

Annual Report 2019-20



Lewisham Children and Family Centres



Lewisham Children and Family Centres



www.lewishamcfc.org.uk

Commissioners Statement

“Lewisham’s Children and Family Centres lay the foundations for happy, healthy and productive lives. Importantly, recognising that experiencing challenges or disadvantage early in life need not dictate a child’s wellbeing as they grow up.

The excellent team at Early Years Alliance have proven that time and again they are specialists in early intervention and preventative work with children aged 0-5 and their families.

The range of evidenced based interventions offered by the team, the breadth of understanding and the genuine impact and difference that this makes to so many of our families and children is clear.

In a world that is constantly changing, the ability to work flexibly is key and again this year EYA have demonstrated remarkable flexibility in responding to the changing needs of the borough, leading on and developing a range of innovative support offers for families across the spectrum of need.

I look forward to continuing this success into 20/21 with Early Years Alliance as an integral part of Lewisham’s approach to early help and supporting children and families to fulfil their potential.”

David McCollum

Joint Commissioner – Early Intervention

Children & Young People Directorate | London Borough of Lewisham



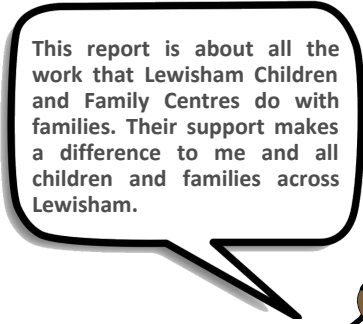
Welcome to our annual report

This is about the work we have completed over the year 2019 to 2020

WHAT WE DO

In April 2017, a collaborative partnership was formed between the Early Years Alliance, Clyde Nursery School, Beecroft Garden Primary School and Marvels Lane Primary School to provide a borough-wide Children and Family Centre offer. Our partnership works closely with Lewisham Council, Health Visitors, schools and other key partners to identify families as early as possible, and provide them with services which meet their needs and prevent problems from arising in the future.

In addition we provide responsive targeted support for families where problems have already developed, which includes 1:1 family support in the home, outreach services and a wide range of specialist parenting and domestic abuse programmes. We also facilitate a single point of referral for support and manage the children's centre website and social media on behalf of all children's centre providers in the borough.



The local authority commission services that work towards the following key outcomes:

- Improved child and family health and life chances
- Improved Parenting and Attachment
- Improved School Readiness
- Prevention of escalation
- Support for children impacted by domestic abuse
- Housing, employment and finance support

OUR PARTNERS



Our work with partners is paramount in order to ensure that families have access to a range of support local to them. Some of our partners such as the perinatal mental health services prefer to meet families in a non-clinical space, as for many families it can be less stigmatising and more friendly. Our holistic offer to parents includes delivery by key partners including Health Visiting, Midwifery, Perinatal Mental Health, Kings Oral Health, Future Men, Adult Learning Lewisham, Bromley and Lewisham Mind, and the Refugee and Migrant Network amongst many others.

IN OUR CHILDREN'S CENTRES

17,464
people
using our
services

9,651
new people
accessing
services

5,736
attended
universal
services

3,915
accessing
targeted
services

519
sessions
delivered

1,296
attended
school
readiness
activities



"Staff are always welcoming and friendly and have a way of connecting with the parents. They are informative and organised and very professional in their approach to delivering and organising a variety of sessions" (Health Partner).



Sessions range from evidence-based parenting programmes in schools, weaning and baby hub sessions in health centres, healthy eating sessions in schools and early years settings, to pop up and play in local parks and open spaces.

COMMUNITY AND TARGETED REACH

We are expected to reach 40% of all 0-5's in their community at ward level and 20% of 0-5's with specified vulnerabilities

127%

community
reach
achieved

103%

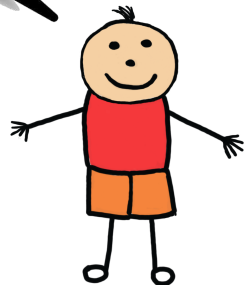
targeted
reach
achieved

1,742

outcomes
set

100%

outcomes
achieved



WHERE WE DELIVER

Services are delivered from sites across the borough:

- three main Children and Family Centre hub sites – Evelyn, Ladywell and Bellingham
- four additional delivery sites – Beecroft, Marvels Lane, Clyde and Honor Oak Depot

Lewisham Children and Family Centres believe our offer should not be confined to the walls of our buildings, and we aim to deliver a service in the heart of the community so that families can easily access our support wherever they are.

Children's Centres

Beecroft

Bellingham

Clyde

Evelyn

Honor Oak Depot

Ladywell

Marvels Lane

Parks

Hilly Fields

Forster Memorial Park

Manor House Gardens

Deptford Park

Beckenham Place Park

Ladywell Playing Fields

Health Centres

Sydenham Green

Honor Oak

Waldron

Handen Road

Hawstead Road

Marvels Lane

Jenner

Schools

Grinling Gibbon School

Turnham School

Sir Francis Drake School

St Margaret's School

Hazeltine School

Athelney School

Sandhurst School

Elfrida School

Forster Park School

Launcelot School

Brindishe Green School

Beecroft Garden

Burnt Ash Pre-school

Rainbow Pre-school

Youth Clubs

Ladywell Adventure Playground.

Riverside

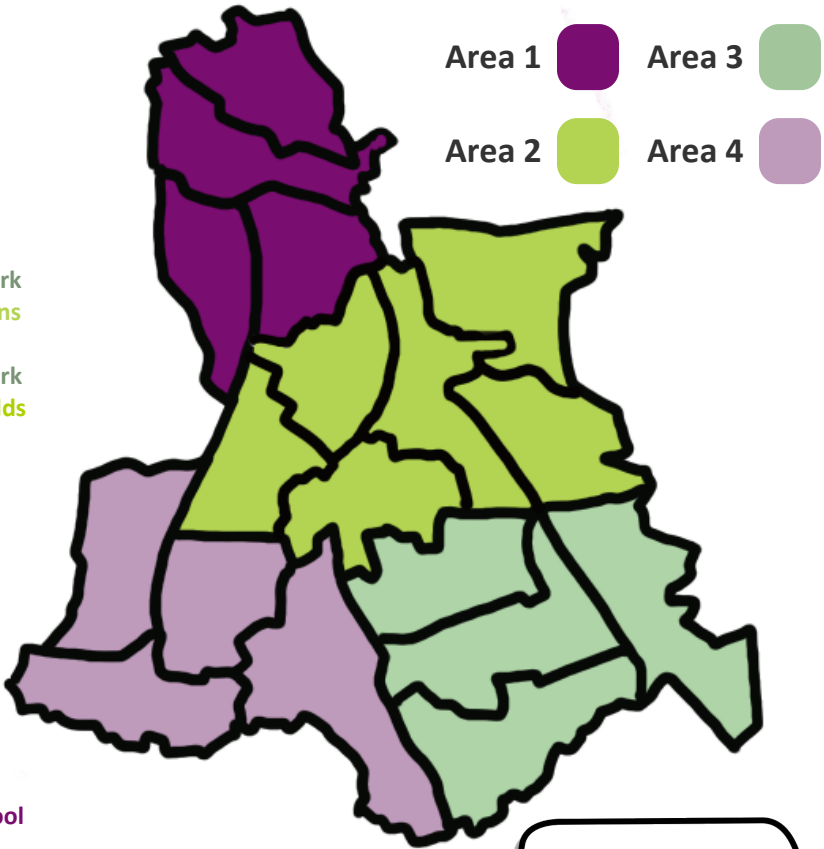
Bellingham Gateway

Community Centres

Corbett Community Library

Goldsmiths Community Centre

Deptford Park Parent Forum

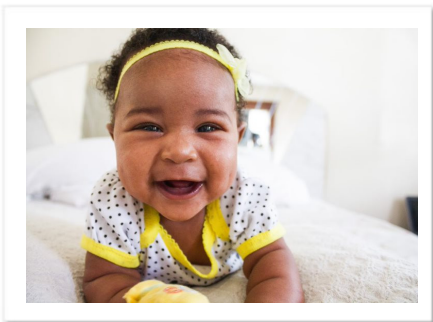


All the places
where services
were delivered



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

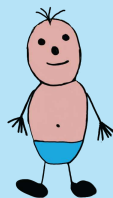
We support parents from conception through to birth and through the early years. We believe that all children should have the best start in life. During the 1001 Critical Days between conception and a child's second birthday, babies' brains are shaped by their experiences, particularly the interactions they have with their parents and others, laying the foundations for optimum future development.



PROMOTING ATTACHMENT

Our groups for parents with younger babies, support positive interactions and attachment:

- Baby Hubs
- Baby Massage
- Little Explorers
- Owl Babies
- Breastfeeding
- Introducing solids
- Mindful Mums
- Peri Natal Mental Health Service
- Oral health sessions benefit



Many of these are delivered in partnership, such as baby hubs with the Health Visiting Team.

"I greatly value the collaborative work between Health Visitors and the Children's Centre workers, effective communication is key to joint working and I have found it easy with them; they are great at communicating and their enthusiasm for working with families is apparent by the hard work they put in to improve outcomes for the families."
Health Visitor



CASE STUDY

SUPPORT WITH WEANING

Mum had a very traumatic birth, and suffered from PTSD, and was still suffering mental health issues. She told our Early Years Practitioner (EYP) that she was very worried about her child's weight and lacked confidence in giving him a healthy diet.

The EYP encouraged mum to attend the Baby Hub, talk to a Health Visitor and attend a Weaning Workshop.

The child's diet has improved, and mum now finds mealtimes pleasurable to enjoy with her son. She herself feels calmer and confident.

Mum said the children's centre was really important to her, "staff really listened to my concerns and that made everything better". This helped her child's health and her own.



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We have run a number of very well-attended 'Wellbeing Days for You and Your Baby' for parents with young babies. With our partners we provided information stands, delivered workshops and offered parents support and guidance. Partners included Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists, Perinatal Mental Health, Health Visiting and Mindful Mums amongst many others.

We provide 1:1 outreach support to mums during pregnancy, and after the baby is born we continue to help with accessing resources for their baby and linking them to services and support available in the community.

We work with a range of partners to deliver universal and targeted support to families who need support with their mental health and emotional wellbeing, particularly for parents who feel isolated. Parents can also get access to clinical support via our family and parenting practitioners.



Watch our film on how we help prevent isolation through early intervention in our universal services.
www.bit.ly/2JWXLOJ

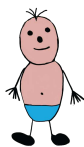
BABY HUBS

202

sessions

3,135

attendees



BABY MASSAGE

38

programmes delivered

343

attendees

92%

improved bonding with their baby

CASE STUDY

BENEFITS OF BABY MASSAGE

Mum attended a stay and play session, mum and baby were both distressed because baby was suffering bad colic.

Mum was enrolled on to a Baby Massage course and encouraged to attend regularly.

Mum learnt baby massage techniques and used them at home as a regular part of her routine. As a result, her home environment was calmer, and her daughter's colic improved significantly.

CASE STUDY

ISOLATION AND ATTACHMENT

Mum came to get her baby weighed at a children's centre Baby Hub session. She spoke to one of the Early Years Practitioners about her problems with her baby's sleeping and how depressed she felt about not coping and being a 'bad mum'. She had been very good at her job prior to having the baby, but now said she felt 'clueless and lost' and very isolated.

The EYP gave Mum tips on sleep routines, ideas based on Five to Thrive Principles of how she could relax, play and enjoy her baby. The EYP also introduced Mum to children's sessions to meet other mums.

Mum reports that visiting the children's centre sessions and getting play ideas has really helped her enjoy her baby and feel much more confident as a mum. The sleep ideas have really worked and both she and her baby are sleeping much better. She has made friends with other mums, and no longer feels isolated.

"I am now doing fine as a mum".

IMPROVED PARENTING AND ATTACHMENT

We offer a range of parenting programmes, which help to develop relationships in early infancy as well as support bonding, attachment and attunement, starting with our universal baby massage programme.

There are several access points for parents to get support, from practical workshops on navigating the demands of parenthood, through to topic based groups for parents on brain development, attachment, positive behaviour management and more. These help foster strong family relationships and help build parental confidence.

We also deliver evidence-based parenting programmes such as Triple P, Personalised Intensive Parent Training (PIPT) and Incredible Years via groups and on a 1:1 basis, as well as programmes we have developed ourselves such as Owl Babies.

BABY MASSAGE

Our staff have been accredited through The International Association of Infant Massage (IAIM) and deliver regular Positive Nurture Touch sessions to parents. The massage gives parents time to communicate positively with their baby, enhancing attachment and helping to lower post-natal depression.

As part of our outreach service we successfully delivered this programme to young mothers who have just left care, and to mothers who are currently supported through the Family Nurse Partnership programme at the Mother and Baby Hostel



OWL BABIES

Owl Babies is a 5-week outdoor course, each week following one of the Five to Thrive principles. It enables parents to reflect on their babies' sensory response to the outdoors, and thus become more attuned to their baby. We are currently working with Greenwich University to build the evidence base for OWL Babies, as feedback shows consistent evidence of highly positive programme outcomes.

TALK
PLAY
RELAX
CUDDLE
RESPOND

FIVE TO THRIVE is a set of five key activities: which constitute the 'building blocks for a healthy brain'. They are drawn from research which proves that how a parent behaves around their baby in the first three years of life has a direct impact on how their baby's brain develops.



100%
would
recommend
the course

100%
said it
supported their
child's learning

"Over the past year it has been a great pleasure for the Early Years section in the school of Education, University of Greenwich to start working in collaboration with Lewisham Children and Family Centres. We are working together on developing research and evidence on the Owl Babies project, and hope to develop this further and write an article for academic journals."
Greenwich University EY Lead

OWL BABIES OUTCOMES

100% reported improved confidence in:

managing any concerns of depression

knowing about their baby's brain development

knowing their attachment has grown

using the outdoor environment

knowledge of Five to Thrive

INCREDIBLE YEARS and PIPT

We deliver the group based Incredible Years Parenting Programme and one to one Personalised Intensive Parent Training (PIPT) as part of our work with CYP-IAPT, as part of the Lewisham CAMHS pathway. These are evidence based programmes using nationally recognised Routine Outcome Measures (ROMs), for children with conduct disorder or particularly challenging behaviour.

"It was so good to be a part of a group and hearing other people talk about similar issues I am experiencing with my children. I have learnt such a lot on this course."
Parent



Emotional Symptoms 43%

Conduct Problems 40%

Impact on Family Life 53%

BPSES Parental Confidence 77%

Goal Progress 63%

The table shows percentage of parents demonstrating clinically significant progress

CASE STUDY

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Mum found her child's behaviour extremely challenging and unmanageable. Mum isolated in her home as she was too worried to take her child out. She was unable to start nursery because of her child's aggressive and physical behaviour. The home situation was deteriorating for the whole family.

She attended our Triple P Parenting course to give the parents strategies to address the unwanted behaviour. The crèche staff worked with the course facilitator to implement the same approach in the crèche and the child's progress was monitored.

The child responded well to consistent boundaries and was able to play and socialise well and now attends nursery. The whole family regularly attend the children's centre together and have developed friendships outside the home as a result. The parents are now socialising for the first time and recently hosted a celebration of EID at their home.

"We have changed greatly for the better as a family".

SCHOOL READINESS

School readiness starts at birth with the support of parents and caregivers, when young children acquire the social and emotional skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for success in school and life

Working with parents, our Early Years Practitioners help children to become ready for school through a wide range of sessions based on the EYFS. We ensure that children have access to age-appropriate resources in an enabling environment that stimulates their curiosity and imagination. Our services support their learning, develop their physical health, motor skills, social skills and mental health and wellbeing.



Recognise numbers and quantities in the everyday environment

Participate in music activities such as singing

Have good oral health

Are able to take turns, sit, listen and play

Are able to communicate their needs and have a good vocabulary

Are able to socialise with peers and form friendships

Are independent in eating

Develop motor control and balance for a range of physical activities

Are independent in getting dressed and going to the toilet



Have received all childhood immunisations

Are well nourished and within normal weight for height

FOR CHILDREN THAT NEED ADDITIONAL HELP

All our sessions are fully inclusive, but we know that some children also need additional help, so we work with a range of key specialist partners including Educational Psychologists, Portage, Drumbeat and Speech and Language therapists to offer access to tailored support where needed.

"The staff member is an expert in child development so from eating, walking, toddler behaviour she can reassure and comfort. I come because it helps my baby's development and my daughter can play and make healthy relationships."



FOCUS ON: TOM TOM

Tom Tom is a weekly group run by staff from Drumbeat Early Years Outreach service at Beecroft Children's Centre. The group is for parents and children under 5 with social communication differences or a diagnosis of Autism. There are a high number of children in Lewisham diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and/or who present with social communication differences. Parents watch and learn interventions that they can then carry out to support their child's development.

Parent comments:

- The staff are helpful in supporting child's needs from toilet training to education
- I feel more confident in meeting my child's needs and understanding them

The group has been running for over six years, and due to the high demand (having to turn parents away due to room capacity) there have now been new multi-disciplinary groups set up in partnership with us in Marvels Lane Children's Centre along with one due to start in Evelyn Children Centre.



During this year with DfE funding for our First and Foremost project, we promoted 'Let's get Talking!' – helping parents to support their child's early language development, with display boards in every centre, and focused activities in our stay and play sessions. Parents could also access communication and language screening for their child, to help establish what the child understands and the language he/she uses as appropriate for their age. Our close partnership with the Speech and Language Team enabled families to be signposted for their support if a need was identified.

"Since coming to the group, we have noticed that K's confidence has grown and she is not as shy as she once was. Before she was a little apprehensive towards other children, and her speech has improved tremendously."



We believe that young children thrive and their minds and bodies develop best when they have free access to stimulating outdoor environments for learning through play and real experiences. We know that contact with the natural world has many proven physical and mental health benefits. We promote outdoor learning in Stay and Plays, Little Explorers and Owl Babies and through outreach activities in local parks and community spaces.

'I needed help with my daughter's behaviour and bonding with her. She has a learning difficulty, and when she was 7 I found she didn't like to communicate. It was very difficult to deal with her and her behaviour. I used to feel so lost. I wanted to be a loving mother and help her with her communication, but she got so frustrated, and her behaviour was so bad, I didn't like her. The Family Support Worker helped me set goals boundaries and bond with my daughter. I now know how to deal with the situation better. I am better informed about her condition, more confident as a parent and know what to do differently.'



CASE STUDY

EARLY INTERVENTION - IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

Mum of 36 month old who had increasingly challenging behaviour, told an EYP that her child destroying household items, and she has no support and as a result she is very stressed. After talking further to mum, it was clear mum was not playing or communicating well with her child. EYP supported Mum to play with her son within the session, modelling play and supporting mum to persevere in trying to engage with her child. She encouraged mum to attend other sessions within the children's centre in order to support her understanding of play. Slowly mum relaxed as she learnt to play more naturally and calmly with her son, and her communication with her son became more positive. Mum reported that her son was much more focused and calm while playing and there was a marked improvement in his behaviour, and she felt much happier in her relationship with her child.



PREVENTION OF ESCALATION

We offer borough-wide, tailored support to families in their own homes, in the community, and online - aiming to provide the right help at the right time and at the earliest point we can, to support parents in their role and prevent problems escalating to more specialist services.



Raising a family can be demanding and challenging, even at the best of times. Difficult home circumstances and adversity can make this even more challenging. Lewisham has a high prevalence of parental risk factors which can result in poor outcomes for children.

Our approach to supporting families is child-centred and based on a belief that effective early intervention prevents escalation of need in children, young people and their families.

Building attachment and attunement between parent and child underpins everything we do. We build resilience, health and well-being in families, empower parents and develop personal strengths and skills that prepare a child for school and for life.

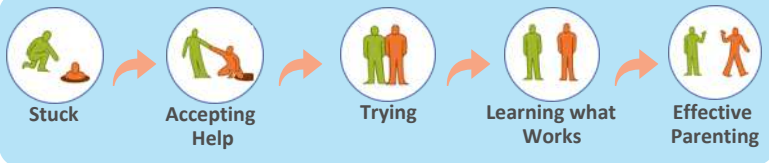
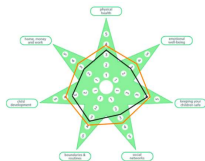
Our offer is therefore based on progressive universalism – providing, on top of our accessible and wide-ranging universal offer, targeted help for those who need it most proportionate to their level of need. We use a trauma-informed approach to providing services to enable the underlying need to determine the best approach and intervention for each child and their family.

“The Children’s Centre Family Support Worker works in a very organised and holistic manner, assessing the needs of the individual / family in a very empathic yet realistic manner, whilst probing and challenging appropriately concerns which are raised. I must endorse the work of the Family Support Service as an integral part of the early help strategy and the prevention of escalation of disaffected family issues.” Support Worker, Working With Men



Referrer	No of Referrals	Percentage
Voluntary and Community Services	50	12%
Children and Family Centres	50	12%
School and Early Years Settings	57	13%
Health including HV and FNP	71	17%
Early Help	65	15%
Children's Social Care	29	7%
CAMHS	52	12%
Self-Referral	55	13%
Total	429	100%

FAMILY STAR



Family Star Early Years is used as a collaborative approach to support families, the tools help families to set actions for themselves and track the progress of outcomes achieved.

'I thought I had an issue with everything, and everything was going wrong, but doing the family star points out stuff you are good at and not so good at. So it's a lot better than saying I need help with everything. When you do the star you realise you're not as bad at some things as you thought you were'. (Parent using Family Star)



We also use Lewisham's Early Help Assessment to identify the strengths and difficulties families may be experiencing and set strategies to minimise any negative impact on the child.

For those families who are being supported through the universal/outreach offer (lower level interventions) we use the Family Outcome Plan to document any issues the family present with, what they would like to see change and outcomes achieved after the intervention has finished.



"Lewisham has adopted an early help approach aimed at providing the right support, at the right time. The Early Alliance family support offer is integral to this, engaging with families when they are needed the most. The range of skills that the EYA team possess means that they are incredibly well placed to support a wide range of families with diverse needs across the borough, from access to parenting programmes through to specialist and innovative domestic abuse recovery support. The proof of success is in the feedback that the EYA team receive from the families they work with and there is an increasing body of evidence to demonstrate the outcome and impact of the important work that EYA do."

Commissioner, Early Intervention, Lewisham Council



CASE STUDY

PREVENTION OF ESCALATION OF NEED

Mum was referred by a Health Visitor. Mum was trafficked into the UK and her application for asylum denied. She was on psychiatric medication, felt isolated and does not speak English. She did not know how to get her youngest child into a nursery place and did not go out. Mum's mental health was declining still further as a result, impacting on her child.

Using an interpreter, the Family Outreach Worker (FOW) took mum to pre-schools near her home, helped her complete the 2 year old placement application, registered her youngest child to receive Vitamin D, accompanied her to children's centre activities, and registered her for an ESOL class. The FOW supported her to go to the local community centre to access children's clothes, toys and resources. FOW also referred Mum to Action for Refugees in Lewisham (AFRIL) for support in her home language and accompanied mum to the first meeting.

The child is now attending nursery and mum also brings her child regularly to the children's centre activities. The AFRIL Worker supported mum to access drop-ins with other mums and gave training and employment support.

The family are no longer isolated, mum is learning English, and mum's mental health has significantly improved.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN IMPACTED BY DOMESTIC ABUSE

50%
of our referrals
have an element of

**Domestic
Abuse**



We provide a wide range of Domestic Abuse recovery support. This includes programmes for parents and also for children like me who have experienced domestic abuse. We also deliver targeted support work through our family support service, and can access counselling and play and art therapy through our partnership with The Deborah Ubee trust.

We recognise the high levels of domestic abuse that takes place across our borough. Nearly 50% of referrals into our service are for families where this is one of the presenting issues. We provide specialist group programmes and targeted 1:1 programmes such as the Freedom Programme and support through our family support service.

We have a particular focus on supporting children who have experienced or witnessed domestic abuse through our Community Groups Programme, delivered as a group or on a 1:1 basis.

We work with The Positive Parenting Company to help support and quality assure our service offer for families, and also in partnership with AVA, Athena, Future Men and the Local Authority.



COMMUNITY GROUPS PROGRAMME

This innovative programme offers concurrent group sessions for the children's mothers, who are supported to understand how the violence has impacted on their child and how best to help them through the healing and recovery process. Children attend separate sessions where they can reflect on their situation and explore their feelings and think about how they can remain as safe as possible. The outcomes of the programme are:

validation of the children's experiences

understanding abuse

reducing self-blame

safety planning

managing expressions of emotion

the mother-child relationship

When she started the programme she was a very angry child, she hated me, she hated the world, she was destructive. Since the programme, she's nearly dry all the time now at night-time and that's the first ever... The Community Groups Programme is equipping me as a parent and equipping her as a child to do that". (Parent)

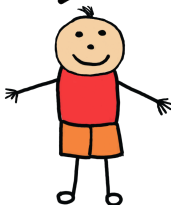


"I resolved my fears and feelings. my feelings are getting better. It's a new chapter in my life and it's going to be a better life" (Child attending CGP)



TRAUMA

Children and young people who witness domestic abuse experience trauma that impacts on other areas in their lives.



THE VOICE OF THE CHILD

'I could get things off of my chest and that I knew was in a safe place and I could talk about it' (Child).

'Coming here, it's all the friends I have made and not feeling alone' (Child).

'It's OK to feel anger but to physically hurt someone or to be mean is not OK' (Child).

'I've learnt about safety plans and that hurting and fighting is never OK' (Child).

'I resolved my fears and feelings and I'm getting better... It is a new chapter in my life' (Child).

'I feel safe and secure and everything is confidential and that this is a safe place to express how I feel' (Child).



The Freedom Programme

The Freedom Programme examines the influence of attitudes and beliefs on the actions of abusers and the responses of those who have experienced the abuse. The aim of the programme is both to help women to make sense of and understand what has happened to them, and also to understand how children are affected by being exposed to this kind of abuse and how their lives are improved when the abuse is removed.

CASE STUDY

COERCIVE CONTROL / EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Mum was a victim of emotional abuse and coercive control and was diagnosed with depression and anxiety. The older sibling had poor school attendance.

The Family Support Worker (FSW) enabled the family to be moved from a universal to targeted Health Visitor caseload, so that additional support could be provided. A referral was made for a medical assessment where drugs were assessed and adjusted. The FOW supported Mum's emotional wellbeing through regular check-in calls, supported her to self-refer to Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) for counselling, and coordinated a multi-agency Team Around the Family.

The School reports the child's attendance has improved to good levels and her wellbeing has improved. Mum is engaging well with support services, reporting that she feels calmer and less stressed, and that she feels she now knows where to seek help from if she needs it.



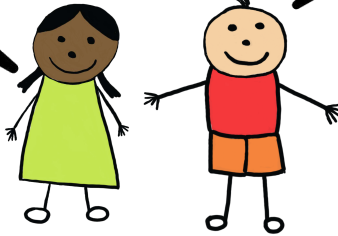
In 19/20 we partnered with London Borough of Lewisham to gain Home Office funding for a pilot project across Lewisham to take a holistic approach to preventing and supporting children affected by Domestic Abuse.

The funding enabled us to train more facilitators of programmes such as Freedom and the Community Groups Programme. This means there are now many more facilitators who can deliver DVA programmes and have additional knowledge and skills to utilise within their work with families, even if they are not able to run a programme. Agencies who currently support with the delivery of CGP include the Police, Children's Social Care, Youth Offending Service, Schools and other VCS organisations.

HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, FINANCE SUPPORT

We support parents in understanding and accessing the housing system, help with form completion, enabling access to financial support, clothing and food banks, and support parents on their pathway to employment. We give support with accessing childcare including the 2 year old entitlement application.

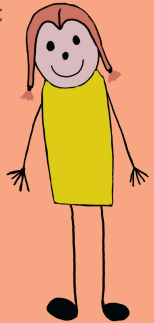
We run programmes to develop volunteering skills and build confidence, and enable access to benefits advice and employment support through the Supported Families Employment Advisers at Jobcentre Plus.



During this year, we held a Joint Employment Event with Job Centres Plus to support parents back into the workplace.

C attended the Children's Centre Employment Event CV Workshop:

"On speaking with C I learned that she has experience and many years of practical skills as a counsellor working with customers with a disability. She also has experience supporting vulnerable groups in Social Rights matters and benefit entitlements. I suggested that she engage in voluntary work in a similar sector to make her CV more UK friendly. She has now started the process to become a volunteer." Employment Engagement Adviser



CASE STUDY

PREVENTING FINANCIAL HARDSHIP AND SUPPORT INTO EMPLOYMENT

The Family Outreach Worker (FOW) met mum while delivering outreach to families in a park. Mum had no legal status as she had recently split up with her partner. She had been in the country for 10 years. She was running out of money and was very isolated and anxious about her children's welfare and did not know where to go for help.

The FOW supported mum to gather evidence that she had lived and worked in the UK so she could apply for legal status. The FOW made an appointment for her with a Jobcentre Plus Adviser who gave mum benefits advice and other support, and she took mum to a Clothing Bank to access clothes and nappies and gave her food bank vouchers.

Mum was successful in achieving legal status. She is now receiving her benefit entitlement and also has a part-time job as a childminder. Mum regularly attends the children's centre sessions, and is no longer isolated or anxious.

"Meeting you was 'fate' and changed my life and that of my children."

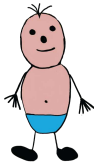
ME AND MY COMMUNITY

We deliver a course for volunteers called Me and My Community. This 5 week course, with a crèche, increases participant's skills and knowledge in how to work as a volunteer in a Children's Centre or Pre-school or elsewhere.



CRECHES

Our free crèche support for all our children's centre courses and programmes enables parents to fully participate, knowing their child is safely cared for nearby with an opportunity to learn through play.



COURSE OUTCOMES

18
Volunteers
Trained

100%
increased
confidence
to volunteer

100%
Increased
confidence in
their skills and
strengths

86%
increased
knowledge of
their
community

"Thank you so much for easing my anxiety about leaving him in the crèche. He is so well looked after by your team and never cries. I am amazed and very grateful. This experience helps me and him to prepare for my transition back to work."



COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

 **ImpactMatters**



We also work with Impact Matters to deliver their Community Conversations initiative in our centres, training parents as community researchers, and supporting them in carrying out quality assurance, mystery shopping and research activities. This builds parental confidence and skills for returning to the workplace.

*"I had a huge gap in my CV since having a baby and this meant I could add to my CV and have something relevant to say in interviews. I was given a paper describing transferable skills relating to life and work and this really helped".
(Student on Me and My Community course)*



WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Website visitors for year compared to 2018/19

New Users



+3K

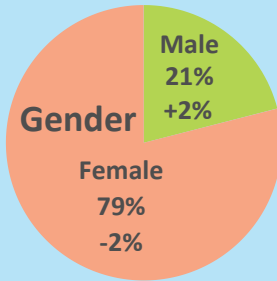
Page Views



+52K

Website Parenting Enquiries

109

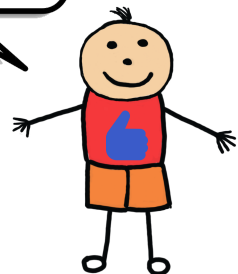


The LCFC website and social media provide essential communication tools for us to connect with families in Lewisham. Our website is a hub of topical information on support for families and domestic abuse. Traffic has grown over the year and we monitor usage and respond and update the website and social media posts to ensure we are responding to need, user feedback and changing local and national information.



500+ follow us on instagram

1,200+ follow us on facebook



www.lewishamcfc.org.uk

WORKING THROUGH COVID-19

In March 2020, we had to completely re-think our approach to supporting families because of COVID-19 and the lockdown imposed on all of us, and had to look very quickly at how we could continue to ensure that our vulnerable families received the support they need. Our immediate response was to create a 'Vulnerable Families List' – composed of over 200 families who were either currently receiving a targeted service from us, or who were on a waiting list for a service soon. Each one of these families received a Screening Call from a member of our team, to check they had sufficient food, medicine and money to get through, and to help identify any other support needs brought about by their isolation, home or family circumstances during lockdown, linking them to services they needed.

One mother fed back that the telephone workshops were an opportunity to talk through her worries and reflect in a safe way. She reported that she felt as though she was listened to and this provided her with a great deal of reassurance - particularly during such a strange time when a lot of other contact with services had ceased. She also reported that she felt as though she and her two children were understood despite having not met face to face.

Our website was adapted to ensure it linked to current COVID-19 borough support services and access points, as well as to provide lots of activities for families to do at home, provide information on parenting strategies and tips, and give access to domestic abuse support.

Live activities every week-day morning from our team delivered through our Facebook page have been captured on YouTube so parents can continue to access these, and there are weekly blogs on key topics, such as cyber-scramming or the importance of Vitamin D.



Stay Scam Safe

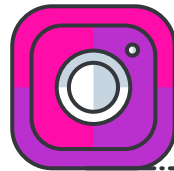
After extensive safety planning to ensure site security and parental privacy issues were addressed, we have also been able to complete the parenting and domestic abuse programmes we had begun before lockdown using the Zoom platform, with excellent parental feedback.

"It is good to be a part of a group and hearing other people talk about similar issues I am experiencing with my children. I like the fact that we could have the session via Zoom, I enjoy things like that I often do FaceTime calls. With it being lockdown and the children not at nursery or school plus thinking about the long summer holidays, us parents are struggling and would not have the help available. It is so helpful having it now with the children at home, having them here all day gives us more opportunity to practice the skills being learnt on this course."

Whether it is providing telephone support, delivering programmes digitally or simply 'checking-in' with families, we have not lost sight of remaining child-focused and working collaboratively with parents/carers to help them find their way through the ever-evolving challenges during these unprecedented times, and we continue to do so.



@lewishamchildrenscentres



@lewishamcfc

www.lewishamcfc.org.uk

CLYDE
early childhood centre



Beecroft Garden
PRIMARY SCHOOL



produced by  **ImpactMatters**