

**coram** | better chances  
for children  
since 1739

# Change that lasts a lifetime

## Impact Summary 2015



# Coram aims to ensure that every child has the best possible chance in life. We work to create change that lasts a lifetime.

We do this by championing what matters most for children in policy and practice and providing sustained services which strive for excellence:

- Permanence planning and timely decision-making in adoption
- helping children gain the skills and information to make choices that support their future wellbeing
- enabling children to be heard
- access to digital-first information and advice
- providing legal representation
- offering research and management services in children's services systems and practice.

Established in 1739, Coram is the oldest children's charity (originally known as The Foundling Hospital) and is today a group of specialist organisations benefitting more than one million children in the UK and beyond.

Coram uses its funding efficiently. In 2014-15, Coram reported that 93% of spend was on direct charitable activities. This was achieved at the same time as the group grew by 15%<sup>(1)</sup>.

**Coram has now announced plans to develop The Queen Elizabeth II Centre in the third phase of development of its historic site in central London as a centre of excellence for children by 2018.**

## Promoting children's voice

Coram Voice is an advocacy provider for children in the care system and provided direct advocacy support to 3,500 children and young people in 2014-15. 98% of those surveyed said they would recommend the service<sup>(2)</sup>.

**78%** of children and young people got the outcome they wanted.

## Enabling children to take responsibility

Coram Life Education worked with almost 3000 schools in 2014-15 enabling 850,000 children to increase their knowledge and understanding of their physiology and harmful substances and to increase their skills to manage peer influence.

98% of teachers surveyed stated that the learning

outcome was covered and the quality of the content was appropriate for the class. The cost per child of a Coram Life Education session was £4, a low cost way of promoting universal health and wellbeing.

## Adoption and permanence practice

Coram made 230 placements directly and in partnership, more than any other Vountary Adoption Agency.

The Coram research analysis<sup>(3)</sup> of the outcomes of children over a decade in the concurrent planning programme demonstrated that all children remained in loving families with no placement break downs (where the national average is 3%).

## Time to adoption order was reduced by

# 12 months

## in Concurrent Planning cases compared to national targets.

In 2014-15, 25% of children who went on to be adopted in Cambridgeshire were placed through concurrent planning, the highest level ever achieved by any authority.

## Gathering evidence of change

Using a dedicated Outcomes Star<sup>(4)</sup> and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire<sup>(5)</sup>, Coram is working to gather evidence on changes in psychological and emotional wellbeing, and relationships through art and music therapy programmes.

An Outcomes Star was also used with the 41 young people receiving supported accommodation from Coram, referred by the London Borough of Brent.

## Evidenced parenting programmes

Over ten years, Coram has delivered its specialist addition to the Webster Stratton – Incredible Years Programme tailored to the needs of adoptive parents. Recognised as evidenced practice by C4EO<sup>(6)</sup>, this shows that 63% increased their skill and confidence in parenting.

*Coram's use of a Mentalization programme for adoptive parents/young people is now contributing to the research being undertaken by the Anna Freud Centre on this approach.*

The excellence of Coram's adoption support contributed to zero adoption breakdowns for Coram adoptions in the year 2014-15.

The Thurrock Think Family Service applies the Mellow Parenting and Triple P programmes with positive results in community sessions for families to improve parent-child interaction, child behavioural problems and parental wellbeing.

### Resolving issues affecting children

The Child Law Advice Service provided legal information and guidance to at least 197,000 unique users in areas of family, education, immigration and community care law.

**71%** of those surveyed reported resolution of their issues, which is likely to prevent longer and more costly legal proceedings.

### Problem-solving court

The Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) team is based on the Coram Campus. Coram partners with the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust. FDAC has been researched for five years by Professor Judith Harwin of Brunel University supported by the Nuffield Foundation<sup>(7)</sup>.

**35% of FDAC mothers stopped misusing and were reunified compared to 19% in the comparator group, avoiding costs of**

**£1.2m**

*The FDAC national unit has now been formed with support from the Innovation in Social Care Fund to nurture new specialist drug and alcohol courts across the country.*

### Quality accreditations

- OFSTED Outstanding for Adoption (London).
- OFSTED Outstanding for Adoption (East Midlands).
- OFSTED Outstanding for Fostering.
- Health Information standard.
- Specialist Quality Mark.
- Helpline Association Accreditation.
- GO Best Service Award - Health and Social Care Organisations.



### Adoption partnership development

The three year Coram Kent adoption partnership has increased adoption placements from 65 in 2012-13, to 169 in 2013-14, 143 in 2014-15, resulting in 182 adoptions in 2014-15 - the highest ever achieved by any agency.

At least

**£1.6m**

cost avoided for Kent County Council over three years.

As a result of independent evaluation of the benefits of their partnership, Cambridgeshire County Council and Coram formed Coram Cambridgeshire Adoption as the first agency operating under the power to delegate local authority adoption functions.

*Coram is now developing a new adoption hub for London helped by a CVAA expansion grant.*

### Supporting the adoption system

First4Adoption was established by Coram Children's Legal Centre (in partnership with Coram and Adoption UK) to enable the network of adoption agencies to increase the number of potential adopters coming forward to provide loving homes for children from the care system. There were<sup>(8)</sup>

**303,000**

enquirers to First4Adoption, an increase of 120% year on year with 17% progressing to find an agency.

### New voice for adopted young people

The Adoptables young ambassador programme for young people who are adopted launched in October 2014 supported by The Queen's Trust. The Minister of State, Edward Timpson launched their Top Ten Tips for enquiring adopters on the First4Adoption national information site.

*The Adoptables are now developing a toolkit for schools to tackle insensitivity to the needs of children from the looked after system in the curriculum and school cultures.*

## Policy influence

*Growing Up in a Hostile Environment*<sup>(9)</sup> analysed the impact of policy for the 120,000 migrant children in the UK, providing evidence to the Bill Committee for the Immigration Bill (2014) and the Justice Select Committee.

Publication of *The Door is Closed*<sup>(10)</sup> a report on the experience of young homeless people supported by Coram Voice in the King's Cross area of London demonstrated the challenge of access to housing.

Coram Children Legal Centre's International Team also aimed to increase knowledge and understanding of issues facing children and young people through carrying out ground-breaking research on a number of topics. It completed four research projects with International Planned Parenthood Federation on legal barriers to young people's access to sexual health services, which included case study research in El Salvador, Senegal and the United Kingdom<sup>(11)</sup>. The research was presented at several global conferences and led to the publication of a journal article and further work in this field.

The Coram-authored publication *Legal Protection from Violence: Analysis of Domestic Laws Related to Violence Against Children in ASEAN Member States* was recognised as one of the top 12 pieces of UNICEF research in 2014 and received a special mention by the external committee of research experts for its potential policy impact.

## Case Law

The Coram Children's Legal Centre (CCLC) was established 25 years ago to champion the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The CCLC Legal Practice operates under legal aid contracts in family, immigration, education and community care basis and brings forward cases for the clarification of law in the interests of children.

A key example of 2014 is the case of *PO v London Borough of Newham* [2014] EWHC 2561 Admin<sup>(12)</sup> in which the High Court held that Newham's policy

of limiting support to families with no recourse to public funds was unlawful. This represents an important development in the jurisprudence on the growing issue of support for families with no recourse to public funds.

## Legislative development

Coram's evidence to the Bill Committee for the Children and Young People's Act (2014) contributed to changes in definition for shared parenting and the strengthening of the requirement for welfare of the child together with shaping of the foster-to-adopt provision based on learning from Coram's expertise in concurrent planning.

## International reform

The International Team worked in 40 countries to carry out research and assessment, policy and law reform, capacity building and systems strengthening with the UN, governments and civil society to ensure that children's rights are respected, protected and fulfilled. This work helped to ensure that the rights of particularly vulnerable children are implemented.

## References

- (1) 2013-14 audited accounts
- (2) Annual Voice snapshot survey of our Independent Visitor, Community Advocacy, Visiting Advocacy & Helpline services
- (3) Coram Outcomes of Concurrent Planning (October 2013)
- (4) Coram and Triangle Consulting (2012)
- (5) Youth in Mind Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
- (6) Validated by C4EO (2014)
- (7) FDAC Evaluation in conjunction with Brunel University (2014)
- (8) First4Adoption Impact Report 2014/15
- (9) Growing up Hostile Environment (2014)
- (10) The Door is Closed (2014)
- (11) Over Protected and Under-served: Legal Barriers to Young People Accessing Sexual and Reproductive Health Services (2014)
- (12) PO v London Borough of Newham (2014)



[coram.org.uk](http://coram.org.uk)

For further information on the outputs and outcomes from Coram's work, please see the [Digest of Achievements \(2014-2015\)](#).