



VINEYARD
COMPASSION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Our Story

Vineyard Compassion is a charity with a Christian ethos and values based in Coleraine, Northern Ireland that was birthed out of Causeway Coast Vineyard Church. The aim of the charity is to support people 'from crisis to full potential', by providing practical, emotional and financial support for the poor in the local community, whilst empowering them to tackle the underlying root causes of poverty through a range of innovative projects.

Recognising the significant deprivation in the local area and with a desire to encourage and empower vulnerable people to overcome poverty and crisis, Vineyard Compassion was established. The charity launched a range of community-based projects that offer a holistic approach to tackling poverty and its underlying root causes. Projects have been developed within Causeway Coast Vineyard ever since the first Compassion Christmas Dinner in 2001 with the charity formally established in March 2012. Motivated by compassion for the most vulnerable in society and recognising the dignity and worth of every individual - the charity welcomes all people regardless of background, beliefs, nationality or disability.



Vision

Vineyard Compassion's vision is to have:

"a transformed & thriving community where poverty is unacceptable & uncommon"

Mission

To achieve our vision Vineyard Compassion will:

Provide people with Financial, Emotional or Practical support at their point of need, while empowering them to tackle underlying root causes of poverty"

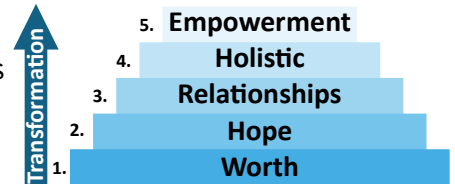
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Transformation through Core Values

Vineyard Compassion's values supports people in a process of transformation from dependence to independence. The different values build upon each other:



Core Values

1. Worth - ALL people are welcome, are valuable & deserve to be treated with dignity & respect
2. Hope - There is hope for the future for everyone, no matter how difficult the situation might appear
3. Relationships - Individual growth & healing happen as we spend time with people who care about us
4. Holistic - We recognise & seek to meet the needs of the 'whole' person - not just their presenting problem
5. Empowerment - We encourage people to develop skills that equip them to meet their own needs & break the cycle of poverty & move from a place of dependence to independence



3 Core Strands

Vineyard Compassion takes a multi-faceted approach to tackling poverty, offering holistic support centred around three core themes. Most projects will contribute to more than one core strand, but their emphasis will sit primarily in one.

1. PROVISION - of crisis needs, where we provide a resource the person lacks. Immediate financial, emotional or practical support. For example: the provision of food, clothing, emotional support and debt counselling.
2. EMPOWERMENT - supporting someone to build their capacity, learn new skills etc to move from a place of dependence to independence - empowering people to

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tackle the underlying root causes of poverty. For example, teaching budgeting skills, building client capacity to break the cycle of poverty, overcoming life controlling habits, moving from dependency towards greater independence.

3. EMPLOYMENT - supporting people on a journey towards employment (& purpose). Work is the fastest and best route out of poverty, not only providing financially, but giving structure to the day, building confidence and self-esteem, improving mental health and providing greater community.



Projects include:

- The Open Door drop-in environment provides a gateway and befriending service to access all support services. Clients only have to enter ONE DOOR and go over their story ONCE.
- The Compassion Support team connects with all new clients. Through needs assessments and tailor-made support plans, people are empowered to move beyond their crisis points.
- Causeway Foodbank provides emergency food and household essentials. Referrals come from front-line care professionals. A clothing bank also operates called Wear House.
- RESET Social Supermarket provides 6 months of low-cost food along with tailored support and training to enable people to reset their priorities of food, finances and future stability.
- CAP Debt Centre provides debt counselling, support and money management courses.
- CAP Job Club supports people to take steps towards employment via an 8-week course.
- Link Logs provides varied voluntary work placements designed to increase confidence, skills and employability through a log/kindling production social enterprise. Some referrals come from the Probation Board for community service or prisoners on day release.
- Compassion Housing provides emergency/temporary supported accommodation for those homeless or at-risk in 12 flats. Referrals from NIHE, Social Services, Simon Community, Womens Aid.

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- Grow allotment gives opportunity for people to grow produce in a supportive mentoring environment improving mental health and promoting physical and social well-being.

These multi- faceted projects are making a real difference to the lives of thousands of people in the Causeway Coast and Glens area. Vineyard Compassion has been privileged to see dignity and hope for the future restored to thousands of people who are trapped in poverty cycles, with many going on to reach their full potential in life.



Recognition

Vineyard Compassion's pioneering work has been recognised locally. In 2011 it won the Coleraine Borough Council Community Endeavour Award. In 2014 it won the Most Inspiring Debt Centre Award and the Social Enterprise NI One to Watch Award. In 2018 it was granted The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service - the MBE for voluntary organisations. Most recently, in 2020 it won the Financial Inclusion Award from the Centre for Social Justice, the UK's top think tank on tackling poverty.

Case study: Russell's Story



Russell had a history of gambling, which started as simple slot machine fun but turned into a daily life of gambling after his marriage broke down. Over a few years, he lost his job, his home and accrued increasing debt. He ended up living in a derelict house with no water, no electricity and no heat. Russell realised he needed to break this cycle and change his life. With encouragement from family he approached Vineyard Compassion. This was not easy, he had to face his problems and take the brave step of asking for help. He called at Vineyard Compassion on a Monday in October and was given an emergency food pack, other essential items and benefits advice. By Wednesday he had a debt counselling appointment, and on Friday, he began a supported volunteering work programme in the Link Logs social enterprise. Russell was provided with temporary housing and after a few weeks he got his own apartment in Compassion Housing.

Today he has completed RESET (social supermarket), is debt free, has moved into private rented accommodation and is now employed as a delivery driver within our social enterprise - Link Logs. Russell is passionate about telling others about how his life has changed! He knows there is still a long journey ahead but with the ongoing support of Vineyard Compassion, he has hope for the future.

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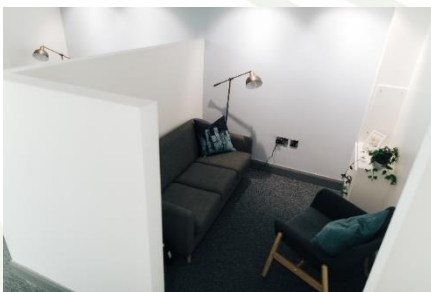


Staff & Volunteers

Vineyard Compassion is first and foremost a volunteer organisation with (paid) staff coordinating the projects and releasing volunteers to work effectively within them. When a decision is made to appoint a paid staff member, each staff member is expected to gather a volunteer team to multiply the hours they work. The projects are supported by 20 staff (10 full-time and 10 part-time) along with over 250 volunteers annually. The majority of volunteers are from the local community with a wide spectrum of backgrounds and abilities. Many volunteers are former clients who are now in a position to help others.

Partnership

The charity is privileged to work alongside many statutory agencies and community/voluntary organisations towards the shared goal of tackling local poverty. It not only receives referrals from these organisations but also signposts and refers clients to them for specialist support. The charity seeks to avoid duplication in service provision. Where gaps exist or current provision is unable to cope with demand, it looks for ways to launch projects that meet genuine needs in a sustainable and effective way.



2020 Impact Card - <https://www.vineyardcompassion.co.uk/s/Impact-Card.pdf>

VC Ethos & Values Statement - <https://www.vineyardcompassion.co.uk/ethosvalues>

VCUKI Statement of Faith - <https://www.vineyardchurches.org.uk/resources/statement-of-faith/>

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