

St. Michael's Fellowship

Impact Report 2017



“Being a mum is loving someone unconditionally and learning how to be responsible for that baby.”

Mother



Welcome

I am delighted to welcome you to this review of our activities and achievements from the past year right through to this summer, and to share news on some of the projects we are working so hard to develop.

Our staff continue to provide the best support possible to families with complex issues, blending what Ofsted reports is an 'incredible' child focus with 'a commitment

to innovative practice and research'.

We are indebted to you, our supporters, whose help allows us to transform the lives of some of the most disadvantaged parents and children in England.

Stephen Hair
Chair of Trustees

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Parents we help have complex problems...



Our Work

St Michael's Fellowship aims to give children the best start in life by working directly with their parents.

We work with families in residency at our centres and with families in the community.

Parents we help have complex problems; such as childhoods of abuse and being in care, mental health issues and learning difficulties.

Complex problems rarely have simple solutions. We work patiently, tailoring our support for each family. A young mother at a residential centre may attend an outreach group. Fathers receiving individual support may also use our family contact service to see their children.

"Children and parents are treated with compassion, dignity and respect."

Ofsted 2017

...complex problems rarely have simple solutions.

Residential Family Assessment and Support



The assessment tools we use include planned and spontaneous direct observation, daily reviews and evidence based tools: Parenting Role Interview, Attachment Style Interview (with Middlesex University); PAMS (Parenting Assessment Manual Software) for parents with learning needs. All are analysed in weekly team meetings.

We provide expert advice for local authorities and courts on whether a child should remain with parents or be taken into care in cases where there are serious concerns for the child's welfare.

Parents and children live for up to 12 weeks in large family houses. Staff help parents to learn about the physical, emotional and developmental needs of their children and to give them the care they need to flourish. We lease four houses in south London. Last year we worked with 58 families, including 70 children, from 24 local authorities. The majority of children were under a year old.

Before they came to St Michaels, a total of 49 children had already been removed from 21 families. Following intensive, tailored

support and assessment, one third of families returned home with their child and a further 10% of children were placed within their extended family.

"I was a new mum that needed help and guidance which I have found here."

I have grown as a woman and mother."

-Parent

and Support

The families we work with in residency

Complex Issues

Our experience suggests that:

- Two thirds will be lone parents
- Half will be aged under 24
- A third will have had one or more children removed
- Three-quarters will have been/are in an abusive relationship
- Eight in ten will have four (or more) of the following issues: violence in the home, learning needs, mental health issues, substance misuse, removal of previous children, a history of childhood trauma and abuse, be a very young parent
- The majority have chaotic lifestyles, limited support networks and no engagement with statutory services
- A quarter are likely to have been looked after children and some still are

Tailored Support

Staff use a huge number of tools and techniques including:

- 'In the moment' modelling of parenting, such as playing, praising
- Individual sessions with a keyworker around parent's background experiences, parenting, learning style, relationships, domestic violence, safety, budgeting
- Teaching tools we have developed – like the Parenting Keyring (p6)
- Programmes we have adapted & developed – like 5-A-Day (p9)
- Technology such as videos, tablets with read aloud and translate features
- Links with the community – children's centres, literacy groups and health centres
- Group activities such as weekly cookups, shopping, trips to the park

Almost every parent in our residential centres

experienced abuse in their own childhood.

The Parenting Keyring

The keyring tool was created by one of St Michael's deputy managers.

The keyring and routine chart that goes with it is a straightforward, inexpensive and effective way to support parents to manage essential chores. For parents with mental health issues or learning needs, daily tasks may feel like insurmountable obstacles.

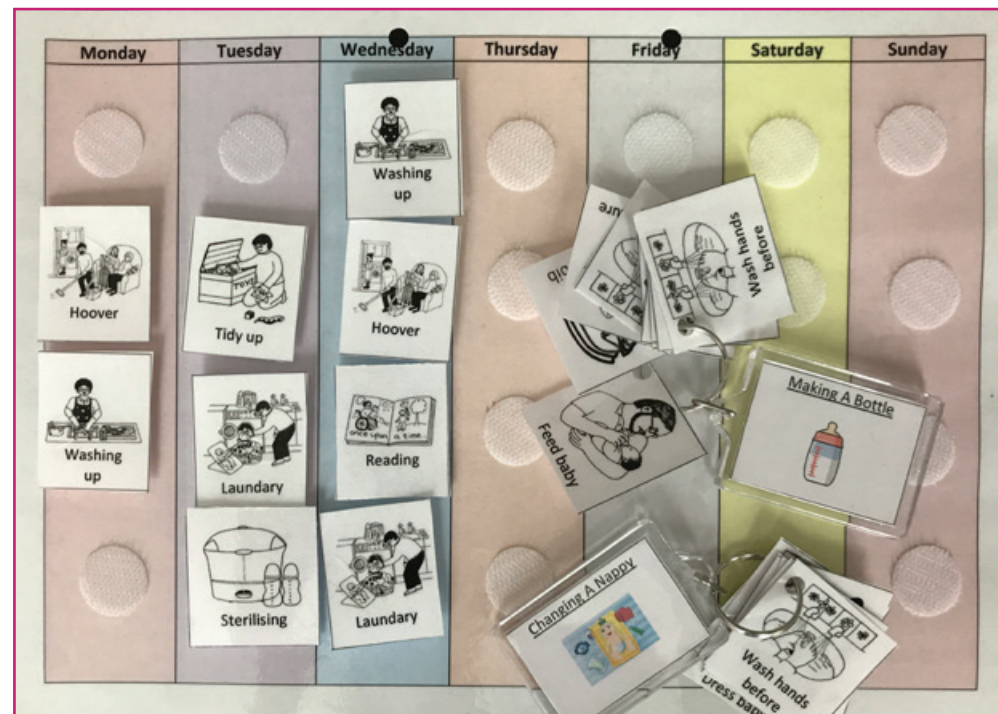
"The keyring and routine chart helps me have a more child-centred day."

-Mother

Each morning, families are asked what their tasks will be for the day. To help them decide, they select from a range of images showing routine household tasks.

The images are put on a keyring and act as prompts to action during the day. As each chore is completed, parents take the image off the keyring and put it onto their daily routine chart.

In the evening, staff and parents look at the chart. Where a task has not been completed and is still on the keyring, staff and parents discuss why this is and how it could be managed in future.



"The keyring helps me remember what needs to be done each day - and it's good to see the keyring emptying and the routine chart filling up with what I've managed to do."

- Parent

Domestic violence, sexual exploitation and a limited support



Securing Change

For the past year we have been fundraising for our new project 'Securing Change'.

For many years we have been troubled by the lack of support for mothers leaving our residential service without their child. Without assistance, many mothers quickly become pregnant again and lose their next baby to care proceedings.

'Securing Change' will offer tailored support. Through our partnership with Middlesex University, we will measure if and how Securing Change leads to changes in behaviour and wellbeing and evaluate the benefits.

"Something needs to be in place as I did go on to have another child"

- Mother whose child had been removed

network often precipitate a residential assessment.

Early Intervention & Prevention

We work to break cycles of poverty and underachievement. We want children to become healthy, confident and financially independent citizens. This means working with parents to embed best parenting.

The Keyworker Model

We use the keyworker model throughout our work, a one-to-one relationship between a dedicated St Michael's practitioner and parent.

Keyworkers offer practical, therapeutic and emotional support tailored to each parent's needs taking account of changing circumstances. There is no 'one size fits all'.

We find this the most effective way of working, making it easier to see the whole picture. The keyworker coordinates support and

makes sure things aren't missed or repeated.

We are honest, consistent and reliable. This includes being able to convey difficult messages. Parents in turn may disclose problems and abuse which they have not previously shared.

Support can range from the relatively straightforward such as helping a young mother update her CV to highly complex; for a parent with issues reaching back to their own childhood.



"You have been a passionate support worker who does more than just support."

You have instilled qualities in us that will remain with us for life."

- Father

Parents loathe telling their story over and over to different people.

5-A-Day

The programme builds connections in the baby's brain and prepares them for school.

We introduced 5-A-Day first in our houses, creating a structured programme for parents who, perhaps had never been read to as children and who were unused to the idea of playing with their child.

On arrival each parent receives a 5-A-Day goody bag with an age-appropriate children's book and toy, a wall chart reminder for daily tasks, and other fun learning materials.

Keyworkers help parents get to grips with 5-A-Day and there are also weekly sessions for all families; for example a budget cooking session or a group outing. Each session is self-contained so new families can join in at any time.

Programme content is adapted to parents' needs to make it accessible for all.

As the weeks progress, parents' 5-A-Day reports show them fulfilling more of the tasks. We hope that this behaviour becomes habitual and continues once they return home. 5-A-Day is also part of our

"I didn't know I was supposed to praise my son each day or read to him. They should teach us about this. I'm going to take my calendar home and make sure I fill it in every day."

- Young mother

outreach work and we are planning to develop an app to support parents at home.



5-A-Day is an evidence based programme nudging parents' actions in five areas to help their baby have the best start in life.

The programme originated in New Zealand.

The cornerstones are :

- Reading or storytelling
- Playing with
- Talking to
- Praising
- Ensuring a healthy diet.

Play and stimulation help babies' speech and social development.

Outreach in Lambeth



St Michael's has worked with young parents in Lambeth since 2000 to enable them to become the best parents they can be. We provide support with issues such as housing and employment, sexual health, child development, accessing general health and social care services, dealing with violent relationships and returning to education.

Last year we supported 119 mums, 23 dads and 43 pregnant young women one to one. We also ran 146 weekly groups for young parents and children at four children's and community centres and a free six-week programme of summer trips.

Outreach parents who are referred to us, most often by the Family Nurse Partnership and Midwifery Teams, are 24 or younger. Most of their children are under two years old.

Most outreach children are younger than two years.

Stronger Minds

Stronger Minds is a peer education pilot project to develop mental health resilience in young people. We are working in partnership with four local organisations. The project is funded by Health Education England.

Young parents train as mentors then partner with a professional. Together they develop and co-facilitate a programme to improve children and young people's emotional resilience. The programme is delivered to community and youth groups and schools.

Stronger Minds challenges the use of the term 'mental health' as a euphemism for 'mental illness'. Instead Stronger Minds presents mental wellbeing as a spectrum where sometimes we may need to consult a professional.

Stronger Minds will evaluate impacts on peer facilitators, youth practitioners, participants - especially mental health professionals - and users of the project toolkit that we are producing.

"Having a baby young teaches you life skills. You can return to study later and appreciate education more."

Alexcis

"Young parents - especially mothers - are often looked down on." - Mother

Challenging Stereotypes

"Fear is the opposite of courage. Hate is the feeling I have towards parts of society."

Love is not just a feeling. It also takes commitment and sacrifice.

Love is waking up in the morning and seeing my beautiful boys just smiling at me."

Teleka

Challenging Stereotypes was a project by St Michael's Young Parents Group with London CLC and Effra Children's Centre, funded by Lambeth Adult Learning.

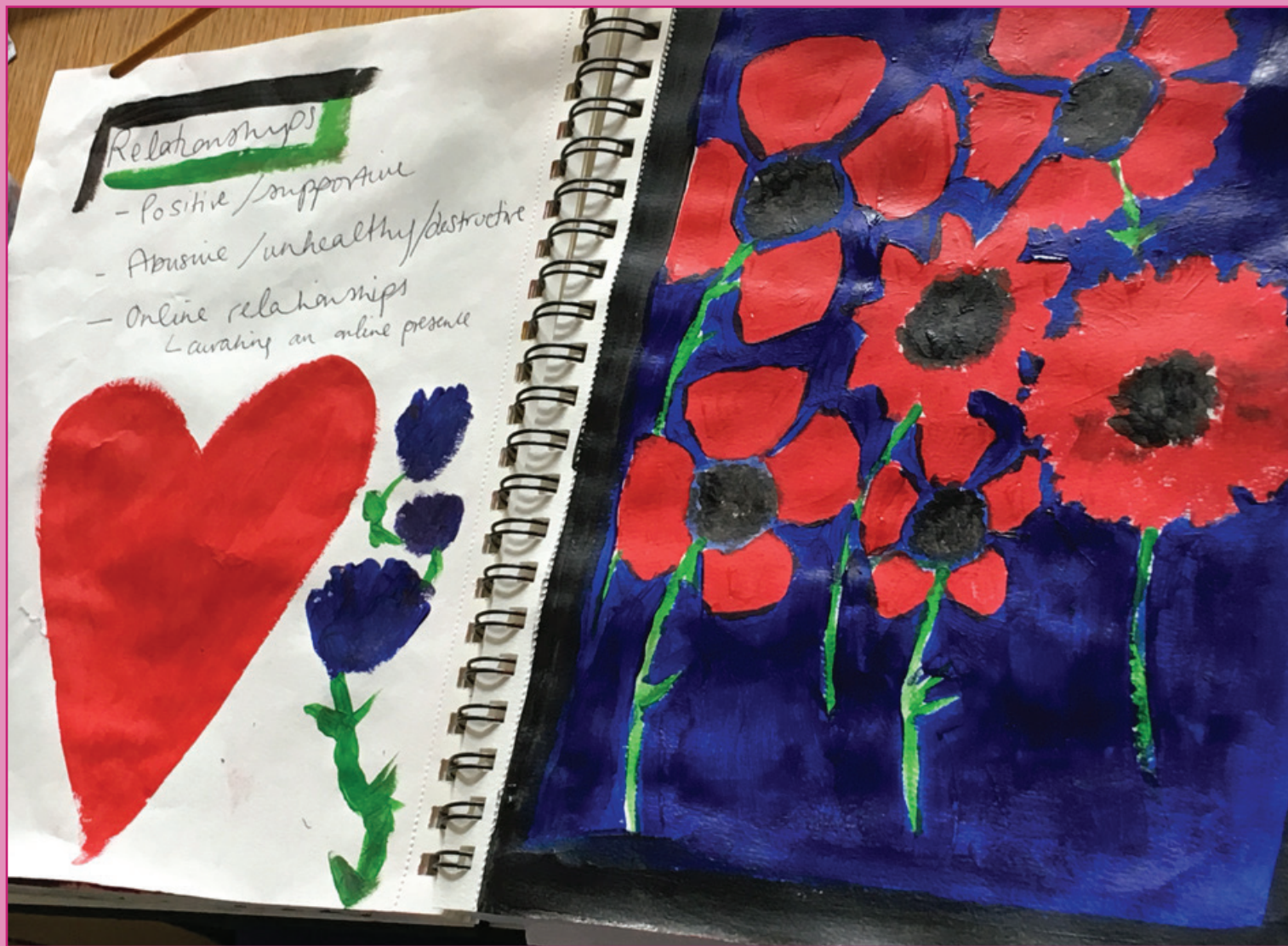
Parents were able to develop their photography and IT skills, whilst focussing on big issues and ideas that were important to them.

The photographs were exhibited in July 2017 at Brixton's Black Cultural Archives.

Domestic Abuse

As we build a relationship of trust, it emerges that three quarters of the young women we work with have been or are in an abusive relationship. We have developed special services to address this issue. These include the DiVa peer group for young mothers and the Caring Dads programme with young fathers. Attending may be part of a Child Protection Plan. Parents are also individually supported outside the weekly workshops which may bring up many issues.

In 2018 we will begin work with young children aged four to six years old who have witnessed domestic violence. The programme will help them to recover from trauma, feel safer and more confident and less likely to become victims or perpetrators in future.



A fifth of outreach children are subject to a Child Protection Plan because of domestic abuse.

Jigsaw Family Contact Centre

At Jigsaw, families can rebuild relationships even when parents are separated and children are in foster care. Contact may help families who are in the early stages of co-parenting.

Jigsaw is an accredited centre where non-resident parents can spend time with their children in a welcoming, domestic setting. For supervised contact, staff observe all aspects of childcare and family dynamics and provide a detailed report. This is shared with parents to help them understand their child's needs. Reports help local authorities plan what is best for the child. For supported contact, staff will advise and guide parents. Jigsaw can also be hired as a space for separated parents with no suitable accommodation to spend time with their child.

We were delighted to open a new contact room within Jigsaw. Thanks to our Capital Appeal

donors and CAFCASS we have been able to refurbish a former office as a second space for family contact.

We designed this room with older children in mind.

"Wow, mum, it's like a hotel, can we stay here?"

-10-year old.



Co-parenting

Co-parenting is where parents work together to raise their child even though they no longer live together. Co-parenting helps children to feel less anxious and confused and to understand that their mother and father respect each other and love them.

We are champions of co-parenting, as delivering the best outcomes for children. We frequently see fathers excluded from child protection services, leading to continuing cycles of abuse and poor outcomes for the whole family. Fathers are often unaware that domestic abuse is also a child protection issue, and that they are seen as a problem to be managed, rather than essential to the solution. In our experience, fathers are not pursued if they fail to attend child protection case conferences or seek support; whereas mothers are.

"Jigsaw is a kind and friendly place. I recommend it 100%." - Mother

Thank You

We are so grateful to everyone who has supported us during the past year:

- Our donors – the generous individuals, trusts and foundations who help to fund our projects and core work
- Our parent volunteers who give their time and experience to help others
- The 2017 London Marathon runners and Prudential Surrey-London100 cycle team
- The congregations of All Saints, Immanuel & St Andrew's and St Saviour's local churches
- Sainsbury's 176 Streatham High Road and their ever generous customers

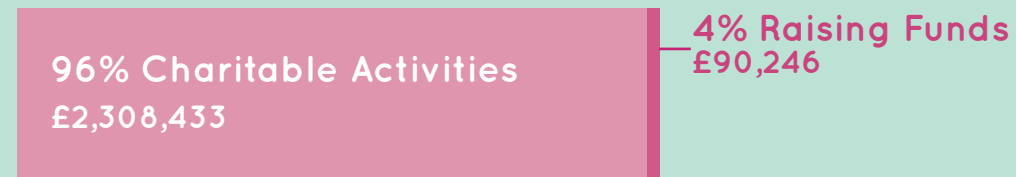
Finance

Where our money comes from and how we spend it

Income



Expenditure



- We spend 96p in every £1 we receive delivering services to families.

Because of you we can continue to help children and their families.

Support Us

We all want a society where children are valued, protected and able to succeed regardless of their background. If you would like to help us ensure a bright future for children, whatever their history, please support our work.

Fundraising

If you'd like to raise money for us by taking part in an iconic event, we have places in the London Marathon and the summer Prudential RideLondon-Surrey 100 cycle challenge.

Or you might like to create your own event with your local community group.

Email hillary@stmichaelsfellowship.org.uk

A gift in your will

If you'd like to find out more about leaving a gift in your will, please contact us.

St Michael's Fellowship will not pass on your details to any other organisation.

If you would like to be kept informed of our work, sign up to our **newsletter** and follow us on **Twitter @stmfellows**. Check www.stmichaelsfellowship.org.uk for updates on projects.



Donations

Donate by bank transfer:

St Michael's Fellowship: Nat West Clapham Common Branch, 145 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7SN

Account No. 82008329 Sort Code 60 05 34

You can also make a donation or set up a **direct debit** from our website, www.stmichaelsfellowship.org.uk.

Or post your cheque payable to St Michael's Fellowship.

"The London Marathon was the most incredible day!" - Harry

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