

## BEFRIENDING

At times of loneliness, which Mother Teresa described as the worst disease of our society, Christian CARE befrienders have always been there, for the long-term if necessary, to offer support to families in need. The causes of the crises they face are so varied - benefit delays, debt, breakdown of relationships, immigration problems, poor housing, eviction, benefit delays, domestic violence, bereavement. Just to have someone there to listen, in person or on the phone, to share their anxieties is so important. Most of the families include disadvantaged and vulnerable children; they too really look forward to seeing 'auntie' who comes to call and can bring joy into their lives and make them feel special.



***“In ways you do not know, you made our family feel relaxed, welcome, comfortable and loved.”***

## ABOUT YOU

### Are you...

- a sympathetic listener, patient, caring and non-judgmental?
- able to show initiative and work on your own?
- willing to keep in close touch with and be guided by the Befrienders' Coordinator?
- reliable, responsible and punctual?
- aware of the importance of issues of safeguarding and confidentiality?
- in sympathy with the ethos of the charity?
- available to offer a 3 hour slot one weekday each fortnight?
- able to drive or travel by public transport around the area?

## ABOUT US

### Our commitment to you is to

- train and support you through our Befrienders' Coordinator
- arrange your DBS check
- invite you to social events with other volunteers
- pay your expenses

## WHY CHRISTIAN CARE MATTERS

In the attic of a 3-bedroomed terraced house in March 2016 I met Grace, Amy (2) and newborn Beth (names changed) referred to Christian CARE as an 'uncomplicated' family. Already the Baby Project had provided everything for Beth's birth. Eleven other people lived in the house sharing a tiny kitchen and bathroom. Grace was sad, depressed, hungry and lonely. For 5 months I visited her fortnightly taking food, nappies, and an Oyster. In May they were evicted and sent, with no assistance at all, to a small room in Lewisham which contained only a bed. Arriving at 8pm with only £5, Grace bought a sheet and a teaspoon. We had paid for her taxi from Merton and the next day we took food, kitchen basics and bedding. This proved an unsafe environment with violent neighbours, so Grace was sent to a small mice-infested room in Brixton. I continued visiting as she still had no social worker or benefits. We found a solicitor to prevent her removal to 'far, cold' Durham and another to help with immigration issues. After a year Grace, granted status and benefits, was rehoused by Lambeth; she was overjoyed. We saw Grace and the girls at our New Year Party and they had a great day on our family outing to Littlehampton in July. In August 2018 helped by friends, Grace moved to a 2-bedroomed flat in Birmingham. With promised help for childcare, things are really looking up for her. Grace has blossomed into a positive, determined and fun-loving mother who cares for her children beautifully. In response to our £50 voucher towards equipping her flat, she texted: 'Thank you soo much for everything, we do really appreciate you. We are very happy here so don't worry too much about us. We will go to church this Sunday and meet other people from Ghana. A big thank you to all the wonderful people at Christian Care.'

Clare Gray

## **Who we are**

We are a group of 60 volunteers, many from churches of different denominations across Merton, who want to show care and concern for our neighbours as Jesus did. We are supported by churches, schools, women's groups and many individuals in the Borough and across the UK.

## **What we do**

- Our Befrienders give time to listen when people are feeling lonely and isolated
- Through our Family Support scheme we help with regular and emergency food deliveries
- Our Furniture Project delivers recycled furniture and other household items
- Our Baby and Children's Project provides clothes for children and items for newborn babies
- Through our Children's Activities we address our concerns that youngsters should not miss out on things that their friends enjoy like birthday gifts and outings

## HOW TO CONTACT US

*Call in by appointment only at ...*

Christian CARE Association  
Martin Way Methodist Church  
Buckleigh Avenue  
London SW20 9JZ

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday  
9.30am to 2.00pm

*Phone us on ...*

020 3302 0181  
(Office hours and answerphone)  
07932 628840

*Email us at ...*

Email: [christiancaremerton@gmail.com](mailto:christiancaremerton@gmail.com)

*Visit us at....*

<https://christiancaremerton.org.uk>

Registered Charity : 1044099



in the London  
Borough of Merton



**BECOMING A  
BEFRIENDER**