



CHRISTMAS TOOLKIT

A guide and resources to help run
Community Christmas Activities
and ideas on how to fundraise for them.



Christmas
Appeal

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Why do we 'do Christmas'? - A missional opportunity.

Major Mal Davies

Again? Already? It doesn't seem that long since we were working out how to 'do' Christmas in a pandemic, and now we need to start thinking about it again. You'll recall the headlines last year about how the government had 'cancelled Christmas', only to have many voices in the Church strongly say that Christmas was not just about busy shops and end-of-year events in pubs! I know you don't need reminding about the 'reason for the season' and the significance of Christmas on the Christian calendar, but perhaps we could all do with a reminder of the opportunity Christmas presents to us.

At Christmas, the world can't avoid Jesus. At Christmas, we are fully justified in talking publicly about Jesus, singing songs about Jesus, reading out the story of Jesus' birth, sending cards with Bible pictures and verse on them, and even setting up little Bible scenes (stables, shepherds, angels, Jesus' family etc.) in our front windows. In a world where many people take no notice of Jesus and where some voices even try and stamp out talk of Jesus - at Christmas we can loudly proclaim his name. Jesus won't be ignored!

At Christmas, doing mission comes so naturally that people almost expect it. At Christmas, if the Church (i.e. us) didn't talk about Jesus, there would be something wrong. So, as you deliver those food parcels, as you serve those community meals, as you run that appeal, as you hand out those toys, as you engage with people in your community - mention the name of Jesus. You're allowed to.

Not the talkative type? Fine. Just 'be' Jesus to people. As St Francis is reputed to have said: 'Preach the gospel at all times and, when necessary, use words.' As you come alongside people this Christmas, show them the respect and value that Jesus himself would show if he was serving them.

Christmas offers us an amazing missional 'foot in the door'. We're allowed to talk about Jesus and 'be' Jesus as we serve our communities. Let's not waste the opportunity.

An Introduction to the Guide

Welcome to the 2024 Be a Star Christmas Toolkit. The Be a STAR campaign was born out of a focus group run by the community and events fundraising team with corps and was used for the first time for Christmas 2020. This year we continue with a suite of materials has been developed using this theme across several teams. These can be used across everything you do - to recruit volunteers, collect toy and food donations, and to raise funds.

We celebrate the fact that each corps 'does Christmas' differently and will base it on what's right for the corps and the local community. The toolkit is designed so that you can pick and choose what you need and what works for you. Do let us know if any of the resources don't work or if there is anything that you need. They are developed by a number of teams and section 16 gives you the contact details of each. You will usually find the contact details of the relevant person at the end of each section.

All the resources you need - including editable A3 and A4 posters, an editable A6 postcard, local fundraising tips, and guides and templates to use when working with families, the local media, commercial partners or businesses are available on the Salvationist website <https://www.salvationist.org.uk/resources/christmas/christmas-present-appeal> OUR HUB - [Christmas forms, documents and resources \(sharepoint.com\)](https://www.salvationist.org.uk/resources/christmas/christmas-present-appeal) is for information and resources that are more "internal" such as GDPR information and referral forms.

wider resources including local fundraising and other resources for those without access to the hub to use.

The posters have text boxes where you can type in your local details (or leave the box blank, print them and then write in hand on them). These work best if you open them using Google Chrome. You can print these locally or for some of the resources you can contact Print and Design (see below). They are able to print the following:

- Christmas Present Appeal posters (A3 and A4)
- Christmas Present Appeal postcards
- Christmas Present Appeal Pop up banners

Paul and his team are also able to do bespoke Be A STAR banners for outside your hall/centre so do get in touch with him for a quote on this as well as quotes for printing of posters and postcards if this interests you.



Christmas Present Appeal

The Salvation Army Christmas Present Appeal (CPA) makes a huge difference to thousands of children and adults across the territory by making sure they receive a gift on Christmas Day instead of missing out.

This section gives you information you might find useful to run an effective CPA in your local area. This includes basic advice on running an appeal, guidance on how to engage volunteers to help run it, and ideas on how you can build year-round relationships with the recipients of the presents.

The content in the toolkit is not a blueprint that you have to follow to the letter, but simply a collection of ideas, based on the practice of many corps around the UK and Ireland, that will hopefully make your job a bit easier. Feel free to run your appeal as you need to and fit it into your existing corps programme; the only thing we ask is that donated gifts are brand new and not second hand.

Here are some ideas for you to consider:

Launch your present appeal well.

A public launch of the Christmas Present Appeal in your area or community can make large amounts of people aware that the appeal is happening. You could launch your appeal by organising a local event, obtaining celebrity endorsements and/or using picture opportunities to let your community know that you are collecting presents for people in need. You could

also use your social media and website to launch it.

Put up the print materials

Find a prominent location at your corps building to display the appeal posters, but also get thinking about other places you might get permission to put them up, like:

- Inside local stores, cafes or coffee shops
- On notice boards at schools, universities, colleges or shopping centres
- At other community groups or clubs

If your corps has a charity shop, you could dress the window with posters and toys linking to the Christmas Present Appeal.

Work locally with other corps

Many corps and centres throughout the territory have found it effective to work in partnership on the Christmas Present Appeal with other nearby corps. This allows The Salvation Army to present a unified front and conduct a single appeal across a much wider geographical area, as well as making it easier to involve local and regional media and appeal to retail partners on a regional level. While this approach may mean a higher level of project management, the responsibility can be shared out between several centres. Why not discuss the possibility of using this model with neighbouring corps?

Make it truly local

You know best what kind of appeal will work best in your local community. Might donations of money, clothes or food be more useful to the recipients than toys? You could choose to purchase gift tokens for shops such as Argos so that the parent or guardian can choose a gift for their child that they will really appreciate (although be cautious of using shops where parents or guardians can use the money for goods other than presents). Your present appeal needn't be for children only: you may want to think about local community members who also may not receive presents at Christmas and provide for them as well.

It's so important that The Salvation Army does not lose its presence in the communities we're part of. By making the Christmas Present Appeal a local appeal, you can create a sense of real ownership and local pride. The Christmas Present Appeal always works best when local people feel they are making a difference within their own community. Publicity generated from a local campaign is often more relevant and has the potential to be carried on a much larger scale by local and regional media.

Get your corps family involved

We would encourage all corps members to become ambassadors for the appeal. They can get involved in the Christmas Present Appeal by:

- Donating a gift, and encouraging friends, neighbours and others to donate gifts

Organising a collection at their workplace, gym, school, university, sports team or other community group

- Volunteering to help collect and wrap presents

You could also think about involving other expressions of The Salvation Army, such as the local homelessness provision (which may include work with families), Anti-Trafficking and Modern Slavery safe houses, Early Years settings, Older People's Services and SAHA housing provision.

Get everyone else involved too

It is easy to make assumptions about who may be willing and able to contribute to the Christmas Present Appeal. We can think of people as 'recipients' of our services rather than contributors and forget to ask them if they would like to give. People who attend your lunch club, come to your community café or drop-in, bring their child to the toddler group, buy from your charity shop customers or attend your Sunday school may be delighted to help. The key is to offer a range of ways people can donate and never put people under pressure to get involved.

If you have a SATCOL charity shop locally why not see if you can put a poster advertising your appeal in their window. The team may also be interested in getting involved either by donating presents or volunteering at your Christmas events. They may also be aware of customers who might be struggling and value some support over Christmas.

Building partnerships within your community

- **Local clubs and societies:** appeal to local groups, clubs and charities such as Rotary, Inner Wheel, Lions, and Scouts for donations. Work together to collect and distribute gifts.
- **Work with retail and business partners:** start by asking at local stores and cafes if you can put up posters to advertise your appeal or discuss the possibility of using them as a present drop-off point. Resources to help you engage with local businesses are on OurHub.
- **Schools:** this is a fantastic media opportunity, and working together with the school you might be able to invite the local newspaper to take photos of the gift collection. Remember, photo-ops with children require permissions!

It is extremely important to thank your appeal supporters so they know how valued they are and how grateful we are for their generosity. Without the help of local communities this appeal would not work.

Know the difference you are making

It can be really helpful to the effectiveness of your appeal to collect data about what you have done and the difference you have made to the families and individuals who received presents from you. I know many settings already do this. This information can be used for fundraising, giving feedback to those who kindly donated or to reflect yourself on whether the appeal is

achieving what you would like it to do. We will be asking for some of this information territorially this year and your regional specialist for Community Services will be able to support you to decide on what information you want to collect, how to do that and then support you as you reflect on what you learn.

Involve your local community

Schools

You could organise a special assembly at a local school to highlight why the Christmas Present Appeal collection is so important. Assembly and lesson plans are available here

[Seasonal Assemblies \(Secondary\) | The Salvation Army](#)

[Seasonal Assemblies \(Primary\) | The Salvation Army](#)

This would be a good way of creating or building upon links with local schools and could work together with a toy collection at the school.

Invitations to a Christmas event

Why not include an invitation to your Christmas services or other Christmas events at your corps with the presents you give? You could also have them available for the public to take when they make a donation. An A6 postcard template is also available on

<https://www.salvationist.org.uk/resources/christmas/christmas-present-appeal>

Building relationships

How can local corps build positive, year-round relationships with the families they support through the Christmas Present Appeal?

Most of the thousands of presents and parcels that are put together by The Salvation Army go to people referred by statutory agencies. Often, we have little or no link with the family receiving the gifts, although some corps have included some of the following ideas with the presents:

- prayer or greetings cards
- an invitation to a 'New Year' party
- a leaflet with the corps weekly activities in it

As a church with a clear mission to serve suffering humanity, how do we balance our compassion to address the ever-increasing practical needs in our communities with our passion to share God's love with suffering humanity?

In some areas corps have worked with agencies to invite families to come along on specific days to choose presents for their own children at the corps, with the opportunity of befriending and support. During these special days the families can be invited to follow-up events in January and beyond, such as film evenings, craft afternoons or family fun days, with the aim of deepening relationships and eventually inviting them to messy church or other entry point programmes. Many of those who have supported the initial Christmas Present Appeal, such as local businesses, educational facilities and Christmas volunteers, can be keen to support the follow-up days too.

Some corps have also found real benefit in developing positive links throughout the year with what they offer in the

local community, like parent-and-toddler groups, volunteering opportunities, community drop-ins, breakfast clubs, parenting courses or debt advice. Often these relationships can be developed through a simple act of kindness, such as dropping off a box of chocolates at the local social work team over Christmas to show them how much you appreciate the work they do, or even inviting them to a Christmas meal.

Extending your reach

To identify 'hard-to-reach' families who are not referred by agencies but are still experiencing significant poverty, some corps have partnered with local schools and nurseries. Rather than making these families anxious by inviting them to a strange corps environment, toys can instead be made available at the more familiar venue of the school or nursery, where befrienders from the corps can support and start to build relationships.

Working with local agencies

Many of the agencies (social workers, health visitors, etc) that refer families for Christmas presents will likely work with them not just at Christmas but throughout the year. It's possible that some of the regular programmes and activities that your corps run would be of interest to the families, but agencies may not be aware of what you do. Informing them may open up other opportunities to engage with these families.

There are a number of ways you can do this:

- Send details of your weekly programme to the local agency offices, either using the leaflets you already produce, or by writing a letter outlining the key activities with clear details of how they might 'refer' a person to you.
- Offer to speak at an agency's team meeting or attend any information days they might be running.
- Invite agency staff to an open day or lunch at the corps so you can discuss your programme with them and answer any questions.
- Email all the referring agencies in January, including details of your programme for 2020.

It will be important to identify for the agencies which activities the community can access by themselves (such as toddler groups) and which offer a little more in the way of personal support, as well as any associated costs. It may also be worth you emphasising that because we are a church all members of the community, of all faiths and none, are welcome, although not everyone may have that understanding. However, it's important you communicate clearly what the expectations and limitations of what you can offer are. Some children referred by agencies may be vulnerable so it's important that you feel able to say whether or not you have the capacity to offer a certain level of service - for example, supervised contact with a child.

The personal touch...

One way of enhancing your appeal is by matching presents to individual children. You might do this through the referral form by asking whether there are any presents that the child would particularly like or dislike. This will often lead to more specific information than a more general question about special needs. As long as you are clear that you cannot guarantee specific gifts, this information may better help you to select an appropriate gift.

Another way to match presents to children is to invite the recipient families to come and choose presents for their children from the range of donated gifts:

'The year before last we ran our Christmas Toy Appeal at Ellesmere Port Corps a little differently.

'In previous years, we had collected the donations of toys from various businesses and individuals and then distributed the majority through social workers or children's centres. Due to the busy schedule most social workers have, toys were often collected in bulk and then distributed to families at the last minute. This approach meant that we lacked any direct contact with families, and felt like we were devaluing the gifts as we weren't able to pass them on with the same personal warmth and generosity with which local people had donated them.

Last year we requested referrals for individual families from professionals.

We developed a simple form and asked professionals to agree with the family which of the date options they would come to The Salvation Army to choose their own gifts. When they attended, they were welcomed and provided with tea or coffee by volunteers, invited to choose which gift their child would prefer, and offered the materials, space and assistance to wrap the gifts they had chosen to take home and give to their child at Christmas. We also gave each family an invitation to a family fun evening to celebrate the new year, with the hope of building relationships with the families beyond Christmas.

WHAT WAS POSITIVE ABOUT THIS NEW APPROACH THAT MADE IT WORTH ALL THE HARD WORK AND PLANNING?

Of course, we found that at times families missed the pre-arranged appointments. So it was important that we followed up with the professional and an alternative time arranged. In addition, the new year event didn't run quite as we'd expected. So this year we are considering asking for permission from families to contact them to arrange their present selection time directly with them, and give us the ability to keep in touch with them about future events should they so wish. YOU might not see all the fruit in the first year but it's worth giving it a try.

Should you wish to explore any of these ideas, your link Territorial Community Engagement Lead and Outreach Mission Partner (Family Ministries) would be glad

to journey with you to discover how this might work best in your local context.

Dealing with incoming requests from external agencies and the public

You are likely to be faced with requests for presents to be given to particular families. You should decide if you can handle these requests, dependent on time and resources. If you are not running an appeal, or are inundated with requests, please contact your DHQ representative (contact details on the last page), who can will advise you if other corps are able to handle the requests.

Resources/Guides Available:

- CPA posters (various sizes and layouts)
- CPA postcards (2 versions, thank you and plain)
- Email Banners
- Assembly resources
- Outside Banners (made to order)

Christmas Celebration Meals

Providing a meal for those who may not have anyone to celebrate Christmas with is a real service to your local community and something that we know many of you offer. Those who would welcome an invitation will come from all sections of your local community and inviting people not only attend but to contribute and participate will add a new dimension to your event.

This year we continue our series of resources which have been produced to support your Christmas Lunch, whether this will be held on Christmas day or another day over the Christmas period.

Our Christmas ministry and hospitality in our Corps and Centres of course serves all ages, but this resource created by our Older Peoples Ministries Team Ali.Thornton-Dean@salvationarmy.org.uk in collaboration with our Community Services Team has practical guidance, tips and resources to support your ministry. A Christmas Service outline and additional resources have been created to help you with delivering the Christmas message and we hope that at such a busy time for you this will act as a supportive tool.

There is a suggested timetable of events for the day to help you structure the Christmas Celebration & Lunch for your guests with ideas to help make the event inclusive for everyone, no matter their age.

Volunteering is key for the success of such a day so please see guidance from the Volunteering Engagement Manager (lydia.kibaara@salvationarmy.org.uk) around befriending and other volunteer roles.

Resource/Guides available:

- Christmas Celebration and Meal guide
<https://www.salvationist.org.uk/resources/christmas/christmas-celebration-lunch>

Food Hampers/Parcels at Christmas

We know that many corps provide food hampers for local families at Christmas. We have for the first time this year provided a poster to help you advertise for donations of food and money to support this work. Whilst not specifically geared to Christmas the Food Poverty Toolkit may give you useful ideas which you can find under Community Services on OUR HUB:

<https://ourhub.salvationarmy.org.uk/CommunityServices/PublishingImages/Pages/foodpovertytoolkit/food%20poverty%20toolkit.PNG>

Resource/Guides available:

- Food donation poster.

Local Fundraising at Christmas

JustGiving and QR Codes

Why Just Giving?

Many of you are now very familiar with the joys of JustGiving:

- All funds donated are clearly for your corps
- We aim for all funds to be with you within 3 weeks of a donation being made at the latest
- Your JustGiving Page will have its own QR code (example below) that you can add to posters, banners etc. People can scan it on their phones and be taken straight to your JustGiving page

In the corps Christmas survey, 50% of corps that responded rated the JG page as contributing significantly to their income.

Christmas 2024 JustGiving pages

We have set up a JustGiving page Campaign:

[Be a STAR and Fundraise for The Salvation Army at Christmas! - JustGiving](#)

Why have we done this?

- This means that all JustGiving pages across the UK are linked together under one umbrella ('campaign')
- It makes it easier to track income that is specifically meant for Christmas activities- and this gets a tick from a legal point of view

- It enables those of you who have Community Support pages for general funds to keep those monies separate

Setting up your Christmas JustGiving page

By now, you should have received an email or seen the Bulletin with instructions on how to set up your JustGiving page. This will outline simple instructions for claiming your page.

If you haven't received this email, please contact us on challenge@salvationarmy.org.uk and we'll be able to help you.

How to make the most of your JustGiving page

If you complete these 5 simple steps below, you'll likely be surprised at how many more funds will come through on your JustGiving page.

- Personalise your corp's JustGiving page

Edit your page and inspire supporters by what you are doing. You can add photos of your Christmas preparations and edit the cover photo of your fundraising page, and you can also add information about your corps' activities under 'Story' on your page.

- Update your Corp's webpage with your new JustGiving link
- If you need support with this, please email digital@salvationarmy.org.uk
- Share your JustGiving page link on your Corp's Facebook and social media
- Use a QR code to direct people to your JustGiving page

A QR code means people can easily scan this on their phone and donate straight to your fundraising page without having to carry cash. Print these QR codes on posters in your halls or local shops, or stick on your collection buckets when out carolling.

To create yours, simply add '/qrcode' to the end of your JustGiving link when in a browser and press enter -
e.g. www.justgiving.com/fundraising/blogscorps/qrcode



- Publicly thank your donors

Thanking your donors publicly to let them know what a difference their support will make to your corps, will foster good relationships and could prompt others to donate as well.

How you will recognise funds from JustGiving in your accounts

JustGiving

- JustGiving send over weekly reports for what was donated one week in arrears. The Donor Care team then process all of this and send a large file to finance so they can make the transfers to corps.
- It normally takes two to three weeks for the funds to be visible in the corps account.
- Note: corps won't see lump sums come in, they will see the donations that were donated one week in arrears and they will be able to identify this with the reserve code in their corps fund code.

Go to Reports/corps Reports/Transactions - All - corps and at the top of the Reserve Column, type in your reserve code - you will then get a list of all transactions coded to your cost centre.

- Please contact your regional accountant for any income related queries.

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- You can also add Live stream videos and more photos to your page by clicking on edit page. There are

instructions available on [how to edit your JustGiving page](#).

Tell people why you need their support by adding a story:

View **edit** Media Donations Settings

Edit page

Page title
Caroling with The Salvation Army
Save title

Fundraising target
GBP 5000.00
Save target

Your story

B I U [List Icon] [Link Icon]

At Christmas, more than any other time, The Salvation Army works tirelessly for people in need.

Get the family and friends together to sing along online with The Salvation Army band! Simply stream the performance, download Christmas Carols and make your donation to JustGiving. Help us spread the joy with us this Christmas.

If you have any questions or would like help setting up either your JustGiving page or QR code, then please do contact us challenge@salvationarmy.org.uk.

Using the Be a STAR Campaign to raise funds for Christmas activities

We currently have posters and ‘assets’ you can use on Facebook and Twitter

- All this information can be found in our Christmas Fundraising pack in our section on Salvationist.org - <https://www.salvationist.org.uk/resources/community-engagement/christmas-fundraising-resources>

We are happy to produce any Be a STARresources that might be useful, so do get in contact with us at challenge@salvationarmy.org.uk and we’ll be happy to help.

Creating Wishlists

Some corps who are running a present appeal use wishlists to help collect presents. The benefits to doing this are:

- You have more control over what is donated, as you have made the selections
- With some retailers you can set up specific wishlists for, e.g., mother and baby/ preschool/ wrapping & ribbons etc
- You can easily manage your lists on your mobile
- You can share the web link (‘url’) on your social media, and if you have multiple lists, you can promote all at the same time using something like LinkTree

To set up a wishlist, first create an account for your corps with an online retailer, find suitable items and add them to your list. Make sure that the retailer offers the ability to share your wishlist (e.g. John Lewis).

Setting up LinkTree

You can use Linktree to create online lists of gifts for your Be A Star Toy appeal.

These links can be from any online retailer, so you are able to choose exactly what you would like to go on your list, without the limitations of using one particular retailer.

Once you have created your list, you can send it out to your corps members and use Linktree’s basic tracking tools to give you an idea of how many times each link has been clicked.

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You are then able to adjust your list according to which items you have received or add items as required.

Below is an example: linktr.ee/amybuddleSA

For instructions on how to set up your corps' Linktree, please click here:

www.salvationarmy.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/2021-08/Linktree_Instructions.pdf

Resources available:

- Fundraising guide jammed with festive ideas and tips
- All the social media promo material you need, including cover photos, posts, frames and e-signatures
- Other resources such as posters, gift tags, collection bucket wrap and Thank You for your Donation cards

Access our [Christmas Fundraising resources](#).

The National Appeal

Julius Wolff-Ingham, Assistant Secretary for Communications writes here about why Christmas is a great time for local fundraising for The Salvation Army.

So many people say that Christmas is The Salvation Army! So, whilst we set about celebrating the mystery of the Christmas story, it might be an idea to try to demystify Christmas fundraising and why it is such a great time for you to get people giving in your community.

First, why do people so generously give to The Salvation Army?

In short, they see us as a practical, faith based, trustworthy movement which strives to meet the real needs that exist in our communities. We are well known for our services for people experiencing homelessness and that is a big driver of donations, but generally, people trust us to use their donation where we think it will do the most good.

Why Christmas?

Research confirms that when asked to name a charity most strongly associated with Christmas, most people name The Salvation Army. People see us as a cause they care for, but unlike many other charities not one that is always a priority for them to support.

People prefer to give to us when they feel like it or when asked but they do like to

give to us at Christmas.

The Christmas season is therefore a really important opportunity for us to present opportunities for people to give or get involved. As we all know, if we don't ask, we don't get!

Why do we need central as well as local fundraising?

Our centralised fundraising programme raises £50m a year and in addition, a further £60m comes from gifts in wills. This funding quite literally keeps The Salvation Army alive. These funds are not 'THQ funds' but are the lifeblood for us all. Funds support all we do - our 'social work', some of our community programmes, mission support, property schemes, grants and allowances for local mission delivery. In addition, our members give generously - sacrificially sometimes.

However this alone is not enough to keep us going. There is so much additional potential for corps and centres to raise their own funds locally. For example, corps which go carolling at Christmas will know just how generous the public are, so just doing a few more things or running a few more fundraising activities or encouraging others to fundraise for us is potentially going to be really successful.

Central vs local fundraising?

I see this as a really powerful, two-way street, not a conflict. We know that the central Christmas fundraising campaign

raises awareness of the work of The Salvation Army and the need for funds. This powerfully increases the likelihood for people to give locally in response to local fundraising. My suggestion is to make the most of the season of goodwill, the respect people have for us and their willingness to give to us. The Be a Star resources are immensely helpful, so please, use them as effectively as you can!

God gives us gifts in due season. Christmas is the season when our need for funds is met with a real warmth of spirit by the admiring public. Let us thank God that we receive such support, given so freely, and ensure we are fine stewards of those gifts. Let's celebrate Christmas and let's also make the most of all the potential it holds for us.

The Entertainer Big Toy Appeal and advice on engaging with corporate partners

The Entertainer

The Salvation Army will be partnering again this year with The Entertainer for their Big Toy Appeal this Christmas.

The Entertainer isn't everywhere so unfortunately not all corps will have a local store to partner with. However, an email has already been sent out to the corps who do with details on how they can take part. The appeal will be running throughout the month of November 2024. Corps that have been matched with a local Entertainer store will be making arrangements to collect new toys donated in stores for the corps to use at Christmas.

In addition to the toys donated in stores, The Entertainer will be matching these and shipping them with toys donated by the public online to The Salvation Army Trading Company warehouse to be divided equally between all the Divisions. These will be shipped in early December to one nominated location within each Division. Corps not partnered directly with a local store can benefit from this delivery if they get in contact with their Division.

If you have any questions about The Entertainer Big Toy Appeal please contact entertainertoyappeal@salvationarmy.org.uk.

Working with corporates at Christmas:

Companies come in all shapes and sizes so it is important to approach them accordingly - from the sole trader (eg window cleaner or corner shop) through the small / medium businesses which might employ a few or a few hundred staff right up to the giant national / international corporates.

There is an opportunity for you as a corps to approach any or all of these on a local basis to explore possibilities for their support - and not just at Christmas. You could approach them for support in many ways:

- financial support
- gifts in kind - donating their products or services if that is relevant
- volunteering their time
- giving you access to their customers or staff - a food or other items donation station
- connections or introductions

If you would like some help or advice then please get in touch with the team at THQ who will be pleased to do what they can to help: corporatepartnerships@salvationarmy.org.uk

Resources available:

- Corporate How to guide
- Corporate sponsorship letter
- Working with commercial partners and business

Volunteering

Christmas is a popular time for volunteering. Whether you are blessed with lots of volunteers or struggle to get enough to support your activity then the following information should provide some useful tips and information.

There are a number of volunteer role descriptions that are specific to Christmas that you may find helpful as well as a template that you can customise for your own requirements. Please go to <https://ourhub.salvationarmy.org.uk/Volunteering/Pages/Role%20descriptions.aspx> to find these and other role descriptions for volunteers.

If you have enough volunteers you might want to think about how you might handle oversubscription. It's a nice problem to have but try not to invent things for volunteers to do that don't match what you need. You might want to consider recruiting some Christmas Befrienders this year - a role description is available above.

If you don't have any volunteer opportunities available, why not ask people to fundraise or collect presents for your Present Appeal (if you are running it) instead?

This is always so difficult but use the template text opposite if you want a kind "no thank you".

If you don't have enough volunteers, here are some useful tips:

Thank you for your kind interest in volunteering with The Salvation Army at Christmas - we rely on volunteers and donations throughout the year to do our work and we value your support.

Unfortunately, our Christmas volunteering opportunities are very popular and are now filled, but The Salvation Army works throughout the year to provide compassionate support, a listening ear and practical help to people who are vulnerable or in need. There are many opportunities to contribute to your local church & community centre, where the events and services on offer are based on the needs of the local community - you can find your local Salvation Army here.

We are particularly in need of volunteers to xxxxx. Please contact xxxx

If you would like to find out more about volunteering with The Salvation Army all year round you can visit our website to find out more. If you are short on time there are other ways that you can support us, from taking action to stop modern slavery, getting active or donating to our work. We hope that you will find your way to make a difference to the lives of some of the most marginalised and underprivileged people.

Attracting Christmas volunteers

Think about who you want to attract and why and try to advertise appropriately:

- Salvation Army corps web pages
- Salvation Army national web pages link to contact
- Local Churches Together networks
- Local Volunteer Bureaux (e.g. CVS services), libraries & community centres
- Word of mouth - people love to be asked
- Social media posts
- Local newspaper - see template press releases
- Salvation Army youth and young people and students from the wider community
- Our Hub Volunteering has lots of recruitment ideas

Handling one-off Christmas volunteering

- If you have volunteers coming to volunteer for a day you obviously don't want to go through the usual process, so ask them to fill out a **one-off application form** (also available under Forms on the Volunteering Hub). You'll still need to ask for and take up a reference.
- **On the day** - If you are running a Christmas meal or one-off event, have a register of volunteers who have signed up in advance, so that you can ensure you have the right people volunteering

- it is ok to turn away individuals who turn up on spec if you don't have the capacity to take more volunteers

- **Briefings** - Make sure your volunteers are briefed on the task that you want them to do, even if they've volunteered before!
- **Face coverings and exemptions** - please ensure that you are following any local guidance as provided to adapt to changing circumstances.
- **Encouraging volunteering for the whole year** (not just at Christmas)!
- If your new volunteers are clearly having a great time, take a few moments to **get to know them** and find out if they'd like to come back at another time of year especially if you have a role that would suit. Have a few dates in mind for when they might be needed.
- **Holding on to a volunteer** is easier than recruiting a new one - just think of the time it takes!
- Start by giving them a **personal thank you**. You could use the little thank you postcards created especially for this year's campaign which you'll find in the resources area.
- **Ask them if they would be interested in coming along to other events** including the Christmas services.

And finally - Thanking Volunteers.

Everybody loves a thank you - it makes them feel special however long they've been volunteering. The template thank you cards are available in the pack for printing or downloading and sending as an email.

Resources available:

- Thankyou cards
- Role descriptions
- Template social media posts

Including Everyone

When planning your Christmas Activities, it's easy to unintentionally exclude some sections of the community. Below we have focused on just two of these, those people living with disability and children.

People living with a disability do have so much to share in their corps and community, but others may require reasonable adjustments for effective participation and engagement. It is important that we reflect on our practices and ensure that everyone is given equal opportunities.

This includes taking steps to provide:

- **Accessible facilities:** Assess your facilities and remove anything that would cause a physical barrier with particular attention to the entrance of the facility, toilets, activity rooms, hallways, refreshment areas, parking etc. Examine all the internal layout/ arrangement of furniture and spaces to provide spaces for free movement for wheelchair users, those with guide dogs or walking aids.
- **Effective communication** - Provide accessible signage and documents including in invitation, program and other materials in easy to read format such as large prints or braille.
- **Engagement and participation:** Make people aware that you are willing to accommodate them irrespective of their disability by providing the information

on disability inclusion on invitations, event notices, leaflets, emails etc. Ask people living with disability on what you can do to make the place or event accessible and any accommodation that they may require.

- Proactively involve members of the enabled group living with a disability in activities and volunteering opportunities by sharing with them how they can contribute or take part.
- **Inclusive recruitment of volunteers:** People living with a disability volunteer for the same reason as anyone else for example to contribute to their corps or community, gain skills, for personal interest as well as to develop connections and relationships. Give equal opportunities and treat everyone with respect and dignity whilst recruiting volunteers. Where possible include someone living with a disability on the volunteer recruitment process as this is a model of good practice.

Children

You may have heard people say 'Christmas is really for the children.' This is a sentiment often quoted by adults when describing all the wonderful effort adults go to, in order to make the Festive Season as magical as it can be for the youngest members of our community.

But what if we turned that on its head? What if we sought opportunities for children to contribute to the wonder of Christmas? What opportunities might we have to teach children about the real meaning of Christmas - peace and goodwill to all people - from an early age?

Schools

If you don't already have links with your local school (or schools) then Christmas provides the perfect opportunity to involve children in supporting other children and families in their community. There are lots of ways in, through Head Teachers, Class Teachers, Governing Bodies, Parent Councils, and Friends & Supporter Groups too. Most schools plan ahead for which charities they are likely to support throughout the year, so get in early and offer to work with the school to make them aware of how The Salvation Army is helping those in need in their area. And it's not just seasonal campaigns that a school might host. Many schools hold 'non-uniform days', 'bake-sales' and other creative and engaging events to raise money for all sorts of projects. Talk to your school. Make a connection, even if it's simply an offer of practical help with such an occasion.

You could organise a special assembly at a local school to highlight why the Christmas Present Appeal is so important. Assembly and lesson plans are available on Salvation Army's Website: www.salvationarmy.org.uk. Why not involve a small band of musicians or carol singers

in uniform? Talk about the history of The Salvation Army. These are simple ways of creating or building upon links with a school, whilst providing some helpful educational content. A seasonal assembly or lesson might launch a toy collection at the school or be a positive way to end an appeal or campaign, when donations of toys can be collected.

Working with children in school always offers fantastic media opportunities! Schools love it when their local press visits to take photos and report on the work of the children. You could offer to invite the local newspaper to take photos of your gift collection. Is there any better sight than happy children with gifts around the Christmas Tree? Be sure to work closely with the school around photo permissions, and ensure you have the necessary paperwork completed if you plan to use photos in your own publicity.

Community Groups

You may have Scout or Guide groups in your community, or even attached to your corps. Make use of them. Talk to the leaders about opportunities for the young people to achieve badges by getting involved in your Christmas appeals. Other community groups, such as dance academies and sports clubs may also be willing to engage their children in raising money for The Salvation Army. Get in touch with them to find out if they might be willing to help.

Other Churches

Don't forget that your corps is part of the wider Body of Christ! There may be other churches/denominations in your area that might like to work alongside The Salvation Army. Working ecumenically is the perfect way to have a wider impact on your community. The wider Church has a great deal of respect for our work - make good use of that!

Families in the Community

Why not put out messages in the local press or on social media to invite families to bring toys and gifts to your building. Children love to bring something 'for a child who might otherwise not have a Christmas gift'. Giving like this can have a huge and lasting impact on a child. Encourage families to bring unwrapped donations in gift bags - and take time to explain to them what happens next, even if that involves a magical story about Father Christmas to younger children!

In 2020, one corps posted a photograph (with permission) of a young girl presenting a cheque to The Salvation Army Officer, which had more 'Facebook likes' than any other post which was published during the year! Families love the opportunity to help their children to share what they have, in the spirit of Christmas.

Toy Service

Your corps could hold a special Toy Service, in Advent or early December, complete with Christmas carols and lots of information about how your local Salvation Army has been helping children and families in the community during the year. Why not invite a school choir to perform, and ask the children and parents to bring small gifts with them? Do everything you can to include elements in the Service which will appeal to families - one simple idea is to provide gift-tags and invite children and adults to write prayers on them, and then hang them on the Christmas tree.

There are so many ways to involve children in your community at this special time of year. Christmas really is all about the children. Let's put them into action!

Richard Prescott is Outreach Mission Partner for Children, working with The Youth & Children's Ministries Unit. Richard would love to hear about your ideas for Christmas, or to help you with any other aspect of reaching out to children in your community. You can get in touch with Richard by email: richard.prescott@salvationarmy.org.uk or by contacting him on: 07342999145.

Procurement Support - including Vouchers

The Procurement Unit will once again be placing a large order with various high street retailers for your Christmas hamper gift cards. The process and timescales are currently being agreed and this will be communicated when available.

Details will be available on the procurement pages of OUR HUB ourhub.salvationarmy.org.uk/procurement/Pages/Buying-guide.aspx.

If you do have any queries about the process then contact us at procurement@salvationarmy.org.uk

We are also available for any other procurement advice including central suppliers and deals and can also provide training on the raising of requisitions on the Accounting System.

Publicising and Sharing Stories about your Events and Activities

Get local media on your side

If you can make the Christmas Present Appeal visible in local newspapers and publications, it will help sustain a successful appeal. You can get ideas from the Using Local Media document and access useful templates that will help promote your Christmas Present Appeal and ask for volunteers on OurHub! Remember, your Communications Officer can also help you write press releases, reach out to local journalists, and prepare you for interviews with media.

Local press tend to be interested in:

- **Human-interest stories** - how has your appeal previously impacted people in your community?
- **Dates** - when is your appeal itself, and any launch or events, happening? Give as much notice as you can.
- **Specifics** - what exactly are you looking for? Do you need more gift items for babies or for teens?
- **Local partnerships** - are local businesses supporting the appeal, or have you partnered with local press?
- **Celebrities** - is there a local star who is helping you launch the appeal?

Use social media

As we are not running a national appeal again this year, the PR and Communications team will be using The Salvation Army's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to highlight local appeals. Be sure to send your photos and stories to the digital team (digital@salvationarmy.org.uk) to help them share your stories. Local people will look for what you're doing in their area, so promoting your appeal on your own corps social media pages is also important. Your Communications Officer can guide you on using social media effectively, if you need support.

We have also produced a document with some sample social media posts which can be found alongside all the other Christmas toolkit resources here ourhub.salvationarmy.org.uk/christmas/Pages/default.aspx

Other tips and ideas:

- Always try and include an image or a graphic. Photos of people connected with the appeal will give the content a human and local touch. When volunteers start sorting and packing, take a variety of photos that you can use throughout the appeal. Make sure you have consent before posting. If you don't have photos you can use, use one of the appeal graphics we have created. salvationarmy.org.uk/resources/community-engagement-resources/christmas-present-appeal

- Share stories of people you have supported - you'll need to make sure you have their consent to share their story. If they don't want to be identified, you could make the story anonymous. Speak to your communications officer for support with sharing stories.
- Share posts thanking partners, such as The Entertainer, social workers and generous businesses - don't forget to tag them.
- Share photos of volunteers working behind the scenes to celebrate their work and thank them. Information you could share about volunteers could include their age, occupation, how many days/ hours they volunteer, how many year's they've volunteered for, why they volunteer etc.

Updating corps webpages

Regularly updating your corps webpage is vital to ensuring that when people search for what is happening in their area, they get the most up-to-date information.

If you are running a Christmas Present Appeal, please ensure that you update your corps webpage to reflect this and include all the details that people will need to support your appeal.

Please see some examples of possible website copy in the document Christmas Present Appeal web copy which you can find here ourhub.salvationarmy.org.uk/christmas/Pages/default.aspx. You can add this content to your corps webpage to help you publicise your appeal.

If you need help and guidance with updating your corps webpage, contact the Digital team at digital@salvationarmy.org.uk.

Resources available:

- Christmas Present Appeal web copy
- sample social media posts
- press release templates

Reviewing your Christmas and planning for next year

Reflecting on what went well and how you could improve it will be easier if you do it either as you go along or as soon after Christmas as you can. Thinking about what you were hoping to achieve and what helped or hindered that will help you in planning for the following year.

If you would like ideas on how to measure the impact of your Christmas Activities please contact your link Territorial Community Engagement Lead at communityservices@salvationarmy.org.uk or from the list below who will happy to help.

We will be conducting a Christmas Survey in January as we did last year asking you to let us know some details about your activities, particularly the Christmas

Present Appeal and any meals you hosted. For your information we will be asking about the number of cooked meals and the number of adults and children you gave presents to. If you could plan to collect this information that should be helpful when it comes to completing the survey.

If you are using Atlas for corps and Community, then there will be reports on the database that you will be able to run off giving this information at a touch of a button. If you would like to know more about this or Atlas in general then please email communityservices@salvationarmy.org.uk

Other Christmas Resources available

This resource is not intended to cover in detail all the Christmas programme that you will be offer which may include Carol Services, School assemblies, Carolling, Messy Church and a whole range of other activities. We know however that you will be keen to link people into these.

There are many resources available that you can refer to both inside and outside of the Salvation Army. They are too numerous to mention but below are some links that you might find useful.

Christmas Music:

- www.salvationarmy.org.uk/resources/worship-resources/christmas-music

Bringing Joy:

- www.salvationarmy.org.uk/resources/key-datesevents-resources/12-ways-bring-joy-christmas

Messy Church:

- www.messychurch.org.uk/resource/summary-christmas-resources

General Resources:

www.salvationarmy.org.uk/resources is worth checking on a regular basis as any new SA resources will be uploaded here.

Getting Data Protection Right

We are aware that there are a wide range of Christmas Present Appeal's (CPA) done by local Corps and that this presents a range of data protection option for you as Corps. I have worked with the Data Protection Officer and pulled together the table below to help you identify what you need to remain compliant.

This advice doesn't just apply to presents for children but is also relevant for other items such as food parcels that might be distributed in a similar way (for example a social worker gives you a list of people who want a food parcel at Christmas). It may be that you process data for the CPA in the same way as for other activities, such as food parcels. If that is the case, you do not need to change the way you do things and you should process your data in line with those policies.

General advice on Data protection and GDPR compliance can be found here:
<https://ourhub.salvationarmy.org.uk/DataProtection/Pages/default.aspx>

Method of contact with recipients of the Christmas Present Appeal	What steps do you need to take to remain GDPR compliant
Collecting CPA information using the Atlas for Corps Database	You need to follow all the guidelines for Atlas for Corps including using the Atlas for Corps privacy notice
Third parties (social workers, health visitors, charities, individuals) give us lists of the number of presents that they require. We do not see any details of the individuals' personal data (such as name, address) and the presents are distributed to the third parties who pass them on to the recipients.	GDPR does not apply as no personal data is being shared.
Third parties give us details of the recipients including personal data such as names. They have collected this and it is conveyed to us on their form/list/email etc. We have no direct contact with the individual.	It is the responsibility of the party collecting the data to inform the client that they are sharing information with The Salvation Army. You may record that information [using ATLAS or local databases/paper systems] but must not use it for any other purpose.

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Method of contact with recipients of the Christmas Present Appeal	What steps do you need to take to remain GDPR compliant
<p>Third parties complete a Salvation Army referral form for the CPA. (Not for data collected on Atlas)</p>	<p>The form must tell the third party what personal data is being processed and how. This is done through your local privacy notice and you should be asking the third party to be sharing this notice with their client.</p> <p>If you have developed a local Referral Form then you could include your privacy notice into this. I have also developed a referral Form with the Be A Star branding and there is space for you to add your privacy notice in.</p>
<p>Individuals approach you directly for assistance at Christmas.</p>	<p>If you record their personal data then you will need to follow the advice on giving assistance in the same way as if you were giving it at other times of the year such as a food parcel in July. This will also be the case if you are already ‘working’ with a family. You may have a separate retention policy for your CPA data than your general assistance (for example you may only keep the CPA information for one year but food bank information you keep for 6). In which case you should ensure that the individual is aware of the correct Privacy notice.</p>
<p>Individuals come to a ‘distribution day’ and collect toys. They have been referred by a third party and you want to take their details when they come.</p>	<p>This is the same as the advice when individuals approach via phone.</p>
<p>Two or more Corps join together for the appeal or one corps in a location undertake a CPA and other corps or settings send in requests/referrals.</p>	<p>In a joint appeal each setting will need to follow an agreed GDPR compliant process as identified above.</p> <p>If a corps is passing personal data onto another corps then the corps taking the information will need to follow the guidelines above. In other words, if Corps A are asking Corps B to provide presents for a family then Corps A will need to ensure that the family have read the Privacy Notice and understand how their data is used and stored. If it’s via third parties please see advice above. What is key here will be how that information is passed across and that the data is kept secure.</p>

CHRISTMAS TOOLKIT

Method of contact with recipients of the Christmas Present Appeal	What steps do you need to take to remain GDPR compliant
Using and keeping lists from previous years	<p>The basic guidelines for data that you keep are that it is up to date, accurate and that you are keeping it for not longer than is necessary. You should have a policy locally as to how long you keep data for. Your privacy notices should reflect these retention periods. The Data Protection Officer will be able to help you with this if needed.</p> <p>However if you remove all personal data from the lists you can keep these as long as you like.</p>

Sensitive data: I am aware that many of you ask for information about a child's 'special needs'. It is important that you link this to the appeal rather than a general asking of information about a child's health and disability. A question such as "Is there any information you have about this child that would help us choose a suitable present for them" may be better.

You could also manage expectations by highlighting that gifts are donated so you have limited capacity to meet individual need.

If you have any questions please contact Gill Bedford, Assistant Director, Community Services.

Resources included:

- Application form for CPA
- Privacy Notice for CPA when you are collecting information on Atlas for Corps

Who can you get support from?

There are various teams who would be glad to support you with your Christmas activities

For help with...	Contact...
Using OurHub or Citrix Receiver to access OurHub	PR & Communications Office ic@salvationarmy.org.uk 020 7367 4821
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running your appeal • Downloading resources from OurHub • Dealing with too many or too few presents • Signing off your Risk Assessments 	Divisional Operations Manager or other delegated person
Inclusion and disability issues	joanne.graham@salvationarmy.org.uk
Children	Outreach Mission Partner (Children) Richard.prescott@salvationarmy.org.uk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building relationships with families and children throughout the year • Developing the missional impact of your appeal • Linking your wider community programme to the appeal 	Outreach Mission Partner (Family Ministries) Rachel.Gotobed@salvationarmy.org.uk Territorial Community Engagement Leads (see list below)
Christmas Meals	Outreach Mission Partner (older people Ministries) ali.thornton-stark@salvationarmy.org.uk Territorial Community Engagement Leads (see list below)

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting your appeal• Telling your story	Regional Communications Officer media@salvationarmy.org.uk 020 3657 7555
Local Fundraising	challenge@salvationarmy.org.uk 0207 367 4819
The Entertainer Big Toy Appeal	entertainertoyappeal@salvationarmy.org.uk
Advice on working with corporate and major donors	corporatepartnerships@salvationarmy.org.uk
General COVID - 19 related enquiries in relation to the appeal and risk assessments	Regional Safe Mission Advisor safemission@salvationarmy.org.uk
Printing	Print and design Paul.Fowler@salvationarmy.org.uk Telephone: 020 7367 4789 Mobile: 07803 452684

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Territorial Community Engagement Leads		
Name	Contact details	Link Divisions
Helen Ryman	Phone: 07341 864 705 Helen.Ryman@salvationarmy.org.uk	West Midlands East Midlands
Michael Alford	Phone: 07341864706 michael.alford@salvationarmy.org.uk	North Scotland Central and Southern Scotland Ireland
Clare Watson	Phone: 07775764698 clare.watson@salvationarmy.org.uk	Wales North West
Natalie Hanchett	Phone: 07341003226 natalie.hanchett@salvationarmy.org.uk	Central Southern and Channel Islands South West
Debbie Charles	Phone: 07341864704 debbie.charles@salvationarmy.org.uk (East of England Division from October)	East of England
Bradley Craddock	Phone: 07341864703 Email: natalie.hanchett@salvationarmy.org.uk	London South East
Karen Edwards	Phone: 07726 692606 Karen.edwards@salvationarmy.org.uk	Yorkshire with Humber North East



Christmas Appeal



The Salvation Army Trustee Company acting as Trustee of The Salvation Army Trust (Central Funds).
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Territorial Headquarters, 1 Champion Park, London SE1 8FJ.