



Young Parents Outreach Service

Annual Report

April 2014-March 2015

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St. Michael’s Fellowship has been providing outreach support to young parents since 2000.

The service is commissioned by Lambeth and is for residents who are young expectant parents and young mothers (up to and including 21 year-olds), young fathers (up to and including 24-year olds) and their children.

Introduction

St Michael's Fellowship has a successful track record of delivering outreach services to young parents in Lambeth over the past 14 years. We understand the need to work flexibly and nimbly, keeping pace with changes to national strategy around childcare, legislation, local government structures and a volatile economy. We understand very well the specific issues in Lambeth. The borough has an unenviable reputation for gang violence. In contrast, in some areas the economy is thriving. There are notable successes such as the quality of children's centres and primary schools, and falling rates of teenage conception. This is the backdrop to our work.

St Michael's outreach is an early intervention which, as these reports sets out, is delivering significant outcomes. The financial implications are highly significant.

The cost of a single child taken into care is more than £46,000 a year. Early Intervention Foundation

The young parent support service based at St. Michael's Fellowship head office offers holistic support to young mothers, young fathers and their children and to young expectant parents up to the age of 21 years (mums) and 24 years (dads).

The service is commissioned by Lambeth and consists of home visiting and group work support tailored to the parents' personal needs and their children's developmental needs. Additionally we are a delivery provider in Lambeth's Early Action Partnership's (LEAP) Better Start programme. Our work aims to improve overall life opportunities for young parents and their children with targets geared towards the following long and medium term outcomes:

- decrease in number of under 18 conceptions and teenage terminations
- reduction in number of young mothers having more than one pregnancy
- decrease in number of children of teenage and young parents on a child protection plan
- decrease in infant mortality for children of young parents
- decrease in low birth weight
- decrease in incidents of domestic violence
- decrease in accidental injury
- increase in number of young mothers breastfeeding and continuing to breastfeed after eight weeks
- increased numbers stopping smoking
- increased take up of immunisations
- children of young parents have safe and regular contact with their separated father
- young mothers and fathers move from NEET to EET

We are sensitive to the individual needs of young parents, recognising the diversity within Lambeth so will offer support to all young mothers and young fathers including; care leavers, those living independently for the first time, those who are gang affiliated, asylum seekers, and those with no recourse to public funds.

We are named as a delivery provider in Lambeth's Early Action Partnership's (LEAP) successful Big Lottery bid for £36million, to which we contributed.

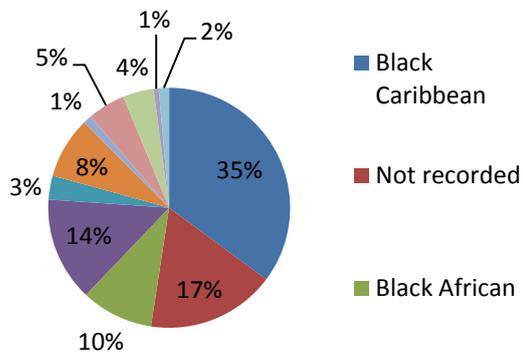
The reporting period should have coincided with the end of our current contract with Lambeth. However, our contract was extended for six months as Lambeth restructured its tendering process.

Clients

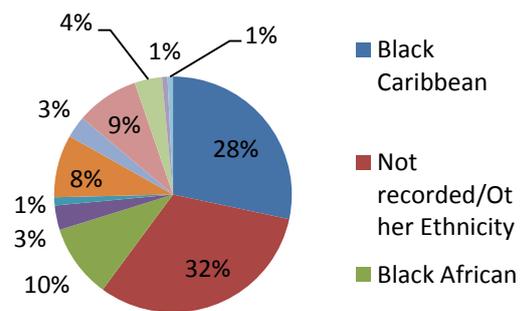
The team worked with 179 mums and 59 dads.

Ethnicity

Ethnicities (Parents)



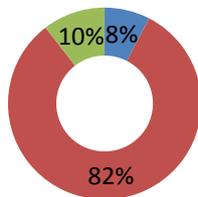
Ethnicities (Children)



Ages

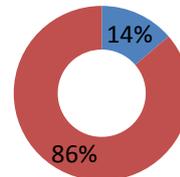
Dads

■ Under 18yrs ■ 18-24yrs ■ 24+ yrs



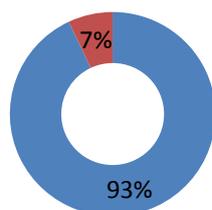
Mums

■ Under 18yrs



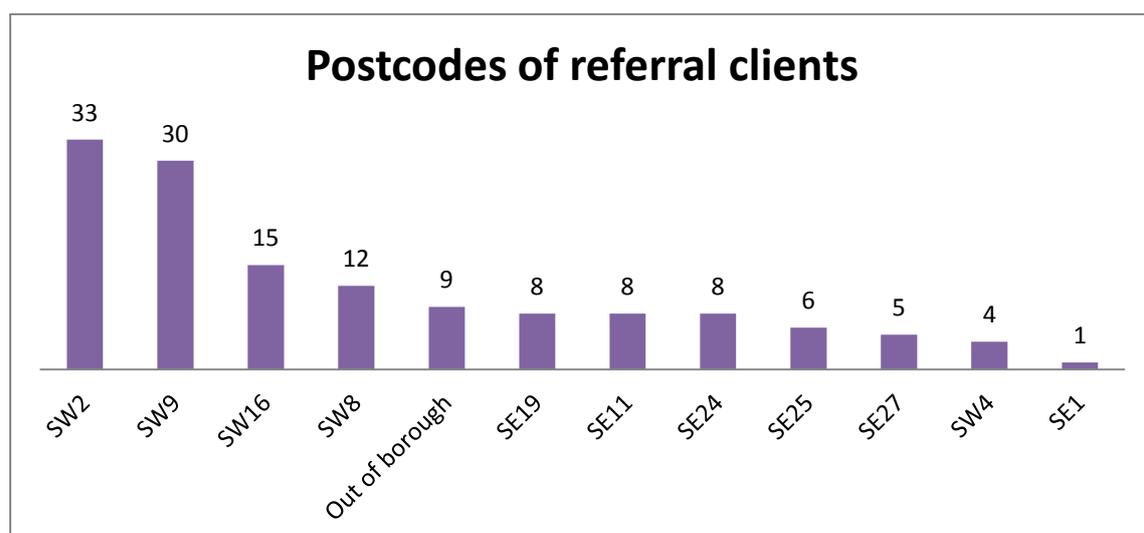
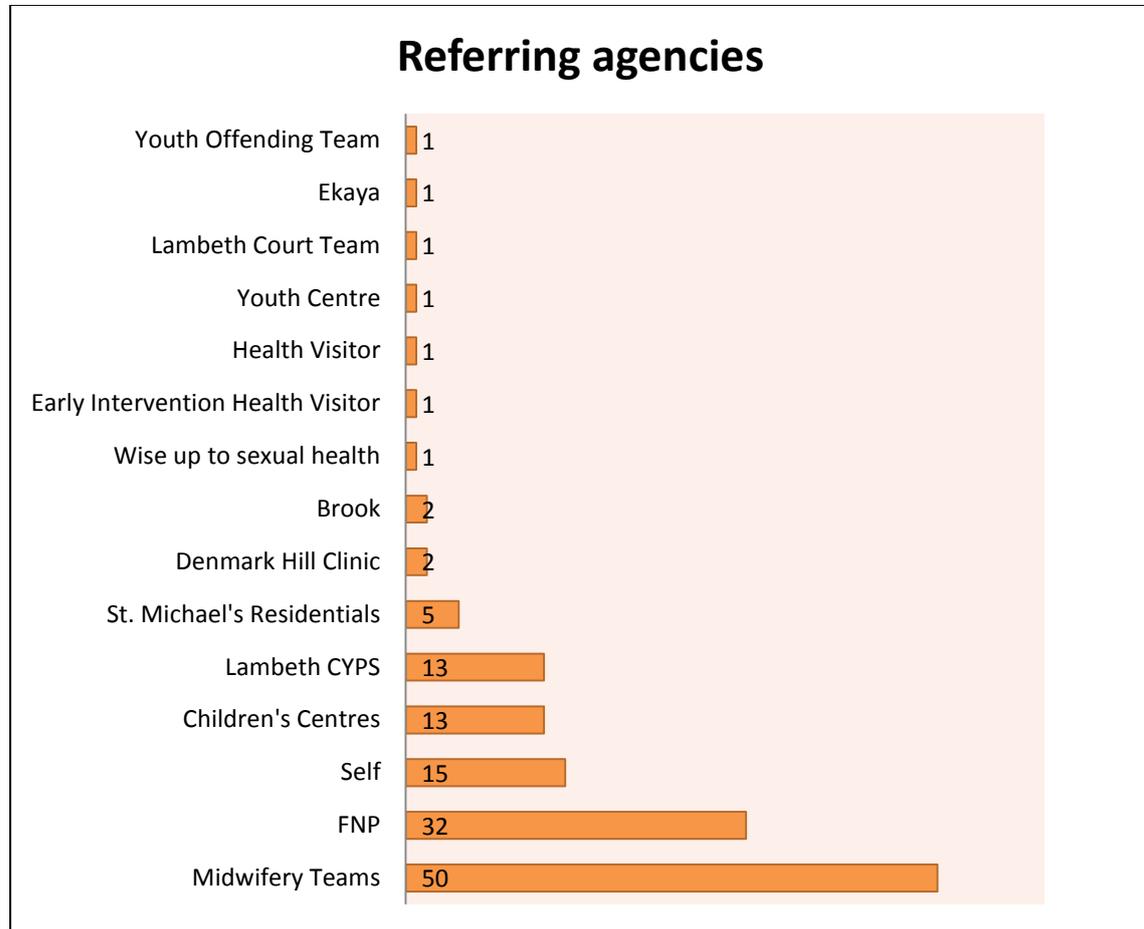
Children

■ 0-2yrs ■ 2+ yrs



Referrals

We received 139 referrals during the year, an increase on the previous year despite the declining rate of teenage conceptions.



Referral trends

The issues that young parents largely present with are: obtaining housing, benefit entitlement, returning to education, securing employment and improving relationships. Staff support parents with these issues alongside improving their parenting skills and addressing the targets set by our commissioners.

Children & Young People's Services

Cases from CYPS were referred to us either as a step down from social care when social workers closed cases or when cases are stepped up to social care. In all cases the families required more support in their community. The presenting issues were domestic violence, previous children removed, mental health concerns, concealed pregnancy, violent/non engaging parent and leaving care parent.

Midwifery

Specialist teenage pregnancy midwifery teams from three hospitals refer young pregnant women for support; the Bessemer team Kings College Hospital, The Teenphase team St. Thomas' Hospital and The Jade team St George's Hospital. Referral forms include very little detail other than due date. We usually uncover an abundance of needs, typically housing and domestic abuse.



Self-Referrals

Almost 11% of our referrals were self referrals: Dads wanting contact with children, preparing for parenthood and seeking employment. Mums with issues including domestic abuse, housing, ready for support after non-engagement.

Brook / Denmark Hill Clinic

Brook and Denmark Hill clinic referred pregnant school-age girls requesting adult escort to pregnancy termination. Our support includes extensive sexual health and life aspiration discussions and the offer of counselling.

Health visitors

Support for young families who are isolated to introduce them to other young parents and engaging in positive activities.

FNP (Family Nurse Partnership)

Most referrals need assistance with housing and support groups. FNP work with girls and women, so referred a number of the male partners.

Service Targets, Outputs & Outcomes

Target: decrease in the number of under 18 conceptions and teenage terminations

Target: reduction in the number of young mothers having more than one pregnancy

<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving advice on sexual health including information on contraception and sexually transmitted infections • Distributing condoms as part of the come correct scheme; • Escorting parents to health appointments. 	<p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:1 sexual health advice and support given to 28 dads, 118 mums • 44 new parents registered on the come correct condom distribution scheme • 16 group sessions covered safe sex and relationships
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Target: decrease in the number of children of teenage & young parents on a child protection plan

<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending case conferences, core group, strategy and professionals meetings • Facilitating parenting programmes • Promoting positive parenting through focusing on the development of good enough parenting skills • Ensuring that each parent has the information they need on children's developmental stages and child care • Advising parents on age appropriate play and stimulation and how this impacts on their child's development • Assisting parents with obtaining housing and maintaining tenancies • Supporting young parents with dealing with and speaking to various officials • Helping with arrangements of furnishing accommodation • Finding out about facilities and services in the local area & feeding back to parents • Advising on welfare entitlement, assisting with completing benefit claims forms • Supporting parents to budget and prioritise money effectively 	<p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24% of families had child protection/child in need plans; attended case conferences, core group meetings, professional meetings; • 22 whose children were on CP plan accessed other children's centre groups outside St Michael's groups; • Start delivery of Caring Dads parenting programme for young fathers • delivered over 231 young parent support group sessions in 7 different children's centres; • 41 families attended the summer activities; • Full benefit entitlement claimed for over 61 parents; • appropriate housing obtained for 14 parents; • 6 successful charity applications totalling £1,417 made for essential items; • children's clothes, toys, bedding and other donated equipment were given to an uncounted number of needy families <p>Outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18% of CP/CIN children de-registered from child protection plans
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Target: Increased numbers stopping smoking

Target: Decreased infant mortality for children of young parents

Target: Decreased low birth weight

<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing information on the harm caused by smoking▪ Providing information on healthy eating during pregnancy▪ Providing healthy eating cooking workshops	<p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Smoking cessation sessions at 5 different support groups;• Stopping smoking/harmful effects of smoking leaflets for all new referrals;• Healthy eating whilst pregnant leaflets for all pregnant women;• 28 cooking sessions with ideas & skills to cook nutritious, affordable family meals• All new referrals receive information on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome;• 6 sudden infant death syndrome awareness sessions.
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Target: increase number of young mothers breastfeeding and continuing to breastfeed after eight weeks

<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encouraging new mothers to initiate breastfeeding• Informing expectant fathers about the benefits of breastfeeding	<p>Outputs/Outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breastfeeding info to all new referral mothers and mothers-to-be;• Breastfeeding workshops included in 6 pregnancy group sessions, 4 expectant fathers session• 88% new mums initiated breastfeeding
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Target: Increased take up of immunisations

<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Escorting young parents to medical appointments• Reminding of immunisations and other medical appointments	<p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All female referrals receive Immunisation information;• 23 dads receive information on immunisations• 5 support group sessions on childhood immunisations.
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Target: Decreased incidents of domestic violence

<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advice & role modelling healthy relationships• Supporting women experiencing domestic abuse• Referring to specialist DA agencies• Working with male perpetrators	<p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 44 domestic abuse support groups facilitated at DiVa group. 6 DV related sessions facilitated at other young parent groups• 7 dads started Caring Dads programme
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Target: Decreased accidental injury

<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continual assessments of the safety of parents' homes, offering advice and supporting with home maintenance and obtaining safety equipment. 	<p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant of £ 1,417 for 6 needy families for beds, bedding, cooking equipment etc; Housing safety assessments for 41 households; safety equipment given as required; 8 group sessions on child accident prevention
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Target: Children of young parents have safe and regular contact with their separated father

<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing a space for separated fathers to have supervised contact with their children; Informing mums and dads about rights of fathers and rights of children to be in contact with their fathers when it is safe for them to do so 	<p>Output/Outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fortnightly supervised contact sessions delivered on weekends with staggered arrival/departure times for separated parents; 8 Co-parenting sessions delivered in support groups. 7 dads started seeing their children, previously having lost/no contact
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Target: Young mothers and fathers are encouraged to move from NEET to EET

<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding appropriate training courses/employment opportunities; Support with writing CVs and with completing job application forms; Providing an English GCSE course for young parents with childcare provided Assisting with developing and improving job interviewing skills; Providing help with finding childcare and promoting Care to Learn which funds childcare for young mothers; Allowing parents free use of the resources at the head office including use of phones, internet, computers and private spaces; AQA workshops facilitated at 2 support groups Running a peer education programme 	<p>Outcomes/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 27 young parents found employment, training or started college. 5 peer educators delivered SRE sessions to young people 49 AQA certificates awarded to 29 parents in 15 different units including cooking skills and preparation for parenthood 10 parents attended English GCSE course
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Case Studies

'Khadija'

"I saw a young person who was looking forward to being a mother and wanted the best for her child. I made sure she pursued her education so she can give her child a promising future." St Michael's young parent practitioner

Khadija (not her real name), a Somali-born lone young mother to-be aged 16, lived in an overcrowded home in Lambeth with her siblings. Her mother was in Somalia, her partner in Kenya. Khadija's unborn baby was subject to a child-in-need plan. Her health was poor and she had no money for food. She appeared blasé about her pregnancy.

Khadija had before spoken to other professionals about her family history but gradually explained to her St Michael's young parent practitioner that she was a victim of FGM (female genital mutilation). She talked about the war and how her father had been shot by soldiers at their home. Her mother had managed to get the children to the Red Cross at the border.

Her 'casual' attitude towards her pregnancy became understandable in this context.

The young parent practitioner saw a young person who was looking forward to being a mother, who wanted the best for her child. She found her an appropriate college where Khadija could continue her education, introduced her to food bank vouchers and supported her benefits claim.

When the baby was born, Khadija was removed from the child-in-need plan as her care of her baby was sufficient. We supported her to claim her benefits so she could contribute to the family income. The house was very clean and tidy and well organised, and the baby was comfortable and well cared for by the family.

Khadija later went to Kenya and married her child's father. She now lives in Kenya with her husband her mother and her daughter. She sometimes calls to tell us that she is happy and well, has sent a special bracelet to the practitioner and often says how important St Michael's was in her life.

'Simon'

Simon is the father of one-year-old Leo whose mother is Lisa

Lisa and Simon's relationship had broken down and they were no longer together. We started working with the family after Lisa asked that Simon be allowed to maintain contact with their son. However, after a few weeks, she obtained a non-molestation order and said she no longer wanted Simon to see Leo. At this stage, St Michael's involvement increased significantly. All our work focused on getting the best outcomes for Leo.

It was important that Leo continued to have contact with his father and his father's family. There is overwhelming evidence that where a father is co-parenting his child, even where parents are separated, children are happier and healthier and do better when they start school.

We wanted Simon and Lisa to avoid a cycle of conflict over contact and money and to resolve disputes as responsible adults.

Above all, we wanted a long term solution which meant that Leo could rely on both his parents to care for him physically, emotionally and financially, giving him the best chance to achieve in life.

Some of the practical measures that St Michael's put in place were:

- Helping Simon to get a contact order so he could see his son
- Providing Simon with a safe and structured environment for supervised contact with Leo
- Persuading Simon to adopt alternative dispute resolutions, in the form of mediation and reconciliation, so avoiding a cycle of conflict
- Helping Simon to obtain a Level 3 apprenticeship so he was able to provide for his son
- Support to set up a payment scheme for this
- Access to other support; one-to-one and peer support at different children's centres across Lambeth

Delivery of services

LEAP partners

Lambeth was awarded £36m from the Big Lottery's Better Start initiative for Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP) on an innovative programme to improve the lives of thousands of children over the next 10 years. As a LEAP delivery partner, practitioners were trained to deliver future group work for the Watch, Wait & Wonder programme

Caring Dads parenting programme

Caring Dads is a 17 week group parenting programme for fathers who have been abusive, neglectful or violent in their families or who are deemed to be at high risk for those behaviours.

The programme which originates from Canada emphasises men's accountability for their behaviour and helps fathers become more aware of and responsible for their use of abusive and healthy parenting strategies. Additionally it encourages fathers to begin to appreciate the impact of child maltreatment and abuse of children's mothers and teaches men concrete skills for improving their relationships with their children and their children's mothers.

The programme has three components:

- Group intervention. 17 two-hour sessions
- Systematic outreach to mothers to ensure safety and freedom from coercion.
- Co-ordinated case management to ensure that child safety and well-being is enhanced as a result of father's involvement in intervention.

We began facilitation of Lambeth's first caring dads programme for young fathers on 25th March 2015. Previous Caring dads programmes elsewhere have been for older dads with older children and evaluations of the programme (NSPCC) have only included such fathers and children. Our programme is different as it is for younger dads less entrenched in their abuse and is offered as an early intervention. We are in a good position as we work on a 1:1 basis with each father. We also work with their partners ex/partners (many of who attend the weekly DiVa group which the female co-facilitator facilitates) so have regular contact with the all the group members and their families outside of the programme.

Safety equipment



Children of young parents have higher rates of accidents and injuries. We received £30k from Public Health to purchase and distribute safety equipment to young parents in Lambeth and Southwark. We will also take part in Child Safety Week.

Counselling service

Our counselling service moved from head office to Sunnyhill Children's centre which has a crèche. Counselling is offered to all of our young mothers and fathers. DiVa group members tend to be the main beneficiaries.

Best Beginnings baby buddy app

Best beginnings parenting charity developed the Baby Buddy free mobile phone app for parents and parents-to-be with personalised content approved by doctors and midwives that spans from pregnancy right through to the first six months after birth. Many of our young parents were involved in the review and refinement of the app.

GCSE English course

14 young mothers showed interest in our English GCSE course delivered at Henry Fawcett Children's Centre with a crèche provided. The aim was for students to gain the GCSE over a year with weekly 2 hourly sessions. There was a high level of drop out, sporadic and nonattendance. Many learners failed to keep up with the required homework despite support from our Young Parent Mentor. The course could not be completed within a year so ceased in March 2015. Students with appropriate attendance will be awarded AQA certificates.

Joint work with residential units

We welcome families from the residential units to our support groups. Residential and community assessment families attended DiVA, Effra young parents and St Stephen's dads groups. Staff from some of the houses attended training arranged by the outreach team on infant mortality. Residential parents attend some summer activities.

"If there's a parent in you, they'll find it."

Young Parent re St Michael's to Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted

We were interviewed by Ofsted inspectors about our services for young parents at Rosendale, Stockwell, Streatham Wells, Hitherfield and Kingswood Children's Centres. The five centres received 'outstanding' and 'good' ratings.



Quality mark

In February 2015 we were awarded with a CANparent quality mark following an assessment of our support groups and parenting programmes. The mark confirms that our support groups:

- are recommended by other parents
- can be relied upon by parents to make a positive difference
- are evidence based and is monitored and evaluated to improve parent/child relationships
- are responsive, warm and relational and engaging with parent
- meet the needs of parents

Summer activities

In the summer most of our support groups take a break due to Children's Centre closure. We run a six week summer programme of summer activities. This year the trips were funded by Lambeth's Holiday Activities Programme fund who awarded us £2,500.

- Paradise Wildlife Park
- Southend on Sea
- Treasure Hunt in Battersea Park
- Puppet show at Polka Theatre
- Horniman Museum
- Mudchute Farm

41 families attended. The parents reported how much both they and their children enjoyed the activities, especially those where they wouldn't normally go or afford on their own. The team always enjoy the summer activities as it includes families from residential units and is a nice way to relax and have different conversations with families and most importantly see their children having fun in different environments.



Open Groups



During the year we facilitated over 214 support groups on a wide range of parenting topics in seven Children's Centres over six days per week.



Contract performance review

At the end of the period we received a score of 50 points out of 50 from Lambeth's commissioning team in our contract performance review .



About St Michael's Fellowship

We aim to improve the lives of the most vulnerable children by working with parents. The families we support live in poverty. Other disadvantages may include a childhood of abuse and/or having been in care, physical disability, learning difficulties, mental health issues and substance misuse. We look to break intergenerational cycles and keep families together where this is in a child's best interests.

Our services include parenting assessment and support at four residential centres in South London; a community team, providing intensive intervention to support parents to change; work with young parents to improve parenting skills and move these young people into education, employment or training; and peer education to encourage resilience and ambition. We work with partners and national networks to benefit from new research and programmes, and to disseminate our own knowledge and skills.

St Michael's has been working with vulnerable children and parents since 1903.

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Working together to keep families together

