



St Michael's Fellowship  
**Working with parents  
so children flourish**  
**Our impact 2022/23**

# Working together to keep families together

Parenting is the  
biggest single factor  
affecting children's  
well-being and  
development

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For 120 years St Michael's Fellowship has been working with parents to secure the best possible future for their children.

Last year over 200 parents were helped through our services:



**Residential Family Assessment Centres:** support families in fixed-term residency at one of three centres in South London.

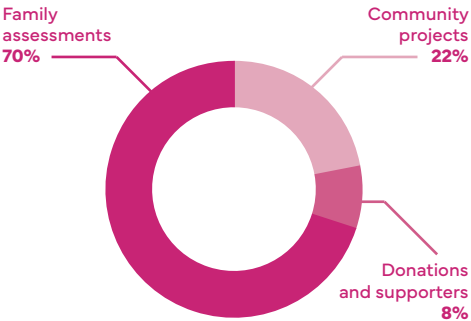
**Securing Change:** follow-on support for parents who have left our residential assessments.

**Jigsaw:** A family contact service to rebuild family relationships.

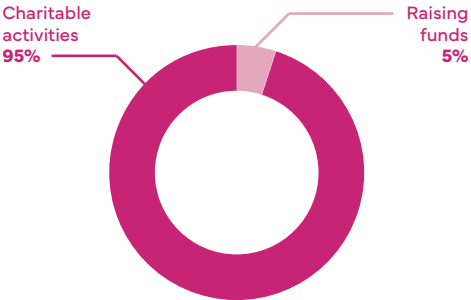
**Outreach:** young parent support offering one-to-one and peer support groups to young mums and dads in South London.

WHERE OUR MONEY COMES FROM AND HOW WE SPEND IT

Income 2022–2023  
£1,987,627



Expenditure 2022–2023  
£2,152,914





# Parents are key

St Michael's Fellowship exists to keep children with their families

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**S**t Michael's Fellowship exists to keep children with their families. We have been doing this for 120 years. All our services work with parents so that they can provide safe and stable homes for their children.

Our impact on the lives of children illustrates the importance of early intervention with families. As in previous years, the parents we worked with this year have complex backgrounds. By working alongside parents to address pressing difficulties and past trauma we have given them the opportunity to improve their parenting skills so children stay with their parents and do not go into care.

Over the past year St Michael's has helped more than 200 parents understand what they need to do to create the best start for their children.

Through our residential assessments and Securing Change we are reducing cases of mothers having children removed over and over again through repeat care proceedings. We are pioneers in working with fathers. This year we have supported more dads who are sole carers for their children.

Our outreach service provides one-to-one support from a dedicated practitioner who can take the time to build a relationship. Since we tailor our assistance, we can help with exactly what parents tell us they need, opening the way to more support in the future.

As always, our work is possible because of the perseverance of families, the skills and dedication of staff, the support of donors and funders and the wise counsel of trustees.

Thank you to all who help keep families together.

**Sue Pettigrew**, OBE, Director  
**Sally Prentice**, Chair

# Residential Family Assessment & Support

St Michael's residential assessment service provides an expert opinion on a family's ability to provide a safe, stable environment for their children

**T**wo of our houses underwent renovations last year. We were able to help 19 families with 21 children. Early intervention is critical for children to thrive, 69% of children whose parents we worked with were under one month old. 97% were under one year old.

Families typically present with 7 or more issues leading to referral.

The five most common are:

- **Neglect**
- **Mental ill health**
- **Domestic abuse**
- **Learning difficulties**
- **Struggle to put child's needs first**



Our expert staff work with parents using trauma-informed practice to break cycles of adverse childhood experiences.

"I can honestly say coming to St Michael's was the best thing that could have happened to me."

Mother on residential assessment



## OUTCOMES 2022/23

31

This year 31% of families returned to the community with their children

25

25% of children were placed within their extended family

13

For a further 13% of families the final outcome is not known – this reflects the extended period between placements ending and the final court hearing.

IN ALL CASES THE FUTURE WELFARE OF THE CHILD IS OUR FIRST PRIORITY.



# Securing Change — Stopping recurring care proceedings

There are more than 100,000 children in care, up to one-third of care proceedings are recurrent. That is – parents who lose custody of child after child.

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12

Last year 12 parents received bespoke support through Securing Change

By providing support to parents after their parenting assessment, whether they remain with their children or not, St Michael's Fellowship ensures that lessons learned during assessment become a way of life and cycles of children taken into care at birth are stopped.



“I look forward to Ann-Marie coming around to my house for a cup of tea every week. She’s not directly involved with social services, but because she has a background in social care, I can talk through with her anything I feel anxious about. She helped me understand the difference between Interim Order and a Care Order. She comes to meetings with social services with me and is very direct and straight-talking. I think we get on because we have a similar sense of humour. She’s helped me with my PIP claim, helped me get a cot and access services.”

Securing Change participant



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“In the time that I have been working with the family they have regularly told me about the amazing support that they have been provided by yourself (Securing Change practitioner). The family have spoken about how grateful they are to have someone that can support them both practically and emotionally and I know that your consistent presence over the past year has been hugely beneficial to them. I have not come across a service which has offered so much outreach support.”

Senior Social Worker

# Outreach

Supporting young  
parents in the community

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“It’s just been a big help to be honest because I feel like Lorraine understands me. It’s important to understand she’s just never left my side to be honest. When I’ve been going through a lot of ‘hard’ she’s just been a big support system, probably like my only support system.”

Outreach one-to-one client

**W**e work with young mothers who need support. In over 800 hours of one-to-one support practitioners helped 36 mothers with housing, finances, child development, parenting skills, relationships, education and training.

We work with young fathers on their terms. We help with whatever they need, from improving their CV to understanding what they must have in place to take care of their children. St Michael's two fathers' practitioners helped 26 young fathers with parenting, housing, benefits and understanding social services.

One of our young dads hasn't had any male role-models in his life. When Junior turned up at his house it was a mess:

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"He had asked me to show him how to lay some laminate flooring. There was stuff everywhere, I told him you can't be living like this. To his credit he sorted it all out and then I showed him how to lay the laminate. I went back after the weekend and he had done it all. And done a good job."

Junior, Father's Practitioner

Our support is open-ended. Parents come back to us when they need more help.



Your donations make it possible to ensure we are there when young parents need us.

OUTREACH WORK IN 2022-2023 WAS FUNDED BY:



Segelman  
Trust

And other Trusts and Foundations. **Thank you for your support**

# Parenting Groups

St Michael's Fellowship's parenting groups strengthen our one-to-one work and provide a gateway to our support

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**Y**oung parents have told us that they often don't feel comfortable at other parent groups. They often feel judged.

Your support means we can create a space for young parents to grow.

For some of the parents we work with the hot meal served at Cook-Up our Wednesday group and at Friday Group is the only one they eat all week.



“Ayoola would come and get me. She made me feel comfortable if that makes sense. There were no added strings, no one talking about you. She is very understanding. She would pick me up on the way to the group. I am so thankful for that. Going to the group made my children feel more comfortable and to be themselves. Going to the activities, they made little friendship groups that allowed us to create mummy friendship groups, have playdates, and the opportunity to bond and gel.”

Group participant

67

parents attended  
our parenting  
groups last year

**Lotus Group** breaks cycles of harmful relationships for mothers who have experienced domestic abuse



12

mums were  
supported in this  
programme  
last year

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“Being in this group has helped me understand how my life choices can affect my child in the long run – understanding risks, negative and unhealthy relationships. I know that not all relationships are all bad and that there are people out there who will treat you right. The relationship with my child is getting stronger.”

Lotus group participant



**Caring Dads** is a group intervention programme aiming to help fathers of any age improve their relationship with their children

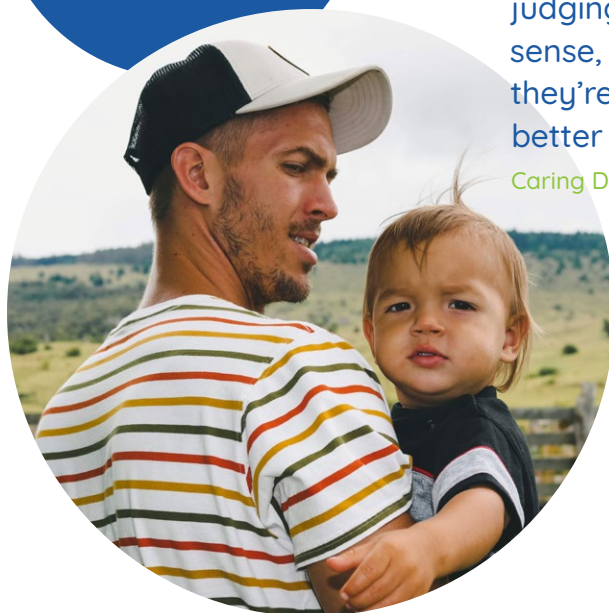
51

dads have been helped by Caring Dads courses

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“You can just talk to someone, literally, like you can just talk and express yourself and no one is very judging you in a harsh sense, you know, I mean, they’re helping me be a better person.”

Caring Dads participant





# Jigsaw — a family contact centre

Contact centres make sure important relationships in a child's life continue even under difficult circumstances

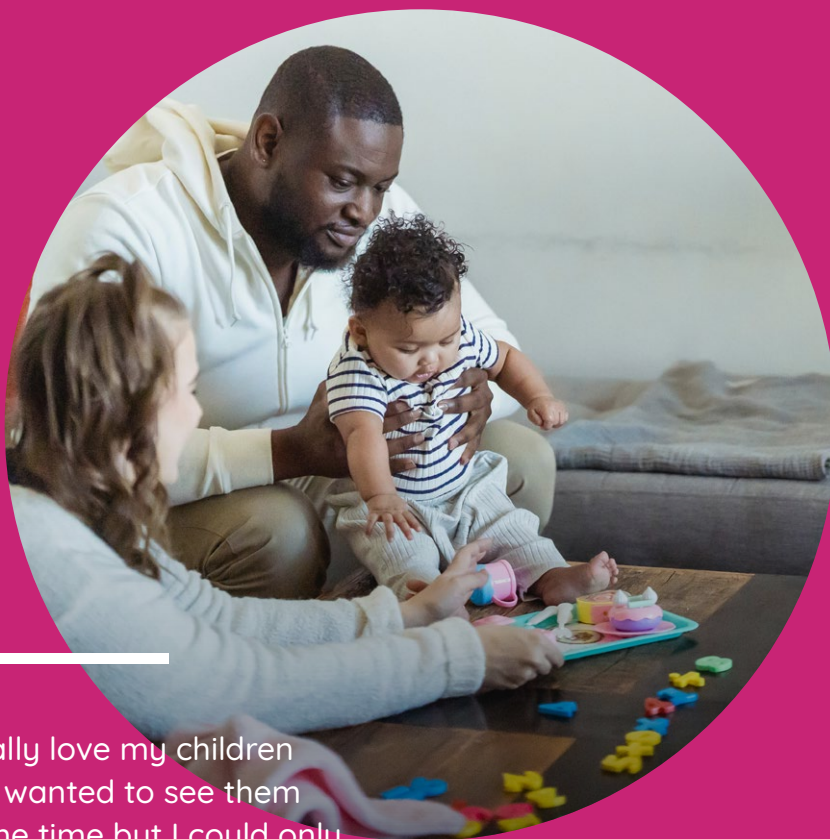
**F**amilies need to use a contact centre for lots of different reasons. They give children and parents a safe and welcoming space to see their families.

We worked with 48 families during the year including 75 children. About 20% of the contacts are from families involved in care proceedings where our detailed contact notes contribute to assessments.



Donors subsidized **39 contact hours for 11 families**. This means that children were able to keep relationships with their non-resident parents and with siblings.





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“I really love my children and wanted to see them all the time but I could only afford to see them once a fortnight for an hour, I couldn’t afford two hours. But I made the most of it. It gave me a chance to make them some food and change their nappies. It was a precious time.”

Father using Jigsaw

“St Michael’s are brilliant at relaying things back to me quickly, so I know what happened in the room and can prepare myself.”

Foster carer using Jigsaw

# History

St Michael's Fellowship has been helping families for 120 years

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In 1903 St Michael's Fellowship was established by Agnes Parr and her wealthy Anglican friends as a place for unwed middle- and upper-class women to have their babies, believing they required a different form of 'rescue work'.

However, it quickly became clear that it was poorer young women who needed the service. Agnes Parr believed it was important for mothers to train for an occupation – 'temporal success', confirmation and taking communion was a sign of 'spiritual success'.

St Michael's did not believe in adoption and encouraged mothers to maintain contact with their babies.

In the past 120 years services for parents and children have changed hugely. Whilst unmarried mothers are no longer a scandal, parents with vulnerable backgrounds still face challenges receiving the right support to enable them to remain with their children.

What was true in 1903 is true now, children need their parents in their lives. Over 120 years we have achieved many milestones in improving provision for families.

## KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER

- **1903 – today** Helping mothers keep their babies
- **1973** Sue (our current director) starts working for St Michaels Fellowship and with her young family **supports young mothers** in a residential service that was always over subscribed
- **1991 Parenting assessments** are being carried out across the UK by St Michael's Fellowship and similar organisations. However, the sector is not properly regulated. St Michael's is instrumental in Family Residential Assessment Centres becoming properly regulated and recognised. Achieved in 2003.

## A VOICE FOR DADS

- **1986** We support a **young father in the Family Court** fighting for the right to care for his daughter when the mother was unable to. He wins.
- **2002** St Michael's Fellowship employs its first Fathers' Practitioner. The role is funded by private donations and is still not funded by any statutory funding.

- **2019** St Michael's Fellowship begins the **Caring Dads Programme** for fathers who have been abusive to their partners.

#### OUTREACH SERVICES TO SUPPORT YOUNG FAMILIES IN THE COMMUNITY

- **2000** St Michael's Fellowship sees a need for more early help support for young parents in the community to stop them hitting crisis points. We set up Outreach for mums as one of the Sure Start Trailblazers
- **2001** St Michael's establishes Groups exclusively for young parents.

#### HOLISTIC SUPPORT – SECURING CHANGE AND JIGSAW

- **2011** A need for homely contact centres that put children at the heart of the experience – **Our Jigsaw Contact Centre opens**
- **2019** We launch **Securing Change** as a pilot programme. Securing Change works with parents following residential assessment to support their parenting and prevent more children being taken into care.

We are proud to be at the frontline of helping families but there is still a lot to do.

As the recent Care Review revealed there is much still to do to change families' circumstances so that fewer children are taken into care.



Leaving a gift in your will to St Michael's Fellowship ensures we will continue to help families for decades to come.

# Support Parents — Support children

Thank you to our dedicated supporters and funders who ensure we can help families and children

There are many ways you can support St Michael's Fellowship's work and improve children's lives.

## DONATE

Help fund our vital work with parents by donating via our website: [stmichaelsfellowship.org.uk/donations](https://stmichaelsfellowship.org.uk/donations) or scan this code



If you prefer to make a bank transfer, our account details are:

**NatWest Bank**  
**Account 82008329**  
**Sort Code 60-05-34**

## LEAVE A LEGACY

Help ensure that St Michael's Fellowship can help children for years to come. Leaving a gift in your will creates a lasting legacy that reflects your values.

## VOLUNTEER WITH US

Help families stay in contact. For more information please contact: [admin@stmichaelsfellowship.org.uk](mailto:admin@stmichaelsfellowship.org.uk).

## SIGN UP TO OUR NEWSLETTER

[stmichaelsfellowship.org.uk/subscribe-to-our-newsletter](https://stmichaelsfellowship.org.uk/subscribe-to-our-newsletter)

## SUPPORT IN OTHER WAYS

For more information, do get in touch [kineret@stmichaelsfellowship.org.uk](mailto:kineret@stmichaelsfellowship.org.uk)

## CONNECT AND SHARE

[www.stmichaelsfellowship.org.uk](https://www.stmichaelsfellowship.org.uk)

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