

## news



- 98% of parents receiving Coram's parenting skills training reported improvements in their children's behaviour following the course.
- 100% of parents attending Coram's Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities training course said they would recommend it to other families.

## Effective investment that delivers change

Today in the United Kingdom there are 3.8 million children whose lives are blighted by poverty. Poverty isn't just about how much money we have; poverty is also about social exclusion. Social exclusion can result in a spiral of disaffection, under achievement, crime, and continuing poverty. Ultimately it is a loss of potential, which costs the country £5 billion a year.

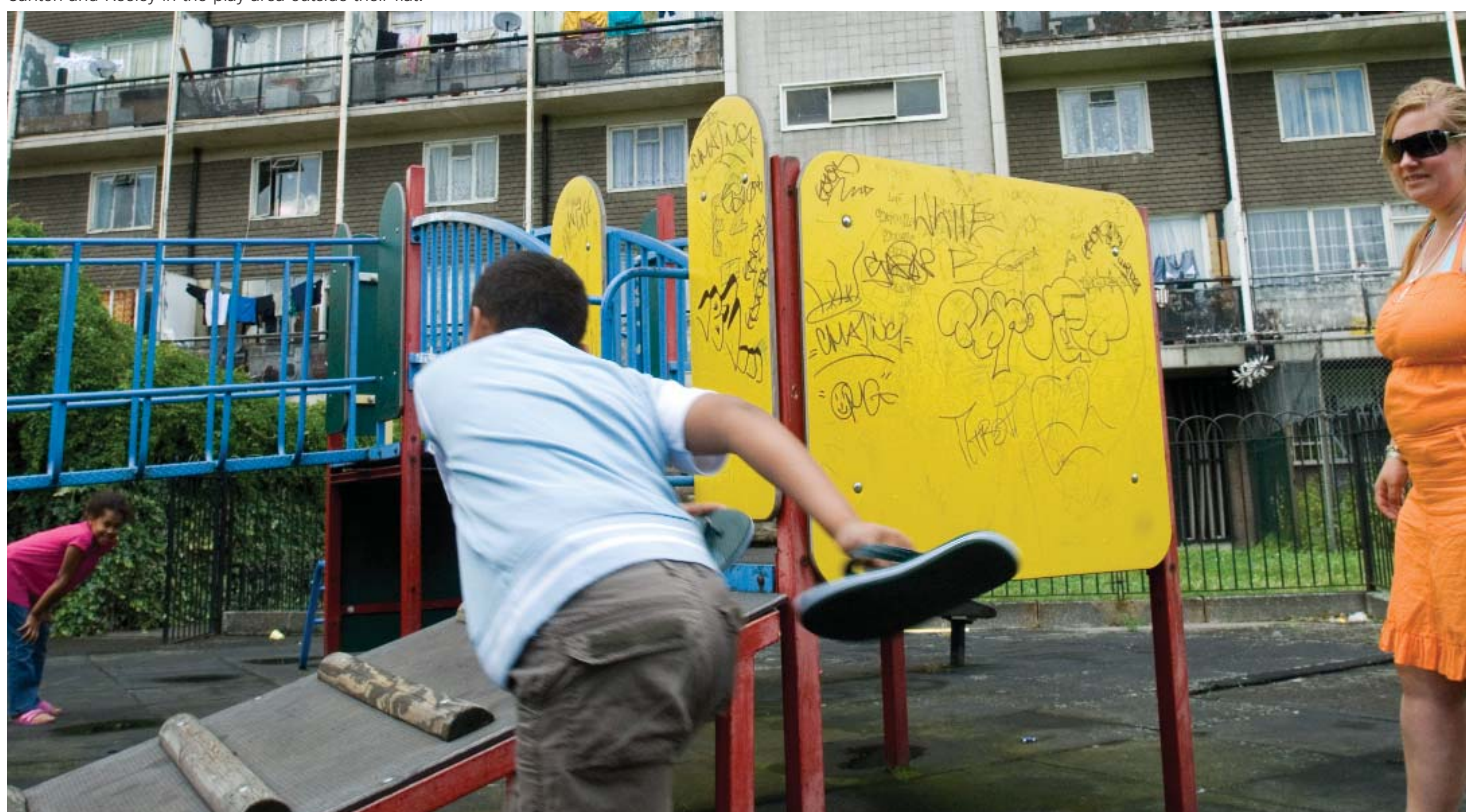
Coram creates better chances for children. We believe that early intervention, targeted investment, innovative and integrated services can change the odds and help ensure that every child has a positive childhood and a fulfilling life.

To achieve this, Coram targets pockets of deprivation such as Thamesmead in London, where the social infrastructure has not grown at the same rate as housing development, leaving many families feeling isolated and unable to access services. The number of deprived young families is growing at an alarming rate. Housing is rundown,

the truancy rate at the local schools is high, and there are a distressing number of children with anti-social behaviour.

Based in a cluster of local schools, we offer support services for vulnerable children, parenting skills courses and Parent Drop-In Centres. In addition to this, our volunteers make home visits in the area, and are able to work closely with "hard to reach" or "difficult to engage" parents encouraging them to access family support services.

Carlton and Keeley in the play area outside their flat.



# Foundling Fellows

The Foundling Museum, Coram's sister charity, has appointed the first of its new Foundling Fellows, who they hope will remain involved with both the Museum and Coram over the coming year. They were looking for a modern day Thomas Coram, William Hogarth and Friderick Handel, original Governors of the Foundling Hospital, now known as Coram. Dame Jacqueline Wilson the children's author was appointed as the modern day Coram, Richard Wentworth as Hogarth and Damon Albarn as Handel.

## Coram pilots new ways of working with babies and young children

Coram has initiated a ground breaking pilot called Born to Learn to comprehensively meet the needs of children aged 0 – 3 years old.

Parents are children's first and most effective educators and evidence shows that a strong home learning environment provides a solid foundation that provides life long benefits. Many children, however, fail to receive this positive start in life. They may be born to a home life where there is substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health issues and a variety of other problems that can lead to children becoming educationally disadvantaged.

To address this Coram is working in partnership with other children's charities testing different ways of working with vulnerable and marginalised parents to ensure that their children get the best start in life.

Through Born to Learn, parents and children are offered group sessions and six home visits. By the end of 2007, 45 families were engaged in the home visiting programme and 80 families had attended group sessions. The majority of children accessing this service were experiencing language delay and 80 percent of the families receiving a home visit did not speak English as a first language. To respond to this, Coram ensured that home visits were conducted in the family's first language.

## Sharing knowledge and expertise

On 25th January Renuka Jeyarajah-Dent, Coram's Deputy CEO and Director of Operations, spoke at the Barking and Dagenham Supporting Parents, Strengthening Families and Communities Conference.

Renuka discussed Coram's Family Support Services which provide parents with the skills to improve and strengthen relationships with their children. Through work in the community and outreach to schools, Coram offers family support where children and parents need it the most.

The aim of the service is to provide resources to families in need which model best practice in parenting and family support, and which enhance the care and parenting of vulnerable children.

Baby Shannon learning through play.



Renuka Jeyarajah-Dent, Coram's Deputy CEO and Director of Operations.



# Joining the campaign to End Child Poverty

Coram has joined the campaign to End Child Poverty. The coalition of charities, social justice groups and trade unions is working to eradicate poverty in the UK. The campaign aims to promote the case for ending child poverty by 2020 with this and every future Government. Visit [www.ecpc.org.uk](http://www.ecpc.org.uk) for further information.



## Education for all

Last year we wrote to ask you for support to fund and equip a new classroom for vulnerable young people and parents.

We're delighted to tell you that as a direct result of this appeal, from January 2008 we have been conducting our training services from a new classroom fully equipped for 20 people. Many thanks to everyone who contributed!

We believe that the key to unlocking our young people's potential lies in inspiring responsibility and creating a route to employment through, for example, access to child care and social enterprise.

The courses we run, which include Maths and English, are vital to these vulnerable young people, parents and their children.

Coram's accredited training courses are designed to break the cycle of deprivation by giving young people the support, confidence and education to succeed and move their own lives forward.

*Coram started working with Sarah when she was 15 and pregnant. She was living in a hostel after having problems with her mother, was particularly vulnerable and desperately needing our support and advice. Sarah attended our drop-in service and drew strength from the other young mothers she was meeting. After her daughter Charlene was born, Sarah often visited Coram and took classes in Maths and English, while we looked after Charlene in the crèche. Now aged 19, Sarah has just started university and her life is full of promise. She is now much more able to provide a positive environment for Charlene in which to grow and flourish.*

Azara and Rashell in Coram's new classroom.



Coram's Family Drug and Alcohol Court team.



## Working in partnership

2008 sees the launch of the UK's first Drug and Alcohol Court, which aims to tackle substance misuse before it splits up families. The project will be run jointly by Coram and the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust.

The Family Drug and Alcohol Court is an innovative approach to the problem of parental drug and alcohol misuse and its impact on children in the family. Drug or alcohol abuse is a significant factor in a large number of cases taken to court for care proceedings.

However services and interventions are often disjointed or un-coordinated with a lack of focus on the family's individual and joint needs. As a result children suffer.

The overall aim of the court is to support families affected by substance misuse so that children can remain or return home. This will be done by providing intensive assessment, support interventions – such as one-to-ones and group work – and coordination of care for families affected by parental drug and/or alcohol misuse.

Judge Nick Crichton said: *"For too many years I have seen children, sometimes the fifth, sixth or seventh from the same family, being taken into care because of parental misuse of alcohol and/or drugs. This is not beneficial for the children. It is expensive for the taxpayer."*

The project will be evaluated by Brunel University funded by the Nuffield Foundation.

## A commitment to children



Thomas in Coram playground.

## Dates for the diary



South Africa Cape Town.

## News update



Royal Bank of Scotland volunteers transforming a children's play area at Coram.

I wonder if you know about a way you can give regular help that not only makes it easier for you to budget for your support, but also gives us more confidence to plan ahead?

I'm referring to a monthly standing order.

You don't have to donate a large amount to help fund vital projects. Just £10 a month would be enough to make a difference to vulnerable children and young people.

With a monthly standing order, we are able to count on your support in advance, which allows us to plan new programmes such as the Born to Learn pilot project, safe in the knowledge that funds will be there to help us make them a reality.

That's not all. Because standing orders are simple to process they save us money on administration costs, meaning we can spend more directly on those who need our help most.

Names of Coram service users have been changed to protect their privacy.

**Thank you for your commitment - we can only continue to make a difference with your support.**

### 25th Oct - 4th Nov 2008 South Cape Cycle Challenge, South Africa – minimum sponsorship £3,125

South Africa is a land of incredible contrast and beauty. We cycle 400km through indigenous forest, farmland, mountains and alongside deserted white beaches, and then celebrate our wonderful achievement with time in Cape Town. Contact 020 7520 0330.

### 4th March 2008 - 5pm Evensong at Westminster Abbey

Join the Friends of Thomas Coram for a guided tour. Afterwards there will be wine and nibbles. Please contact Pam on 020 8325 2339.

**Tickets £27 – last few tickets remaining!**

### 11th April 2008 - 11am Visit to Dorich House

Join the Friends of Thomas Coram for a guided tour. Afterwards there will be wine and nibbles. Please contact Pam on 020 8325 2339.

**Tickets £27 inc transport from Norbiton.**

### 13th April 2008 Flora London Marathon

10 intrepid runners, including Crishi Jayawardena from Warner Bros and Sam Fox from Whitehead Mann, are taking part for Coram. If you'd like to sponsor any of our team, or have your own place and would like to raise money for Coram, please contact David on 020 7520 0330.

### Coram Concert

On 8th December The Friends of Thomas Coram, held a concert featuring the Kingston Chamber Orchestra at St Andrew Holborn. The event was hugely enjoyable and raised £1,200 for Coram's Music Therapy project.

### Bloomsbury Festival

At the Bloomsbury Festival in October the sun shone, and the streets were filled with the thousands of visitors enjoying the amazing range of events on offer. Coram participated with a stall in Brunswick Square, London near our head office. The team gave out information to people about our services in the local area, and a lucky dip and cake sale raised over £300 for our work.

### Corporate support

This year Coram has been lucky enough to launch two new corporate partnerships. Lloyd's will be supporting Coram with £150,000 of funding over a three year period. Coram will also be the first ever charity of the year for Whitehead Mann, one of the world's best-known leadership consultancy partnerships. The sponsorship will be a firm-wide initiative, enabling Whitehead Mann practice specialists to participate in a mixture of fundraising, volunteering and pro-bono support, which will raise £100,000 towards Coram's work.

### Volunteering for children

Late last year volunteers from the Royal Bank of Scotland descended on Coram and transformed a piece of ground used by children attending Coram's crèche. Painted murals of Mr Men brightened a dull fence, the ground was cleared, and RBS will also be donating £1,000 to our work.

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The Thomas Coram Foundation for Children (registered charity no. 312278) was established by Royal Charter in 1739.