

Read all about it: a busy half-year for Circles South West!

Welcome! There's so much going on all the time...
this newsletter can only give you a taste of it! But
we hope you will be interested to find out about:

- our multi-faceted and very successful (or so you've told us!) Volunteer Conference;
- the 'shape' of our work in 2018
- the disappointments, puzzles and exciting opportunities for our work in the county of Dorset;
- our new film on the work of our *Circles for Young People* project of which we're very proud;
- some fascinating insights offered by our volunteer training;
- a Core Member's experience of our 'Through the Gate' project;
- our AGM meeting which was both legally necessary *and* interesting...
- ...and last but not least, the positive research evidence which is beginning to build up...

So make yourself a cuppa, and get reading!

A message from Tim Price, Chair of CSW

"A very warm welcome to our latest CSW newsletter which I hope you find informative, entertaining and of course is a tribute to all of you who make CSW the brilliant organisation it is! 2018 has seen the delivery of a large number of Circles

in differing areas and when I attend national meetings others are always impressed by how many Circles we deliver and how we focus every penny on providing such a high-quality service. That is a tribute to all of the hard work our staff and volunteers put in – you all deserve a massive thank you! In addition, we are about to launch a

We need more volunteers to help prevent sexual abuse

We continue to actively recruit new volunteers across the region. Please do spread the word within your networks and let Lucy know if you can use posters/leaflets locally.

"I don't know where I would have been without my Circle... I would never have achieved the milestones I did. Although it was only once a week the Circle was on my mind every day... Thank you for everything you have done for me"
Core Member

Please spread the word within your networks



spanking new website... and we have recently produced a great video highlighting the work of Youth Circles that is garnering justifiable praise wherever it is shown. The year has also brought challenges, mainly through the surprise decision of HMPPS to pull out of the commissioning of Circles nationally. This was an

unexpected turn of events and has led to the closure of some other projects around the country, a very sad loss for those communities. We were not so severely affected but one consequence was the loss of our seconded coordinator, Tim Johnson. He has been such a viable member of our team and

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we were very sad to lose him - thank you Tim and we all wish you well for the future. Funding is always a challenge for charities such as ourselves and this coming year will be no different, but I and the other Trustees have set a realistic budget that enables us to continue with the vital work of the charity. The Trustees are confident we will continue to deliver across the South West. CSW is dedicated, innovative and working hard to make the communities we serve safer and I would like to thank all our funders who share our vision of having no more victims of sexual abuse and who make our work possible. Lastly, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to wish our staff, volunteers, funders and supporters a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous 2019!"

June Volunteers' Conference

The planning of our volunteer conference is an exciting and rewarding experience and one which I take on with relish. My colleagues and I were determined to provide a memorable and useful day for all our wonderful volunteers who gave up a Saturday to join us. The sunny start to Saturday, June 9th was auspicious and Taunton Racecourse looked inviting in the misty dawn light (well, I did arrive quite early!) My colleagues joined me, bright eyed and bushy tailed to sort out the rooms, put together the delegate packs and generally ensure that everything was on track

to cope with the full schedule and large number of delegates.

After coffee and pastries and a chance to network, which everyone always cites as a very valuable aspect to the conference, we all gathered for an excellent session presented by Andy Watson, CEO of Geese Theatre Company. Andy's knowledge of working within the criminal justice system and particularly with those who sexually offend, together with his innovative approach to dealing with issues around working with Core Members was unanimously acclaimed by our delegates and set the tone for the rest of the conference. Feedback from all the workshops was so positive and I extend huge thanks to our wonderful presenters for the informative, innovative and interesting sessions they delivered:

- **Polly Baynes**, independent social worker and trainer, led a workshop on working with resistance to change, of paramount importance when working with our core members;
- **Circles Coordinators Tim Johnson and Jackie Citron** held an open mic session which gave volunteers an opportunity to learn from each other across the region;
- **Hannah Jayne Smith and Katie Finch** of Freedom of Mind in Bristol, presented a workshop about dealing with anxiety and depression, two of the most common mental health illnesses in modern society;
- **Jacki Williams** from the Department of Work and Pensions gave an overview of Universal



Current CSW team, looking as beautiful / handsome as ever

Credit in which she delivered an interesting and illuminating session;

- **Matt Trerise** from the Bristol Autism Spectrum Service led a workshop on working with people with Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC), offering practical skills and advice;
- **Dan Wakefield and Stephanie Hardwick** from HMPPS led a workshop on Personality Disorder Awareness. Again, another interesting and apposite topic for our Circles work.
- **Linda Ricks**, Senior Probation Officer with HMPPS led a session on working with women who sexually offend, timely as we had recently begun working with our first female core member;
- **Mike Sheath** of the Lucy Faithfull Foundation delivered a workshop on trauma in childhood and its manifestations in adulthood. Adverse childhood experiences and trauma informed work are now at the forefront of working with people, children and adults alike;
- **Riana Taylor**, CEO of Circles UK, gave an interesting and motivational

address, praising the valuable contribution of volunteers in Circles' projects across the country, citing a recent evaluation of the benefits that their work brings to Core members.

- **Angus Macpherson**, Police and Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire & Swindon was another very welcome guest speaker who also praised the contribution that volunteers make to community safety generally and, specifically to reducing the risk of sexual harm through working with Circles. Angus has been a supporter and funder of ours for many years and it was good to be able to thank him in person for his contribution and involvement.

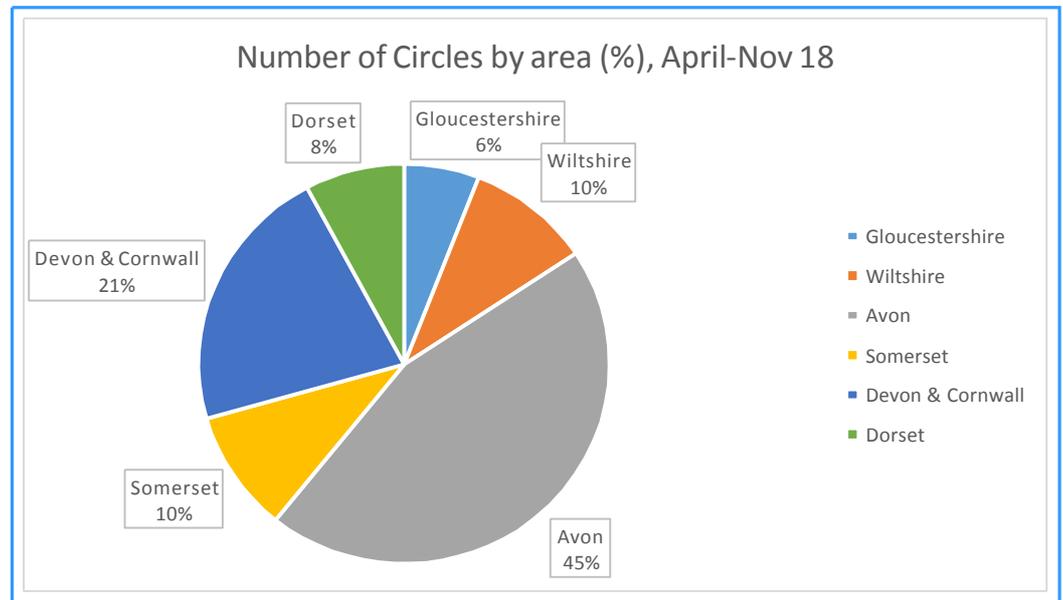
Thanks also to the events manager of Taunton Racecourse for helping to ensure the smooth running of the conference. The venue provides a comfortable space and marvellous food which, we think, enhances the overall experience. Now, I must start to think about the next one in 2020; our 10 year anniversary! Ideas on a post-card, please...

Pauline Rousseau, Practice Manager

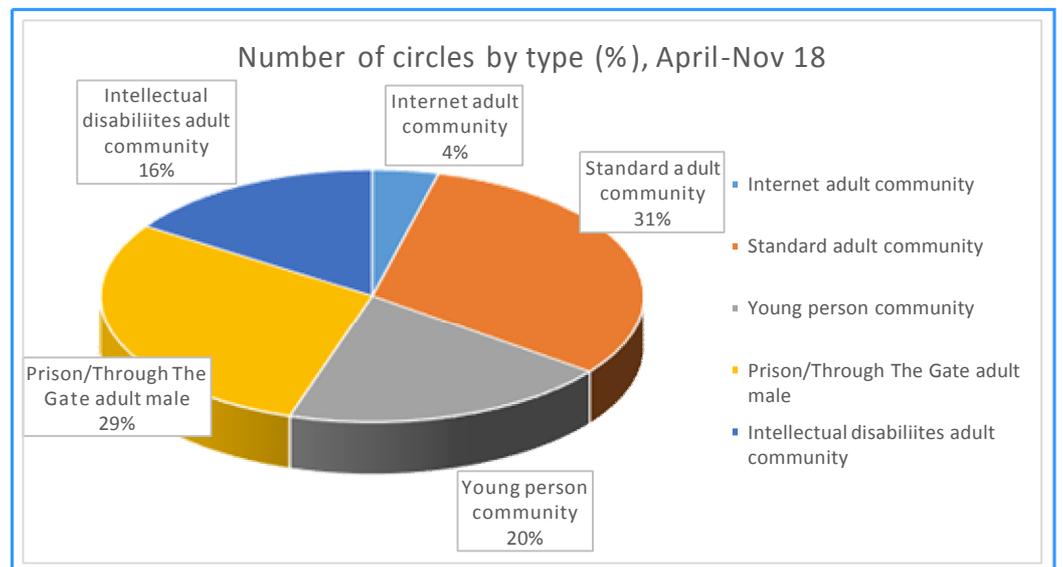
A snapshot of our work in 2018

We often get asked how many Circles we're coordinating, of which type and where they are located, so here's a snapshot. Between April and November 2018 we coordinated 31 Circles across the region.

This first chart shows those Circles *by area*:



This second chart shows those Circles *by type*:



An outline of our volunteer training programme for 2019

We pride ourselves on providing interesting and relevant development training for our volunteers.

So we've been working hard to secure some wonderful trainers and our 2019 schedule looks like this:

February

Circles South West Winter Lecture – Professor Kieran McCartan (University of the West of England, and Trustee)

May

Pornography: Impact & Implications – Jamie Stephenson & Jackie Citron (Circles South West)

October

Rolling with Resistance/ Kaizon & Horizon – Pauline Rousseau & Kate Hothersall (Circles South West) & Tim Johnson (National Probation Service)

November

Working with Autism and Personality Disorder

Responding to demand from current volunteers these four subjects will greatly help with the challenging work they face within their circles and will be open to all volunteers. Our volunteer coordinator will be sending out invitations in the early new year so do be ready to book your slot if of interest to you.

This development training schedule will run alongside the six core training events we have planned for next year, meaning it's going to be a busy but thoroughly rewarding year for all involved.

Farewell to Tim Johnson, Dorset Coordinator

It was with a heavy heart that we said our farewells to Tim in September.

Tim was seconded, on a part time basis, from the National Probation Service from 2016 to 2018. He quickly settled into the role of Coordinator for Dorset Circles and became an invaluable member of our team. He brought with him a wealth of knowledge in the field of working with those who have sexually offended and he

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provided an effective bridge between us, a third sector organisation, and the statutory sectors with whom we work so closely.

Tim developed a close working relationship with all his volunteers in Dorset and made a massive contribution to the training of volunteers across the region. He also worked unstintingly to promote the efficacy of Circles within his local Probation area as he has a firm belief that Circles work, that

they reduce the likelihood of re-offending, and that they make an effective contribution to public protection.

We wish Tim every success in his Probation career but think that he might be branching out into amateur dramatics, following his resounding success in his debut as 'Bob' at the recent volunteer training and assessment weekend! We hope this will be a way that we can keep in touch with him...

Get ready for our new website: www.circles-southwest.org.uk

We're delighted to announce that our new Circles South West website will be up and running later this month.

Up until now Circles UK has kindly given us a page on their website but, in this modern age, we need a stronger online presence. This will not only help us to recruit new volunteers but it will also help promote our services to the public, referrers and funders, and hopefully lead to an increase in public awareness.



A sneak preview of the new site!



Our volunteer coordinator, Lucy Graham, says: "We're incredibly excited about the new website. It's been something we've wanted to do for a long time. Increasingly I am asked if potential volunteers can read about our different projects and apply online and up till now, sadly, I've had to say no. Now I can direct people there and it will help people decide if this is the right opportunity for them."

A collaboration with the south west design company 'The Group of Seven', this year has seen us working on content and look as well as, most importantly, accessibility and a user friendly experience.

Phase one of the website will see all of our services explained, our charity ethos and background. Volunteers will be able to find out about opportunities in their area and apply online; referrers will be able to read criteria for making referrals and identify key contacts. Case studies, video clips and audio interviews will provide real-life stories about the difference Circles make. Information about staff and trustees will allow people to get to know us better.

For phase two we hope to be able to offer current volunteers an online space to communicate with each other and their coordinators, as well as a secure 'members only' area which will hold Circle documents, minutes and policies and procedures.

A 'soft launch' will come mid-December with the official launch happening early in 2019. From January you can find us at www.circles-southwest.org.uk

In Focus: Our Young People's Services NEW FILM!

*By Jackie Citron Young
People's Service Coordinator*

In March I met with Kevin Redpath, filmmaker, to discuss making a film to promote the new Young People's Service for Circles South West.

At the outset, we established a need for Core Member involvement and two suitable young people were identified and permissions sought.

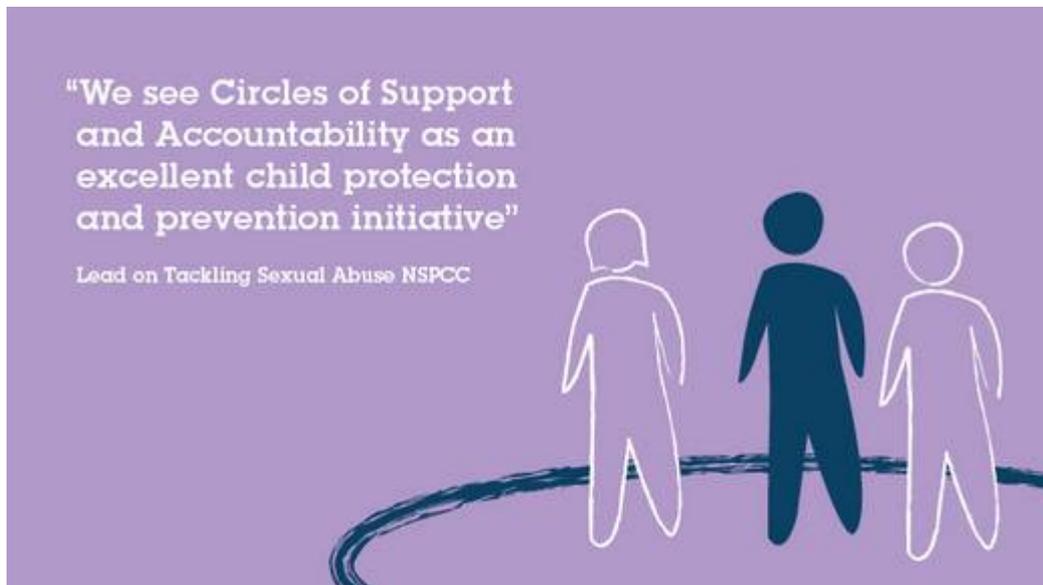
Over several meetings we defined our target audience and the need to include the voices of referrers, volun-

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teers and Parents/Carers. We recognised the need for Core Members and Parent/Carers to maintain their anonymity and so enlisted the creative talents of The Group of Seven to animate the sections of the film involving them.

Over the next few months filming began in earnest and Kevin and I met regularly to undertake audio and video recordings. Kevin liaised closely with The Group of Seven to ensure that their animation work would fit with the narrative of the film, and remain within budgetary constraints. In early September the film was launched at the Circles South West AGM. Circles UK subsequently showcased the film at its 10th Anniversary event in December.

The film was extremely well received: a fantastic piece of filmmaking by Kevin. The Core Members' stories are



insightful and heartfelt and the Foster Carer's story is particularly powerful. I would like to thank Stephen Barry (Principal Clinician at the Bristol Be Safe Service) for his input and ongoing support of the Young People's Service, and the volunteers who spoke so eloquently about the benefits of Circles

for young people on film. Moreover I would like to thank Kevin for his dedication, patience and good nature throughout the duration of the filmmaking process.

I feel privileged to have been involved in such an exciting and worthwhile project and look forward to showing the film to professionals, young

people and potential funders alike.

Note: this film is in the public domain and can be accessed via our new website from January 2019. It will also feature on our new YouTube Channel here: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmZ2LIcmKCG9dAeU-rjDe_g

Reflections on a Prison/Through the Gate Circle: by a Core Member

One of the scariest things about my release from prison was making the transition from a culture where, for very good reasons, inmates are required to comply and conform with a strict regime, into a world where self-reliance is vital.

Unless you have experienced life in prison you can never know what it is really like to do nothing unless or until you are told to – you are woken up in the morning, told where to 'work', when and where your meals will be provided, when to exercise, shower and make phone calls. Incentives are given for 'not doing' rather than showing initiative.

Having spent a number of years within this system, with parole and potential release eventually looming, the excitement of upcoming freedom, (albeit starting again from scratch with virtually nothing), was tainted by the thought of so many things to sort out and to arrange, and they were just the things I knew about... There were many things I would have to do that I hadn't even considered, and worst of all, nobody was going to do it for me. Whilst I was really positive about being released I was also scared of how people might react to me and all the baggage attached to my offending. Would people look at me and judge me without getting to know me?

Six months before my parole hearing I was discussing the need to have a robust and varied support network with my Offender Supervisor. We discussed Circles as an option, which initially I

viewed with some reservation, mainly because I saw it as just another way to monitor me: this I think goes back to the overriding culture of suspicion that exists in prison. With an assurance that if it wasn't for me then we wouldn't pursue it, I felt I had nothing to lose. So I agreed to an initial meeting with my local Circles Coordinator. I have to say I was very encouraged by her straightforward but very supportive approach.

My first meetings with Circles were while I was still in prison, which gave me the opportunity, on my patch so to speak - to start to build some trust and to become comfortable with the volunteers. This meant that when the first meeting was held in the community I could put names and faces together and I was actually really looking forward to seeing them; and am constantly reassured by the fact that while they are curious about the events of my past, not once have any of them shown any hint of judging me on anything other than where I am right now.

I view Circles as a kind of 'bridge': not too sympathetic, as family can sometimes be. Not completely risk-averse, as probation can sometimes appear to be. Simply a bunch of normal people who are genuinely supportive, providing me a safe place to seek advice & guidance, to give me a gentle nudge here and there... and often just to have a good natter and a laugh.

It's really hard to express how valuable this extra area of support has been and continues to be for me. I know there will be hiccups along the way, but I am reassured by knowing that my Circle is there for me. Without the support of my Circle life would be a whole lot more difficult.

Anon Core Member

Volunteer Development Training: 'The Impact of Sexual Abuse on Children, Through the Lens of Schema'

In November, Mike Sheath of the Lucy Faithfull Foundation delivered development training for volunteers

Mike began by introducing Kolb's Cycle as a model for reflective supervision. He then introduced the concept of 'Schema' which are ideologies or lenses through which we view and make sense of the world. Everyone has schema, but some are dysfunctional. Those who sexually abuse often have a variety of dysfunctional schema. Mike went on to explain that victims of sexual abuse often take on the schema of their abuser as a result of the grooming process. Such schema can have life-long consequences for victims, particularly in their intimate relationships and their notions of self. Such schema result in 'noise' when victims are presented with alternative perspectives of their abuse.

Mike then introduced Beech and Ward's 'Aetiology Model of sexual offending' looking at the 4 factors which impact on an individual's risk of recidivism. He then moved on to discuss the impact of childhood trauma and present the findings of the

research about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The research indicates that the higher the number of ACEs, the more likely the chance of an individual developing significant health problems in later life (both mental and physical). Given the high prevalence of ACEs among Core Members, this highlights the need for trauma-informed approaches, which take into account the individual trauma history of the Core Member.

Whilst Mike's presentation contained a wealth of information, his delivery was light-hearted and often highly entertaining. The feedback from volunteers was extremely positive and many left with a new language with which to explain some of the phenomena they had observed in their Core Members and a greater understanding of the routes to sexual offending.

Jackie Citron, Young People's Service Coordinator

Annual General Meeting September 2018

Thanks to everyone who attended our AGM in September

As well as the formal business required, this most interesting and informative event marked the official launch of our new promotional film about Young People's Circles. We were very grateful to the Core Member (and Volunteer) who came to talk about his experience of his

Circle, really bringing the work to life. **Martyn Underhill, Police & Crime Commissioner for Dorset**, came and talked about his strategy to reduce sexual violence and prevent sexual abuse, and he pledged his support to fund new Circles in Dorset going forward. In addition, Lucy gave a sneaky peek of the website.

Dorset Developments

It has been a turbulent year for our Dorset Project...

Match-funding for the half-time coordinator seconded by the National Probation Service (NPS) that had come from the Police & Crime Commissioner, ceased in Sept 2017. However...

...the NPS undertook to honour the half-time Coordinator secondment arrangement until March 2018, whilst behind the scenes, there was a lot of work going into the development of a national commissioning model for Circles. But...

...this came to an abrupt halt in March 2018 when NPS announced that all their funding of Circles Projects nationally would be withdrawn from September 2018: there would be no national commissioning of Circles. However...

...at our AGM in September 2018, Martyn Underhill, Dorset Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC), pledged to ensure the continuation of our Dorset Circles Project. Confirmation of funding for three new Circles was recently received, a huge relief for all those involved. In addition, we have been involved in exciting recent discussions between NPS, PCC, and HMP The Verne about the potential for co-commissioning a Prison/ Through The Gate Circles Project based at HMP The Verne. So...

watch this space!

We need your help!

Can you help us to recruit more volunteers? Perhaps you're part of a community group sympathetic to our aims? Can you display a volunteering poster? Or distribute volunteer recruitment leaflets? Or circulate a recruitment advert via a mailing list or social media?

Are you an experienced Circles Volunteer? Would be willing to share your experience with new volunteers? Do you have suggestions for development training?

Are you a professional with a suitable referral on your caseload? Would you come along and give input to our volunteer training events?

Do you have access to a community venue suitable for a Circle to meet?

...if there's a 'yes' in there somewhere... Please get in touch!

The difference we make

Two recently published evaluation reports are of particular interest to Circles South West.

Firstly, *An Evaluation of the Glebe House Circles Project* by the University of Cambridge studied eight Circles for Young People, two of which were delivered by Circles South West. Glebe House in Cambridgeshire is a residential therapeutic programme for young men (15-18) with a known history of harmful sexual behaviours. Glebe's 'Transitions Project' refers young men for local Circles as an exit strategy. They are often placed in an unknown community with no known contacts. The move from residential therapeutic living to independence therefore demands a huge shift. The evaluation is very positive stating that young people's Circles:

"offer support, social interaction and positive role models at the vulnerable time of transition.... The activity element of Circles built relationships and enabled the young men to try new leisure pursuits. Circles also offered practical help and guidance in areas such as housing, money management and employment".

In discussing the merits of young people's Circles, the evaluators conclude quoting a young person: *"why wouldn't you have a Circle?"*.

Secondly, *Research In Practice (RiP)* is independently evaluating of the process and impact of Circles delivered by Circles South West and has recently produced an interim evaluation report (October 2018) concluding that:

"early evidence is showing positive effects... There is evidence of certain adaptations occurring in each type of Circle, where the support is being tailored for different populations. Across all Circles, the central focus on controlling thoughts and actions remains present, and the majority of Circles appear to be making positive differences here..."

...in terms of the volunteers, CSW appears to have developed a valuable community asset. Many volunteers report using their skills outside of Circles, wanting to volunteer again, and recommending volunteering to others. The training by CSW was almost entirely met with positive feedback, as was the support that coordinators provided for volunteers..."

...although data collection is still ongoing, the emerging findings show that Circles are having a positive effect on Core Members, improving outcomes and reducing scores for a variety of risk factors..."

Both these and other relevant research reports will be accessible on our new website.

Donating is easy

The easiest way to donate to Circles South West is via the charitable giving website 'The Big Give'. Just click the icon on our webpage www.circles-southwest.org.uk and choose to 'Donate Now'. Please GiftAid your donation if eligible.

You can now donate to Circles South West FREE when shopping online at 3,300 shops and sites. For every purchase you make a donation is made to our charity. Easy! Sign up at www.easyfundraising.co.uk

Getting in touch

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And last but far from least...
from all the team and
trustees:

Thank you!

and

HAPPY
CHRISTMAS!

All good wishes to you for 2019. We are hugely grateful to all volunteers, funders, statutory partners and other supporters. It's because of you that our charity continues to develop.