



# Combining Fostering and Adoption

## Phil and his wife share their experience of adopting their son through Coram's Concurrent Planning.

"Our son is the light of our lives. He first came to live with us in a foster placement through Concurrent Planning.

Concurrent Planning ensures a child finds a settled foster placement while the family courts consider the longer term outcome. This could be adoption or it could mean the child returns to their birth parents; whatever the court decides is best for the child.

The centrality of the child's needs in the process is what attracted us to concurrent planning. We wanted the opportunity to care for a baby as young as possible and to be the ones there through the early stages of development.

The first step was a phone call to Coram. Following a meeting with them, being assessed and attending a number of training sessions we were awarded concurrent care status.

The next step was a phone call telling us the details of a one month old baby who had been referred for concurrent care. After great discussion and a visit from the baby's social workers we were able to meet him.

As soon as we saw him, he was all we could focus on. He was so cute with the most amazing smile, we just couldn't wait to hold him. We immediately fell in love with him and felt so proud that



we had been chosen to be the ones to give him a good start in life.

Our job for the next 6–9 months was to foster him, and bring him into contact with his birth parents.

We always prepared ourselves for the eventuality that his birth parents might overcome the circumstances leading to him being removed. Sadly they couldn't, and the courts granted a placement order and we adopted him.

As his foster carers we were in the ideal position to then become his permanent family. For us it was wonderful. Again, Coram was there for us, in areas we

hadn't even anticipated, for example the introduction to extended family, play dates and being able to call them at any time.

*As every parent knows, however amazing you think family life is going to be, that preconception is dwarfed by the wonder of the real thing.*

Yes – the life our child has is special compared to the life he may have had, but he gives us so much more in return. Concurrent care is highly demanding, but the end result has been nothing short of transformational. Our son is beautiful, active, intelligent, hilarious and loving, and we couldn't be happier."

## Inside

.....  
Foundling stories



.....  
Join Team Coram 2017



.....  
Coram Voice: A typical day

.....  
**coram**  
**Voice**   
getting young voices heard

## Message from our Chief Executive

Welcome to the Autumn edition of *Coram News* which I hope you enjoy reading.

Coram exists to provide children and young people better chances. Your support helps us do that and I wanted to share with you a short summary of what you have helped us achieve.

In the last financial year our advocacy service, Coram Voice supported over 4,000 children and young people in care; 675,000 children in over 2,000 schools learned skills to help them manage risks such as drink and drugs; we've worked with 137 local authorities, trained 4,575 professionals. We championed the rights of marginalised children. We launched the innovative Adoptables Schools Toolkit to improve the school experience for so many adopted children.

The motivation for everything we do is always what is best for the children and we can't do that without your help. So once again, thank you for all of your support and kindness.



*Carol Homden*

Carol Homden, CBE  
Chief Executive

## Foundling Stories

In 1942 Doris was brought to the Foundling Hospital, as Coram was known then. She explains how her story was quite unique.

"I arrived at the Foundling Hospital with my birth mother in 1942 at the age of just 6 months. Before coming to the Foundling Hospital my mother and I had travelled around a number of work houses but my mother soon realised this was unsuitable for raising a child so she brought me to the Foundling Hospital to give me the chance of a better life and an education.

Upon arriving at the Foundling Hospital I was baptised and foster parents were found for me to stay with. I was taken home with them to Saffron Walden the same day."

It was the norm for Foundlings to stay with foster parents until the age of five when they would return to the Foundling Hospital to live and attend school until the age of 15.

"I was always made aware that one day I would have to return 'home' but I was never sure what this meant. Where was home? I grew up knowing I wasn't theirs and that at some point I would be sent back. This uncertainty left me feeling very insecure and whenever I had a new pencil or comic I would take it with me just in case I was sent back."



*Doris and her adoptive Father*

Doris never had to return to the Foundling Hospital as at the age of seven the Foundling Hospital agreed to let her foster parents adopt her.

"When the adoption was being finalised in court I remember seeing my birth mother and I was very wary of her. I remember clinging on to my foster mothers arm as I still wasn't sure what was happening to me and I didn't want to be taken away from them."

Doris was one of the first Foundlings to be adopted and feels she was very lucky to be given the chance of a better life and to avoid the trauma many Foundlings went through of being separated from their foster families and being sent back to the Foundling Hospital.

*"I don't just owe Coram for my upbringing and a roof over my head; I owe him for a family."*

## Adoptables Schools Toolkit



**For an adopted child, school life can be difficult. Friendships, relationships, and even certain lesson topics can raise areas that can be sensitive or challenging for them.**

In May this year we launched a toolkit to improve the school experience for adopted children and young people. In consultation with teachers, this resource was developed by Coram Adoptables which is a peer network of adopted young people.

The Adoptables Schools Toolkit uses fun, interactive lessons to help teachers and students understand some of the issues that adopted children have to cope with.

It has had very good feedback with 95% of Key Stage 3 class participants rating the toolkit as good or very good. We're very excited about it and really believe that it will improve the school experience for many adopted children.

## Christmas concert

**Monday 5th December 2016**  
at St Andrew, Holborn Tickets £15

Coram's annual Christmas celebration returns to the beautiful surrounding of the church of St Andrew, Holborn, the final resting place of our founder Thomas Coram.

It is a delightfully festive evening with mince pies and mulled wine, some very special guest speakers and wonderful singing from the Trevor-Roberts School.

Find out more at [coram.org.uk/xmas2016](http://coram.org.uk/xmas2016), call Liliana Beaumont on **020 7520 0344** or email [Liliana.Beaumont@coram.org.uk](mailto:Liliana.Beaumont@coram.org.uk)



## Inspiring Women: Crossing the line

**Thursday 8th December, 6.30pm**  
Tickets £25 including drinks and canapés

Join us for our inspiring networking evening with drink, canapés and stimulating discussion with special guests including a member of the Ireland Women's rugby team.

Aon, The Leadenhall Building,  
122 Leadenhall Street,  
London EC3V 4AN

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Please visit [coram.org.uk/sport](http://coram.org.uk/sport) for more information, call Liliana Beaumont on **020 7520 0344** or email [Liliana.Beaumont@coram.org.uk](mailto:Liliana.Beaumont@coram.org.uk)

## D&D London gala dinner and auction

**Wednesday 26th**  
**October** Tickets £80

**D&D**  
LONDON

D&D London will be hosting a fundraising gala dinner and auction in aid of Coram on 26th October at Blueprint Café in London on the bank of the River Thames.

With a celebrity host and titled 'Changing Course', chefs from D&D's finest restaurants will each contribute a course to create a unique, three course menu, while guests will also have the chance

to bid on a range of exclusive prizes including rare and fine wines and unique trips and experiences. The chefs on the night will come from D&D's critically acclaimed restaurants Le Pont de la Tour, Sartoria and the Michelin starred Angler.

For more information and to buy tickets visit [coram.org.uk/changingcourse](http://coram.org.uk/changingcourse)



## London Marathon



Congratulations to our 32 runners who joined Team Coram 2016 and ran the London Marathon raising a record amount of £80,000! It was a fantastic day and we're so grateful to all of the team who put in so much effort to raise so much. Thank you once again.

If you're feeling inspired, we have guaranteed places in next year's Virgin Money London Marathon so why not join Team Coram 2017 and help the country's most vulnerable children?

To find out more contact our Challenge Events Team at [challengeyourself@coram.org.uk](mailto:challengeyourself@coram.org.uk)

## Riding for Coram

The King's Cross Cycle to MAPIC will see 50 property professionals tackle a 700km ride from Girona, Spain to the annual property conference in Cannes in support of Coram.

Organised once again by Club Peloton, our charity partner, this year's ride is expected to exceed 2015's fundraising total of £50,000. Chapeau! Good luck to all taking part and thank you so much for all your efforts.



## A day in the life...



**Sara Gomes**  
Coram Voice  
Advocacy  
Coordinator

**Hello. My name is Sara Gomes and I am an Advocacy Coordinator for Coram Voice. It can be extremely difficult for a vulnerable, young homeless person to navigate the complex bureaucracy of local authority housing, and that is what I and my team at Coram Voice help them with.**

Today I went straight to a homeless shelter in Kings Cross where I spoke with four young homeless people. Three of them had been in care as a child and now, through one reason or another, found themselves living on the streets. Often these young people don't even know that they are entitled to any help at all.

I'll speak to their Local Authorities and ask them to re-assess their cases. They really should be classed as care leavers who should be provided with suitable accommodation.

Getting back to the office I caught up on emails and my existing caseload.

Then I sat down with the advocates that I supervise and we talked about their cases.

Before I could leave for the day, I got an urgent email about a young pregnant woman who was supposed to be moving into accommodation that day, but it is now no longer available.

Every day is different; some are less complicated, but some are much more so. It can be a very difficult job, but it is also the most rewarding. Helping a young person get a new start in life give me an incredible feeling, because I know I have made a huge difference.

## A lasting legacy

**Some consider it a difficult topic of discussion, but making a Will really shouldn't be. In fact it is incredibly important because without a Will you cannot be sure that your wishes will be carried out when you die.**

Mrs Morris knows this and already had a Will, but when her circumstances

changed she wanted to update her Will. She wanted to make sure that after she had taken care of her loved ones, the causes that she supported were remembered as well.

"My family knows I support a few charities, but they don't know which ones and why. Coram is one of my favourite charities. I believe in Coram's positive and supportive attitude in helping children and their adoptive parents."

Making a Will gives peace of mind because it makes sure that what happens to your estate is exactly as you would want it.

It is also a good time to think of your favourite charity or charities. Leaving a gift in your Will is a wonderful way to show how much you care and is a lasting legacy. Your kindness continues even after you die. As Mrs Morris says, "I cannot do a great deal after I go, but that much I can do!"

If you'd like more information about leaving a gift in your Will, contact Rachael Corns on **020 7520 0306** or email [rachael@coram.org.uk](mailto:rachael@coram.org.uk)

## All about Coram

**Coram is the UK children's charity that has been supporting vulnerable children for 276 years, and is still finding new ways to help children. We help a million children and young people every year.**

**Coram helps children and young people develop their skills and emotional health, finds adoptive parents and upholds children's rights, creating a change that lasts a lifetime.**

### Adoption

Finding permanent homes for children in care. We consistently have one of the highest adoption placement success rates in the country.

### Life Education

Enabling children to make responsible choices. Each year we teach 675,000 children about the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

### Creative Therapies

Transforming children's lives through art and music. Children who have faced trauma in their young lives find their voice through the language of creativity.

### Advocacy for Young People

Working with children and young people vulnerable to harm or exclusion from society.

### Legal Advice & Policy

Providing free legal information, advice and representation to children, young people, their families, carers and professionals and influencing Government policy.

### Research and Consultancy

Defining best practice in work with vulnerable children and young people. Our findings help change children's lives across the country.

## Get in touch

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## Thank you

**Thank you for helping us to create better chances for children – we can only continue to make a difference with your support.**