

St Michael's Fellowship
Supporting parents
so children thrive
Our impact 2023/24



St Michael's
Fellowship

Supporting Parents

St Michael's Fellowship works with mums and dads to develop their parenting skills so that their children can thrive.



34 FAMILIES

Caring Dads: group intervention programme aiming to help fathers, of any age, improve their relationship with their children.



22 FAMILIES

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



50 MUMS,
22 DADS,
31 GROUPS

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



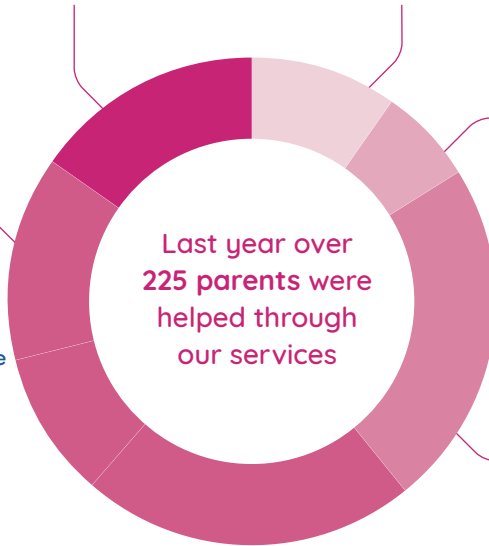
15 FAMILIES

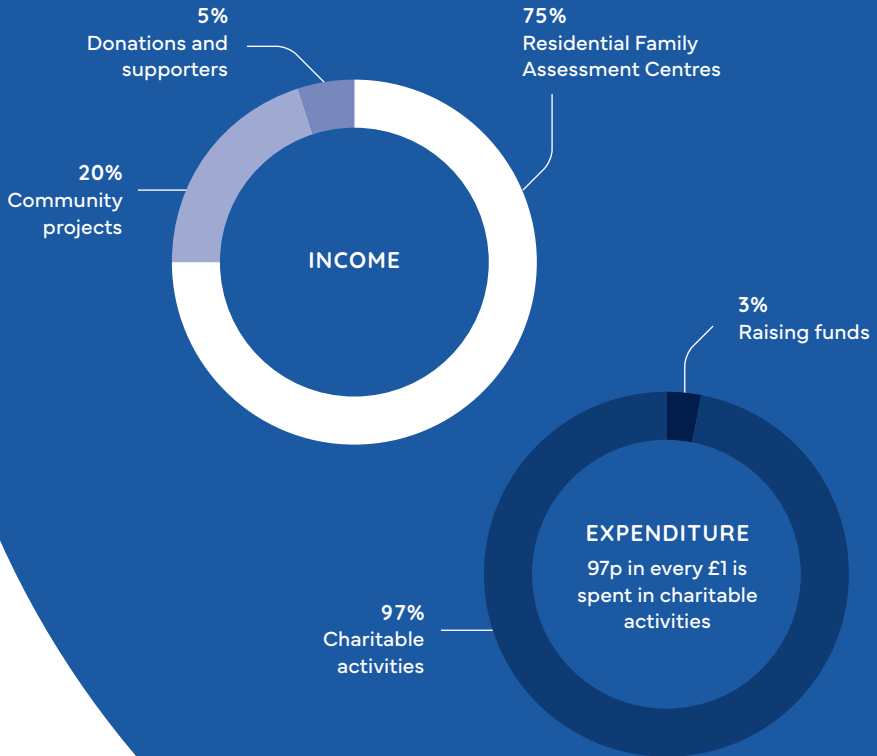
Securing Change: follow-on support for parents who have left our residential assessments.



52 FAMILIES

Jigsaw: our family contact service to rebuild family relationships.





“Parenting is the biggest single factor affecting children’s well-being and development.”

Public Health England





Working together to keep families together

We have been working with families for over 120 years and our aim of keeping children within their families as long as that is safe has never dimmed.

We're always looking to see how we can improve our services and extend the support we provide to vulnerable families. Making new connections and developing partnerships within the local community is fundamental to being accessible to both families and professionals and improving our reach.

In the last year we are proud to have been able to share our expertise far and wide, speaking at a nationwide webinar run by the For Baby's Sake Trust, facilitating training for AidHour Ltd specific to our work with dads, as well as featuring in Comic Relief's Winter Survival Campaign with The Evening Standard in December 2023.

It can be difficult for readers to envisage just what we offer at St Michael's, so we are incredibly proud to share our three new service videos showcasing:

✔ **Residential Family Assessment Centres** – how our staff work in an inclusive and trauma-informed with families over 12 weeks

- ✔ **Jigsaw** – our contact centre where we have extended our service to 7 days a week
- ✔ **Securing Change** – our follow-on service for families who have returned to the community after being in our assessment centres

As society continues to change, our presence in the lives of families who need us has remained consistent throughout our history.

Thank you to everyone who continues to support our work and in turn support the children and parents we work with.



Sue Pettigrew OBE
Director



Sally Prentice
Chair

Residential Family Assessment & Support

St Michael's residential assessment service provides expert assessments for the family court. In all cases the future welfare of the child is our first priority.

Our 3 residential centres are accredited by Ofsted and are all assessed as Good. We were able to help 22 families with 24 children. Early intervention is critical for children to thrive, 73% of children whose parents we worked with were under one month old. 80% were under one year old.

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

The five most common are:

- ✗ **Neglect**
- ✗ **Mental ill health**
- ✗ **Domestic abuse**
- ✗ **Learning difficulties**
- ✗ **Drug or alcohol misuse**



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

“The work in the residential centres has a 100% success rate from the perspective of the child. Whatever the outcome of the assessment, we always focus on and prioritise the needs of the child.”

Service Manager



This year 41% of families returned to the community with their children.

For a further 18% 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.

This year 5 families had a total of 15 children removed from their care prior to being placed with us, and 2 of them returned home with their subsequent child.

One of our houses has undergone redecorating and renovations this year. Additional funding from B&Q and Clothmakers will allow us to renew furnishings and carpets to ensure our houses are a comfortable space for the families and staff.



Scan here to watch our **NEW** video about our work with families in our residential assessment centres.

Videographer: Joyce Nicholls,
joycenicholls.com

“Without this place I think we would have lost our baby girl. They are here to help you.”

Mother & Father following a Residential Assessment



Securing Change — Embedding positive change

Parents who leave our residential assessment centres still need support. It can be a huge adjustment moving back into the community after being in a supportive environment.

At St Michael's we want to stop recurring care proceedings for families. That's why we created Securing Change.

Whether parents leave with or without their children Securing Change is in place to ensure hard-won behavioural changes continue and for parents to be able to look after their children long term.

15

Last year 15 parents were helped by Securing Change

68%

of the families who were assessed in our residential assessment centres went on to work with Securing Change



“Anything Ann-Marie suggested I jumped at the opportunity, she’s so up to date with everything and all the support that’s available... not everyone is as lucky as me to get that support.”

Young Father



Scan here to watch our **NEW** video on **Securing Change**.

Videographer: Stan Nwaeze, one of our summer interns



“It’s nice to watch someone succeed, particularly a young father, where professionals had previously questioned his ability.”

Ann-Marie (Securing Change Practitioner)



Equality. Diversity. Inclusion.

St Michael's Fellowship is on a journey of ensuring that all the families we work with, staff and trustees feel included, celebrated and safe.

Following an external organisation review it was clear that we needed to create a space where discussions and accountability surrounding equality, diversity and inclusion could be had, and where action could then follow. We believe communicating our work

in a transparent and collaborative way is key to demonstrating our commitment to St Michael's ongoing improvement as a charity. It is not sufficient for EDI to be an 'add-on' to our organisation, it needs to be embedded in all aspects of our work, values and strategy.

OUR WORKING GROUP HAS:

Monthly EDI Working Group Meetings where we discuss our EDI strategy, event planning and address issues raised – this has led to us holding ourselves accountable with tangible actions each month, tackling problems head on and improving how we communicate EDI topics.

An EDI Rep from each service and team – ensures a diverse range of voices are heard and staff are aware there are processes to report to and people whom they can talk to and suggest ideas.

Quarterly Sub-Committee Meetings with x2 Trustee Reps – bridging the gap between staff and trustees, ensuring the board are aware of experiences and suggestions by families and staff.

Black Workers' Monthly Forum launched in Jan 2023 – creating a safe space for our Black employees to connect with one another, share thoughts, opinions and experiences.

Organised training including: trauma-informed practice, anti-racism workshops, microaggressions & more – providing staff, sessionals and trustees with better knowledge and best practice on relevant EDI areas.

Finalised our Zero Tolerance Policy: Microaggressions – showcasing that we have listened to reported incidents, reassuring people there is a clear procedure they can refer to and that can be followed.

Created events including: Neurodiversity Celebration Week, Black History Month & more – increasing recognition of awareness days and providing a chance for families and staff to connect and feel celebrated.

Regularly shared interactive learning resources: Webinars – Understanding DA in LGBTQ+ relationships, LIVE British Sign Language lesson & more – increasing engagement as the learning tools are varied.

65% of our staff feel safe and comfortable to report any EDI issues.

77% of our staff said EDI topics are discussed regularly in team meetings.



Jigsaw — our family contact centre

Families need to use a contact centre for lots of different reasons. Jigsaw, St Michael's Fellowship's contact centre draws on our holistic work with families to ensure the contact experience is centred on the child.

In the last year we have worked with 52 families and 75 children, and are now open 7 days a week. Allowing more families to have contact and opportunities for extended sessions.

Most cases where supervised contact is required are complex and may have been referred by the child's social worker.

“Elvedina is smashing, she's 'golden' and has 'total empathy'.”

Parent using Jigsaw

Where parents cannot afford the fees there is a danger of relationships breaking down. Thanks to your donations we were able to subsidise contact visits for 9 families over 200 hours enabling children to maintain relationships with their non-resident parents and with siblings.

We are proud to announce that Elvedina, our Jigsaw Coordinator, was awarded with the Highly Commended NACCC's Chair's Award for Innovative Practice.

After our busiest year yet we are looking forward to welcoming a growing cohort of volunteers and sessionals who have recently completed training with us.



“It will forever be the place we started getting to be father and son again. Today was probably the highlight of my 2023 knowing that I can start telling him, “I’ll see you next week” when we have to say our goodbyes.”

Father using Jigsaw

52

In the last year we have worked with 52 families



Scan here to watch our NEW video on Jigsaw.

Videographer: Stan Nwaeze, one of our summer interns




Outreach — 1-2-1 support

St Michael's provides a bespoke outreach service to support young parents.

600

Our practitioners gave over 600 hours of 1-2-1 support



“If there were any groups or workshops that were running at St Michael's, believe me, I was there. I learnt so much from my time spent at St Michael's. I learnt about healthy relationships, child development, parenting skills, emotional resilience and advocacy.”

Young Mother

Workshops, projects, weekly group sessions and 1-2-1 support are all on offer to provide young parents with valuable tools to achieve the best long-term outcomes for themselves and their children.

In over 600 hours of 1-2-1 support practitioners helped 72 mothers and fathers with housing, finances, child development, parenting skills, relationships, education and training.

“Bez is like my brother. He helps me manage stressful situations. I feel like I’m on a new path.”

Young Father

“I remember a time when Lorraine (mentor at St Michael’s) told me, ‘No one is going to advocate for your child better than you’. That comment stuck with me, and I was able to develop self-advocacy skills and thus have autonomy in other areas of my life. I still have a lot to learn. But I believe that the tools that I learnt from St Michael’s shaped the person I am today.”

Young Mother



**OUTREACH WORK IN
2023-2024 WAS FUNDED BY:**


Lambeth


**COMIC
RELIEF**

 **CITY BRIDGE
FOUNDATION**


**Segelman
Trust**


**CHARLES
HAYWARD
FOUNDATION**


JCCT
John Coates Charitable Trust

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

Outreach — Group Support

Young parents asked us to start support groups so they could connect with ‘someone like me’, help each other and learn parenting and personal skills.



100+

group sessions
were held in
2023–2024



“You’re lovely souls
and are amazing individuals
with very big hearts. Thank you
for all your help and words
of wisdom. I appreciate
everything you’ve done
for us.”

Young Parent from
Parents & Peanuts

In the last year we were able to start 3 new groups: Dads Hub (in partnership with Unity Matters), Parents & Peanuts and Young Mum Active Community (in partnership with The Change Foundation).

- ✔ **Dads Hub** has had speakers connect with local fathers, from healthy living to baby first aid along with food and casual conversation.
- ✔ **Parents & Peanuts** has focused on breastfeeding support, baby massage and more with our new Start For Life Practitioner, Michelle.
- ✔ **Young Mum Active Community** have taken our young mums and their children swimming, dancing and even hosted a summer sports day.

We also run three long-standing groups:

- ✔ **Lotus Group**
- ✔ **Cook-Up Group**
- ✔ **Friday Group**

In 2023–2024 we held over 100 group sessions. We were able to work with parents to build their confidence and create new friendships. We awarded AQA certificates in 10 subjects including parenting and relationships.

3

new groups were started in the last year

“St Michael’s baby group is the best baby group I have ever been to, the amount of support I’ve been offered by these people is unreal, they help by feeding me, counselling me and giving a listening ear. I can always count on a lovely home cooked meal and supportive advice when I come there.”

Young Parent



Caring Dads

We are the delivery partner for Lambeth for the Caring Dads programme.

Caring Dads is a 17 week group intervention programme aiming to help fathers, of any age, improve their relationship with their children. Dads learn how to spend time with children in healthy ways, and how controlling, abusive and neglectful behaviour can impact their children and the mother/s of their children. The programme is evidence-based and has been refined over the last 10 years.

6 boroughs have received facilitator training from our team

“Stick with it. Go with it. And in the end you will become a better father.”

Caring Dads father

34 Dads have been helped by our Caring Dads programme, from Lambeth and other referrers





“It actually is
a safe space.”

Caring Dads father

“No one is here
to judge you know,
everyone is in the same
boat. It’s why we’re
all on this course.”

Caring Dads father

Scan here to
watch dads who
have completed the
programme speak
on their experiences
of Caring Dads.



How you can help children thrive

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



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.

SIGN UP TO OUR NEWSLETTER

stmichaelsfellowship.org.uk/subscribe-to-our-newsletter

SUPPORT IN OTHER WAYS

For more information, do get in touch libby@stmichaelsfellowship.org.uk

CONNECT AND SHARE

www.stmichaelsfellowship.org.uk

f X @stmfellows

@stmichaelsfellowship