverse range of families and children from many different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and we recognise the importance of trying to reflect this diversity in our staffing team. We encourage all our staff to celebrating our differences and learn from each other's experiences.

This October as part of Black History Month we are celebrating our black staff members and all they contribute to the work of Welcare. We have taken some time to chat with James Komeh, Senior Family Support Worker, and ask him a few questions about his work at Welcare, with focus on his experience working with fathers on our Caring Dads programme, and his 1:1 work with children and creating a more positive relationship with their fathers.

Tell us a bit about yourself, what is your background?

My family are originally from Sierra Leone, West Africa. I was born in the United Kingdom. I studied BSc Social Work and I have been working in the social care industry for the last 8 years in various sectors. I am also a dad to two amazing, wonderful boys.



What is your role at Welcare?

My role at Welcare is as a Senior Family Support Worker. This entails delivering work with children and families in Inner London. I also facilitated group work programmes in partnership with schools and the Caring Dads programme.

Do you feel that you have had any additional barriers working in the child and family charitable sector due to being a black man?

No. I love what I do, and I do not see barriers in anything that I do, only opportunities for me to learn further and grow.

What is the Caring Dads programme and how does it help fathers, particularly those from black or other ethnic minorities?

Caring Dads is a *group intervention programme aiming to help fathers improve their relationship with their children* and to develop positive parenting skills. The programme enables fathers to learn skills to cope in healthy ways with hard situations, understand how their choices and ways of being a father affect children, and to increase awareness about how their behaviours and attitudes that can be harmful to children. Ethnicity doesn't really play a part in Caring Dads and each father has different life experience – you have to take a holistic approach to individual fathers and their families. However, saying that, I do think Caring Dads is a good resource for all fathers from black and ethnic minorities.

In your 1:1 work with children, tell us about a time you have helped a child understand their relationship with their father better?

I worked with a young person who was recovering from trauma due to witnessing domestic violence from his parents, perpetrated by his father. As so many children who are involved in conflict between parents, they are faced with the difficult task of dealing with the experiences and still loving their parents as this is the norm. This young person was aware of the wrongs that dad did, however, still had love for his dad and wanted a relationship with him. The barriers between the young person and his dad were communication, the young person wanted his dad to listen to

him without being judgmental and for dad to understand his lived experience and the emotions he was feeling, therefore, to have closure and start a healthy relationship with dad. The intervention and work were to support the young person in understanding emotions, the triggers of emotions, understanding past trauma's and not blaming himself for any part of the conflict between his parents. We also worked on ways that the young person could communicate to dad, what he was feeling and the things he would like for dad to do and take into consideration.

How would you encourage other men, particularly those from black or other ethnic minorities to work in the child and family charitable sector?

In my opinion it is imperative that children/families have both female and male role models in their lives, especially children who are from single family households. For this reason, I believe the industry needs a balance of female and male professionals. I feel that bringing a male perspective to the eco system in an unbiased way adds positive solution to the healing process of a family or child. I will advocate to colleges, universities, and various media outlets to speak to the community and stress the importance of a balanced work force, that reflects family's dynamics, and to recruit positive male and female role models that will champion the work of building the family unit for a healthier society.

Do you have any additional comments or advice?

I believe that I found my purpose, and every day I learn new ways of improving not only my professional work, but also my personal development. I love what I do, and it gives me the utmost satisfaction. I look forward to growing and reaching the highest heights I can in fulfilling my purpose.

Thank you, James, for all you do for Welcare and the thoughtful, caring, and tactful approach you take to working with the children and families Welcare supports. You are a star!

We also marked the end of Black History Month with a short glimpse into the personal and professional life of one of our most versatile, compassionate and experienced practitioners, Fay Morris.



Anna Khan, CEO at Welcare says, 'Fay is known throughout Welcare for her warm professionalism and wisdom, as Fay approaches retirement in 2023 we are delighted to share her reflections of her career in social work and experiences as a black woman navigating the workplace over the last forty years and her pride in the achievements of her family.'

To watch the interview visit www.welcare.org/interview-with-fay-morris-support-services-manager

Families we've helped: Amy's Story



Amy* and 7 of her 8 children, aged between 1 – 16, were referred to Welcare due to complex housing and financial challenges and Amy's difficulty establishing boundaries and routines at home. The family of 8 lived in a small 3-bedroom flat which was overcrowded and cluttered. The housing situation had a detrimental effect on the whole family's well-being, and the children found the long dark evenings at home difficult with a lack of space and nowhere quiet to study and complete homework.

The family also struggled financially due to the Benefit Cap and the rejection of their claim for Housing and Council Tax Benefits and other benefits. Amy had to pay all the monthly bills, with a limited and insufficient income, not to mention food and clothing for 7 children.

Amy said, 'Things are very hard now. There is not enough money for everything. I worry a lot about how I am going to feed my family.' Life for Amy and her children was increasingly fraught, and their financial situation became more precarious leading to arrears and just as Welcare started work with the family, a notice of eviction was received.

The Welcare Family Support Worker began 1:1 work to help Amy manage her family situation and this included liaising with the local authority Housing Department, referring to the food bank as well as providing supermarket vouchers (supplied by Welcare), securing funding from the local authority for school uniform, helping Amy to create a detailed budget plan, and working in partnership with the other professionals involved with the family.

With Christmas approaching, Welcare staff worked to help the family enjoy a special Christmas and purchased food for the festive period, including a full Christmas dinner for the whole family. When the Family Support Worker shared the good news with them, Amy's older daughter became very emotional and said, 'We can have a Christmas now! Mum told us a few days ago that we would not be having one due to the cost. Thank you so much!', and Amy said, 'It is such a relief, and we are so very grateful. We are amazed at the level of help Welcare could provide and it means we will be able to enjoy Christmas. Thank you!'

*names have been changed

If you would like to make a difference to someone struggling in your local community please spare what you can. We couldn't do the work we do without the valued help of our supporters.

www.welcare.org/donate

Work of trustees and new central office



Welcare is fortunate to have a committed and dedicated board of trustees, led by our chair Chris Elliott. On 28 November we welcomed two new trustees, Louise Villeneuve who contributes a wealth of experience as a senior social worker and The Venerable Greg Archdeacon of Croydon who will strengthen our connections in this part of the diocese. Visit www.welcare.org/our-board to read about all our trustees.

Over the last year the trustees have worked with the CEO to guide the charity through changing and challenging times. In common with many charities, we have considered our future accommodation needs, how we can reduce our fixed overhead costs and continue to deliver services for children and families at the heart of the community. Our plans include aligning our work more closely with the SDBE and on 1st February the central office and inner London teams will move from Frederick crescent to space within the SDBE. This will enable Welcare to work more closely in partnership with schools to deliver our Families And Schools Together (FAST) programme. Working through schools we plan to extend our reach by building our partnerships with education settings who were close to the child and often the family.

Families in Crisis



Supporting our annual Families in Crisis Campaign is a practical way that individual and church supporters can help. All funds raised through this appeal are restricted to our client grants fund and used throughout the year, especially if a family lives in an area where there is more limited access to other support or they need an item not covered by local grant funders, recent examples of this type of support include carpets and bedding but also a man and a van to help a woman and her children leave the family home.

Looking ahead to Christmas we request that any churches who have previously supported us through Toy Services will support us instead with a monetary donation, which we can use to purchase specific items and a range of supermarket gift cards. This allows us to be flexible in the support that we give and complement, not duplicate, the excellent work of the foodbanks and other charities.

Please visit our website for more information about our [Families in Crisis Appeal](#) and [#CapeAbility at Christmas resources](#) to use with Junior Church groups instead of a Toy Service.



We are delighted to have been chosen to be part of the Co-op Local Community Fund. From October 2022 to October 2023 Co-op members can raise money for us when they shop just by swiping their membership card. If you have a Co-op membership card go on line and select Welcare as your chosen cause. It is free to be a Co-op member and you can collect rewards for yourself at the same time. [Visit www.coop.co.uk/membership](http://www.coop.co.uk/membership)

For more information on fundraising or planning your own event visit www.welcare.org/fundraise

To see more of our news from 2022 visit www.welcare.org/news-listing

EVENTS

Thursday 15 December 2022 at 7.30pm

[Carol Singing at The Anglers, Teddington](#)

3 Broom Road, Teddington, TW11 9NR

Come and join the choir and congregation of St Mary with St Alban Church for Christmas carol singing at the The Anglers Pub in Teddington.

Monday 19 December 2022 at 11.30am - 1pm

[Carol Singing in the Glades](#)

Glades Shopping Centre, High Street, Bromley BR1 1DN

Come and join us as our wonderful Welcare in Bromley supporters sing our favourite carols in the Glades shopping centre.

Thursday 12 January 2023 at 7.45pm

[Performance of 'Love From A Stranger' by Agatha Christie](#)

Bromley Little Theatre, North Street, Bromley BR1 1SD

Our Brilliant Bromley supporters are having their yearly charity preview. Tickets are £12 and can be brought from Gillian Scales by calling 020 8663 3173 or emailing g.scales566@btinternet.com

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