



THOMAS CORAM

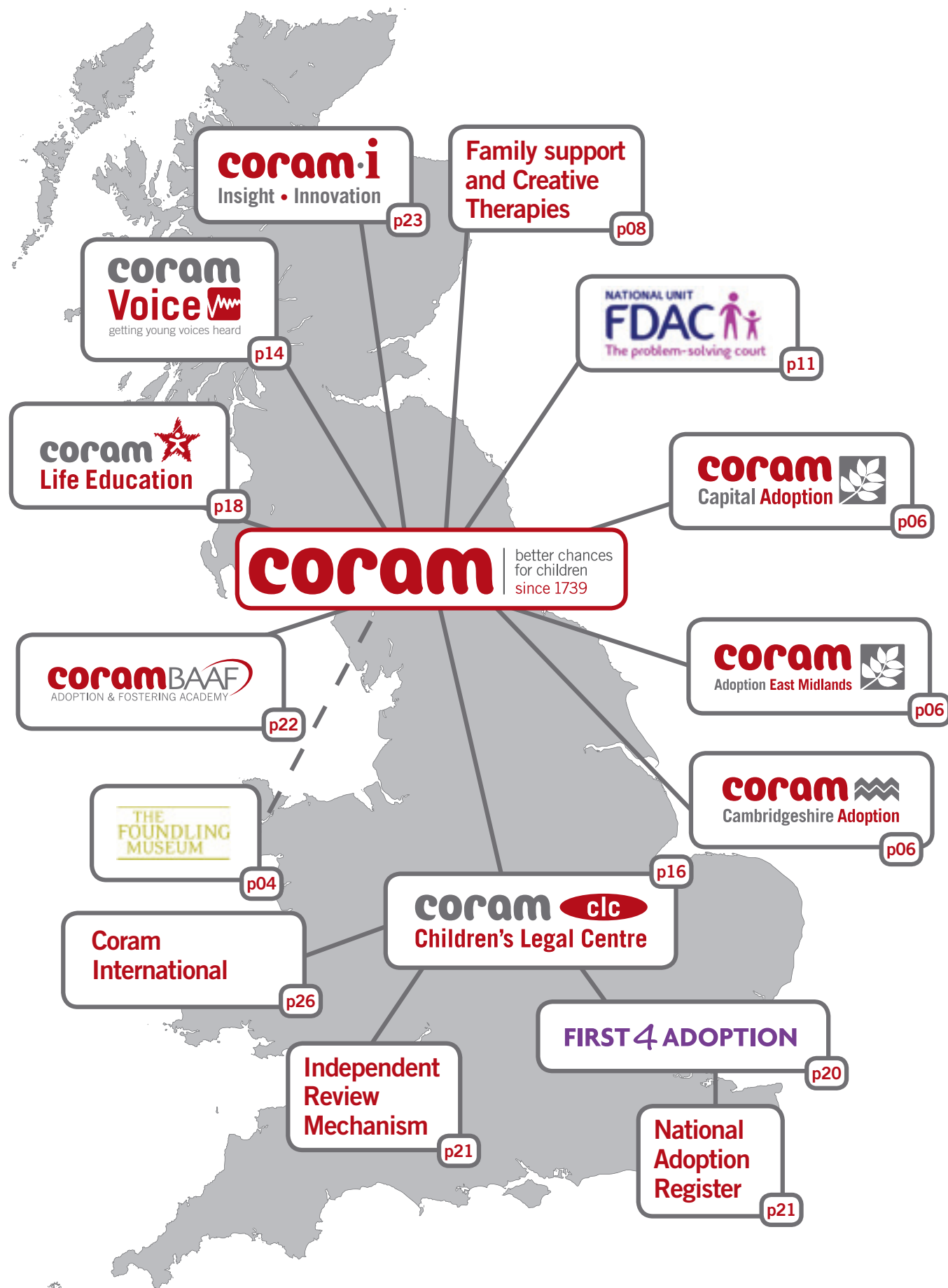
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PIONEER IN THE CAUSE OF CHILD WELFARE

Digest of achievements 2015–16
275 years of creating change for children

Coram is the UK children's charity that has been supporting vulnerable children for more than 275 years, and is still finding new ways to help children. We help more than a million children and young people every year.

Coram helps children and young people develop their skills and emotional health, finds adoptive parents, upholds children's rights and provides training and support for professionals and organisations, creating a change that lasts a lifetime.



Changing children's lives for 275 years

In April 1740, Thomas Coram's charity received the Act of Parliament by King George II establishing the first charity for children. On 24 March 1741, abandoned children were admitted for the first time.

275 years later, Coram is a group of specialist charities, still dedicated to championing the rights and welfare of children, and supporting the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

"It is a tragedy that there are still too many children waiting to be placed with a loving family."

Prime Minister David Cameron during a visit to Coram in November to launch his commitment to early placement.



Pictured: Far left, Edward Timpson MP, Minister of State for Children and Families; centre The Rt Hon David Cameron MP, Prime Minister; centre right, Dr. Carol Homden CBE, Coram Chief Executive; far right, Jeanne Kaniuk, Coram Adoption Managing Director with an adoptive mother and child and an adoptive father.

Charter for Children

Coram celebrated its establishment and the birth of children's social care with a reception for parliamentarians hosted by Lord O'Donnell the Earl of Listowel in June 2015. Our Charter for Children, launched that day, focused attention on the issues we still need to address for all children to have the best possible start in life:

- Decisions for children to be made in their timescales and best interests
- Equality of access to education, to services and to justice for all children
- Consistent high quality practice and relationships which matter.

Digest of Achievements

This Digest of Achievements summarises outcomes and progress over the year 2015–16, during which Coram has played a significant role on the national stage in the UK and worked to improve legal systems of children in 34 countries.

We have reached more than one million children, parents, professionals and partners and championed their voice and co-production to strengthen outcomes and policy for young people.

With the number of children in care proceedings at an all time high, a key focus of the year was the formation of CoramBAAF as the UK Academy for Fostering and Adoption and knowledge centre for professional practice.

Future strategy

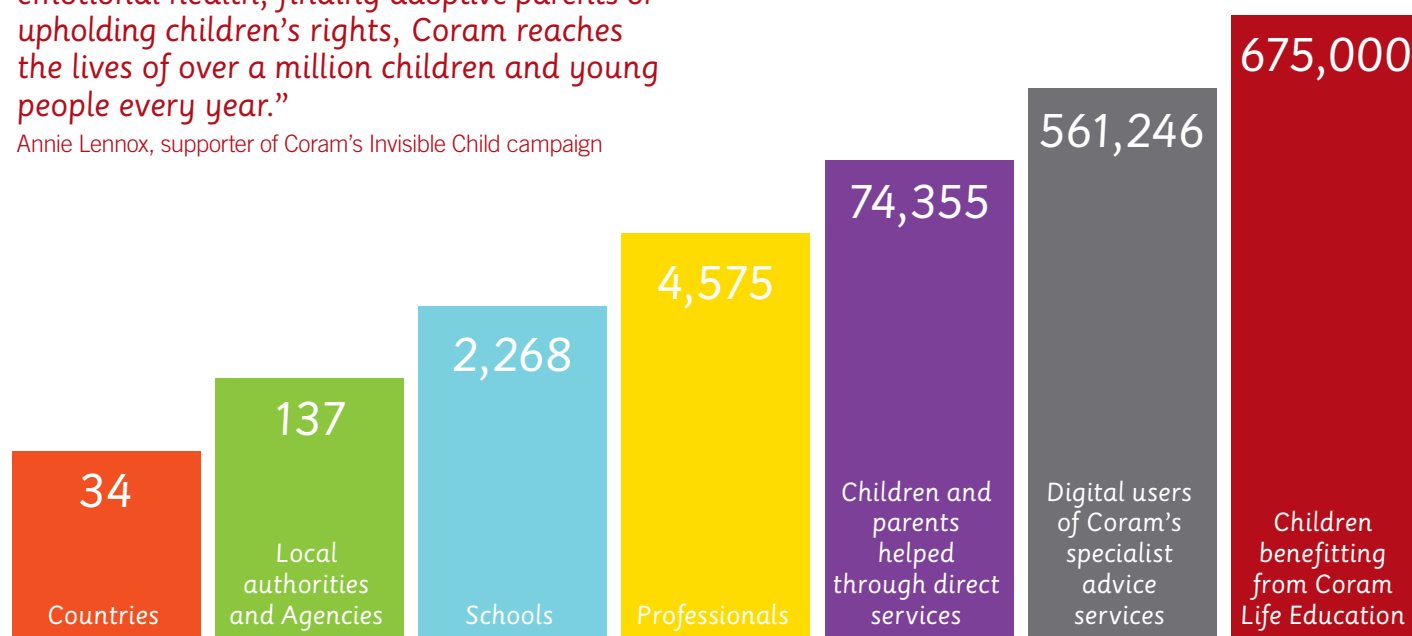
Coram works to support national systems and all the agencies which use them and has this year been recognised as a pioneer of social care reform as well as outstanding practice, being the only agency of our kind to lead development of a regional adoption agency.

To achieve these goals, we have set a strategy to develop the Coram Campus as the national centre of excellence for children placing the needs and engagement of children at the forefront of development. Coram is delighted to be able to announce the lead gifts – from The Queen's Trust and the ZVM Rangoonwala Foundation – for the creation of The Queen Elizabeth II Centre opening in autumn 2018.

Key Achievements

“Whether through developing skills and emotional health, finding adoptive parents or upholding children’s rights, Coram reaches the lives of over a million children and young people every year.”

Annie Lennox, supporter of Coram’s Invisible Child campaign



Policy and practice impact

- **Coram Capital Adoption**, formed with four local authorities, was cited as the trailblazing innovation that influenced the policy for regional agencies.
- **The Adoptables** ambassadors programme, for adopted young people, developed new resources to tackle the issues identified by adopted children. They ran workshops nationwide, developed a new toolkit for schools and helped to judge the National Adoption Awards, presented by the Minister of State. The planned expansion of The Adoptables programme was cited in the government reform paper, Adoption – A Vision for Change.
- **Coram Voice** co-chaired the Advocacy Alliance and its Bright Spots project worked with five local authorities and the University of Bristol to pilot new wellbeing indicators and to investigate what makes an effective care journey. Results will be published next year.
- 52,505 visitors learned about Coram’s role by visiting the **Foundling Museum**.
- Coram hosted the Family Drug and Alcohol National Centre (in partnership with the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust), the Ofsted ‘Outstanding’ Thomas Coram Nursery, and formed a new **partnership** with Montessori St. Nicholas Charity as part of the national centre of excellence for children.
- **The Migrant Children’s Project** chaired the Refugee Children’s Consortium and gave extensive evidence in the passage of the Immigration Bill, while Coram provided a specialist focus on the needs of children to the Citizens UK National Refugee Welcome Board.
- **The Child Law Service** became digital and quadrupled the percentage of helpline calls it could answer, **First4Adoption** created an acclaimed e-learning platform for adopters and was recognised as Best Public Sector project, and Coram generated a 16% growth in web visitors.

coramBAAF
ADOPTION & FOSTERING ACADEMY

CoramBAAF became part of the group on 1 August 2015 and since then has supported UK-wide members

22 publications and journals printed

130 expert networking meetings

420 local authority, voluntary adoption agency and other organisational members

1,200 professionals trained

Champion Supporters

Thank you to all of the individuals, trusts, companies and other funders that make Coram's work possible.

- The Club Peloton programme of rides in aid of Coram's Adoption services, included 125 cyclists raising £288,000 in the Legal & General Real Assets Cycle to MIPIM, which also had a new route alongside the main peloton. 25 cyclists also completed the Legal & General Real Assets pedElle women's ride. The 700km King's Cross Cycle to MAPIC will take place in November and a new ride is planned from Coram's London base to its historic Berkhamsted home (see image below).
- The Pears Foundation, lead funder of the Pears Pavilion, extended their support for creative therapy for traumatised children and, in the coming year, will also support Coram's specialist centre for migrant children.
- The Mace Foundation extended its support for another three years – donating £20,000 to Coram Voice. Their third annual Gala raised vital funds for Coram's capital appeal.
- 507 new individual Coram supporters were recruited and 31 energetic runners completed the Virgin Money London Marathon for Coram, raising in excess of £65,000.
- The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation continued its strategic support for Coram's training, research and policy impact to support vulnerable children.
- The Queen's Trust gave a £2m donation, the largest in Coram's history, and Her Majesty The Queen graciously agreed to the naming of The Queen Elizabeth II Centre.
- Dame Emma Kirkby and Peter Capaldi led Coram's annual Handel Birthday Concert, organised by Life Governor Philippa Dodds John and sponsored by Ansvar
- Following a major capital gift, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation supported Coram's Adoption Support service and Peer Educator project.
- The ZVM Rangoonwala Foundation has sponsored the new Rangoonwala Conference and Learning Centre, opening in 2018.

Award winners



First4Adoption
Best Public Sector project



Coram Cambridgeshire Adoption
Excellence in Practice in National Adoption Awards



CCLC International
Top 10 UNICEF Best Research reports



CCLC Legal Practice
Legal Week Award and Law Works Award for Pro Bono Legal Service



Noel Arnold
Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year

Quality approved



Investors in People Gold Award (2016)



Ofsted Outstanding for Adoption (Coram Capital Adoption & Coram East Midlands Adoption)



Ofsted Outstanding for Fostering (Coram Capital Adoption)



Best Practice Award in National Adoption Awards for Concurrent Planning (Coram Cambridgeshire Adoption)



Lexcel quality accreditation (Legal Practice)



National Helplines Accreditation (Coram Children's Legal Centre, First4Adoption and Coram Voice)



Department of Health Information Standard (Coram Life Education)



Loving families that last

Each year, there are around 4,000 children in England who are unable to grow up in their birth families and who need to be adopted by loving permanent families. Many of these children have been let down by the adults in their lives and have been neglected and abused: they will need a lot of patience and devotion to help them recover. Coram runs one of the largest and highly acclaimed Independent Adoption Agencies in the UK. This year, Coram provided this service in and around London, with thanks to Terra Firma, who donated £26,000 to support Coram South London Adoption, as well as Cambridgeshire and the East Midlands. Coram is also the only independent agency to deliver adoption services for local authorities (City of London, Harrow, Redbridge and Thurrock councils as well as Cambridgeshire) and provided national practice improvement in life story and matching work.

An acclaimed service with national impact



Coram became the first independent adoption agency to lead the development of a regional adoption agency in the Central East region



Coram Cambridgeshire Adoption won an achievement award in National Adoption Week 2015 for Excellence in Practice in concurrent planning. A quarter of the 48 children that CCA placed were vulnerable babies who found an early opportunity for permanence with specially prepared carers.

87 babies were placed for early permanence through the Concurrent Planning Subscription Scheme which expanded to **16** Local Authority members and **9** Independent Adoption Agency members

134 children were placed for adoption and 88 families approved for adoption by Coram Capital Adoption, Coram East Midlands Adoption and Coram Cambridgeshire Adoption

450 professionals and adopters benefitted from free life story workshops provided by Coram and supported by the Department for Education

Innovative partnership

This year saw the formation of Coram Capital Adoption, a partnership between Coram and four local authorities adoption services based at City of London, Harrow, Redbridge and Thurrock. A 'hub and spoke' delivery model with 'one front door', Coram Capital Adoption handles all adoption enquires, approvals and panel management via Coram's centrally located adoption team in London. Coram bases key members of staff at each local authority, strengthening early permanence planning for children by working closely with the children's teams. The programme was supported by funding from the Department for Education (DfE) and Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies and was cited as a 'trailblazer' by the Minister of State in 2015.



A card designed by Hayley, a child adopted through Coram, was chosen as the DfE 2015 Christmas card. The drawing depicts her and her adoptive family, complete with a glittery Christmas tree and snowman.



© istock



Leading the way in adoption support

Supporting best practice in life story work

Research by Coram and the Hadley Centre revealed that the national quality of life story work for adopted children is extremely varied and often lacking.

Life storybooks are an essential aspect of telling adopted children about their history and identity and, when done well, are a valuable tool exploring the child's background and experiences. Although providing life storybooks is a statutory requirement, a lack of resources, training and prioritisation means that the quality is sometimes poor or they are not being provided at all.

Funded by the DfE, Coram aimed to tackle this gap by providing life story workshops teaching practical skills on how to share difficult information with children at different stages of development. Coram has now developed online resources for adopters which are published by First4Adoption.

Support for the whole family

Research has shown that adopted children often have difficulties with managing their emotions and understanding their own and other people's thoughts and feelings. This makes it difficult for children to trust adults and to accept loving care, which gets in the way of building loving relationships.

Mentalization based therapy for Adoptive Families (MBT-AF) is a new intervention that aims to improve family relationships by supporting family members to reflect and try to understand each other.

MBT-AF was developed at the Anna Freud Centre, a leading centre in child mental health, and is being piloted at Coram as part of a Department for Education grant. Twenty-seven families have attended MBT-AF in London and Cambridgeshire. Feedback from attendees has been extremely positive. 100% of parents told us the service they received was 'good' and 88% of adopters said confidence in their parenting skills had improved.

"I can honestly say how truly grateful myself and my daughter are that we had the opportunity to have Mentalization therapy. It was extremely valuable."

Alison, adoptive parent

Parenting programmes for adopters

Coram offers parenting programmes tailored to the unique needs of adopters and adopted children at different life stages. Parents of adopted children aged eight or under took part in the Parenting Skills for Adopters programme, based on Webster-Stratton's Incredible Years programme, and parents of adopted children reaching or in adolescence took part in the STOP programme.

Last year, Coram delivered four parenting programmes in London to 53 adopters, which were extremely well received. 100% of adopters were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the programmes and said they would recommend it to a friend. The programmes were particularly effective in improving adopters' abilities to manage their children's behaviour, with 80% reporting improvements.

100% of adopters and professionals agreed the workshop had helped them to better present and structure life storybooks

Changing lives through music and art

For centuries, Coram has maintained a strong association with music and art. The artist Hogarth and composer Handel were both early supporters, and, today, music and art continue to influence Coram's work through pioneering use of creative therapies and educational art projects.

Children and their families value therapeutic support, particularly if children are feeling sad, lonely, are struggling to concentrate or behaving in challenging ways. Using art materials, musical instruments, movement, and play, therapists help children and young people make sense of their world and explore different ways of communicating. The sessions aim to help children and young people feel more confident, find positive solutions and address the way they behave and interact with others. Funders of this work in the past year include the Pears Foundation and the Bernard Sunley Charitable Trust.

"I was able to connect with my child on a completely different level"

Mother of a three year-old child who was newly diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Targeted support for families

Coram, in partnership with Elfrida Rathbone, Haverstock Healthcare and Camden Citizens Advice Bureau, supported 48 families with complex problems living in Camden, where the oldest child in the family was five-10 years old. The project, funded by the Big Lottery Fund, allocated two parent support advisors and three creative therapists to provide support across three schools in Camden.

Mainstream inner city schools and nurseries

Forty-seven children aged three to 11 took part in one-to-one, parent and child, small groups and drop-in group art therapy sessions. The children had a range of needs including emotional, social and communication difficulties and some had experienced trauma such as domestic violence or bereavement. The Music Therapy Drop-in session had around 33 children self-refer to the lunchtime group when they were feeling upset or wanted support. These sessions provide the opportunity for children to explore their feelings through discussion, individual role-play and group improvisations.

Young people excluded from mainstream schools

Art Therapists have worked in two schools in Camden with 29 young people aged 13-16 who have been excluded from mainstream education. Art therapists form part of a multidisciplinary team of professionals supporting young people with complex social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The main aim of art therapy is to support the student's reintegration into mainstream schools.

Young Offenders

Coram provided art therapy to support 22 young people in the criminal justice system or those vulnerable to becoming involved in risky behaviours. This project based in Kensington and Chelsea supported young people are demonstrating emerging symptoms of problematic emotional health difficulties which are impacting or may impact on their life choices. After having art therapy 87% of young people said they had fewer problems.

Children and young people with learning difficulties

61 children and young people with multiple and/or profound learning difficulties received one-to-one and group music therapy in Camden. Music therapists work with staff to share strategies and techniques for use in the classroom.

171 children received Creative Therapy

100% of parents saw a decrease in their child's behavioural and emotional difficulties

In addition to continuing community contracts **3** new services were developed; a community creative group; a collaboration with the Cartoon Museum; and art workshops for young parents and young people in supported housing.

Individual stories are real, but the accompanying images are posed by models and are not the subject of the story
© Coram



Impact of Creative Therapies

Coram published an evaluation exploring the impact of creative therapies on adopted children. The Department for Education funded a project for 70 children in the East Midlands, Kent, the North East and East Anglia to attend therapy sessions over 17 weeks. The results demonstrated significant progress:

- Before attending a therapy session, 71% of parents said their children experienced substantial behavioural and emotional difficulties. After the sessions this was reduced to less than 50%

- 70% of parents said that their children's problems had generally improved since therapy
- 100% of parents said their children had maintained improvements made during therapy at a three month follow-up.

Recommendations for practice include:

- Creative therapists should be part of a multidisciplinary adoption support team to ensure smooth referral and assessment processes, and appropriate family support

- Parents and adoption support services should be prepared to support children during transition times, such as starting a new school, providing therapy in a timely manner
- Funders should not underestimate the time and resources needed for effective creative therapy assessment to ensure correct approach is used
- Service providers and funders should be mindful of the diversity of a child's needs and be flexible with provision.



Sara's story

"Sara was adopted when she was six years old. As she reached puberty she experienced severe difficulties regulating her emotions and her behaviour became particularly challenging. When I met Sara she was anxious about the sessions and what they might reveal. Over time, she became more inquisitive and I began to see Sara connect with her feelings through art.

As Sara began to reflect upon her art making, she was able to share her fear of being judged. She worried that her artwork might not be good enough and this raised concerns about being rejected. Once Sara began to feel safe in the session she began to explore other situations when she had experienced feelings of rejection.

From this, Sara described how she felt at fault for no longer being able to live with her birth mother, and that this had caused anguish and grief for Sara and her birth mother. During the art therapy sessions Sara worked through this grief and began to realise that she was not to blame. As she came to terms with her traumatic experiences she also became calmer, more communicative with her adoptive parents, and her challenging outbursts decreased."

Art therapist

Helping parents do their best for their children

For a number of reasons, parents sometimes struggle to care for their children. The strain of illness, mental health issues or drug and alcohol misuse in particular can lead to difficulties in parenting. Coram's parenting services offer early help for families so that they avoid reaching crisis point and are empowered to provide a loving and secure environment for their children.

This year, Coram supported more than 300 parents to help them do their best for their children. With funding from the Social Care Innovation Fund for the Family Drug and Alcohol Court National Unit, Coram pioneered multi professional support and the wider application of a problem-solving court approach for those children on the edge of care.

Parenting service achievements in Thurrock

Contracted by Thurrock Borough Council, Coram offers one-to-one support and evidence based group parenting programmes for families with children from birth to 18 years old with additional needs. The service focuses on building family resilience and relationships and strengthening community support networks.

This year, more than 250 parents took part in parenting programmes or received one-to-one support from Coram. Their experiences were recorded with Family Star, a nationally recognised tool used to assess the difference parenting courses make to families. The tool focuses on eight key areas: home and money, family routine, education, social networks, keeping children safe, physical health, emotional wellbeing and setting boundaries and behaviour. The latter two areas were identified as the greatest area of need by families who were embarking on a parenting programme with Coram.

"Parents described the programme as 'life-changing' and something that far many more parents should be able to access."

Thurrock Council
Commissioning Manager

99% recorded improvements in at least one area of their parenting*

88% of parents saw improvement to their emotional wellbeing*

25% of attendees were fathers - above the national average of 15%. **

*Based on responses from 254 parents who part in parenting programmes

**Parenting Early Intervention Programme Evaluation (DfE)



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Community Based Assessment project

The Community Based Assessment (CBA) project, a partnership project between Thurrock Council and Coram, entered its second phase this year. The project provides expert assessment of families with children in need or at risk of being removed. It is provided via experienced specialist social workers from the London based Family Drug and Alcohol Court. The CBA team and Thurrock are working together to develop a multi-disciplinary supported assessment service with close collaboration between local practitioners and FDAC's specialists in domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health to offer comprehensive and timely assessments.

Parenting programmes

Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities (SFSC)

The team offered this universal parenting programme to all parents in Thurrock with children aged three to 18 years. This preventative programme aims to increase parental self-esteem and achieve positive long term changes in family relationships.

Mellow Parenting

More intensive programmes were also delivered by Coram - Triple P and Mellow Parenting. Mellow Parenting was previously offered to mothers and fathers separately. This year, Coram was part of a pilot project delivering the programme to parents together. Parents received additional one-to-one support at home to reinforce their learning, as were those not able to engage in group settings because of mental health or learning difficulties.

Managing risk for children

Parental substance misuse is the leading preventable cause of child abuse and neglect featuring in three out of four court proceedings considering removal of a child from a family.

Through the Family Drug and Alcohol Court, in partnership with the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, Coram works intensively with parents to combat substance misuse, aiming to keep families together wherever possible or to ensure swifter decisions to find permanent alternative homes for children.

“The FDAC model appeals to both the heart and to the head. It is the mix of compassion, firmness and clear-eyed assessment of the parent’s realistic chances of achieving rehabilitation.”

President of the Family Court

Children at risk

In partnership with the Tavistock Centre, FDAC offers an alternative way of supporting parents to overcome the substance misuse, mental health and domestic abuse problems that have put their children at risk of serious harm at an earlier stage, so that they can safely be reunited with their children.

Through our innovative approach, more children are returning to safe and sober parents who are relapsing less. 35% of mothers who were supported by the

court overcame their problems and were reunited safely with their children, compared to 19% of mothers in ordinary proceedings. A year after care proceedings, fewer FDAC parents had relapsed and fewer FDAC children had experienced further abuse.

Every £1 FDAC spends on the service avoids the Government spending £2.30 on court proceedings and foster care. The savings made by one family going through FDAC are nearly £15,000*.

Local authority commitment to the FDAC approach continues to grow, recognising it as an effective alternative to standard practice. There are now 12 FDAC centres in operation across 22 local authorities.

*“The savings made by one family going through FDAC are nearly **£15,000**”*

*Source: Reeder & Whitehead, Centre for Justice Innovation, March 2016



Children on the edge of care: a family’s story of reunification

“The parents of two children under five joined our SFSC parenting programme after their physical and mental health issues had resulted in their children being removed and placed with alternative carers. Throughout the sessions, I saw significant improvements in both parents who started taking better care of themselves, and showing determination to not fall back into their previous lifestyle. Their parenting skills improved, as did their self-esteem and both felt it helped them not just as parents, but as adults. After completing the course, the mother was offered a job, the family started to do more positive activities together and, after six months, the children were returned to their care. There have been significant, sustained improvements at home and both children are now settled into a new school.”

Project Manager, Thurrock Parenting Services

Supporting innovative peer to peer learning for young people

Young people often lack the support needed to access education and training and develop independent living skills when transitioning into adulthood. To address some of these issues, Coram has developed youth led education and support projects including, The Adoptables and Peer Education for Young Parents. These projects provide vital peer support for vulnerable and isolated groups, and the opportunity for young people delivering the programmes to learn new skills and increase their confidence.

“By talking to his adopted peers Josh can see he is not alone and there is ongoing hope for the long term.”

Parent about their son who became an Adoptables Ambassador

95% of young people who participated in Adoptables workshops said their team work, listening and communication skills had improved

Influencing practice nationally

In partnership with Coram Life Education, Adoptables Ambassadors have co-produced the first ever school programme about being adopted for key stage 2 and 3 pupils. The resource is delivered by ambassadors (in key stage 3) and includes two short films highlighting issues, such as bullying, faced by adopted young people at school. The module, piloted in April, will be rolled out nationally this summer.

Next steps for policy

The Adoptables are helping to inform the design of regional adoption agencies and respond to the further concerns of adopted children. In the coming year, they will develop a guide for teenagers called ‘How To Tell Your Story’.

The Adoptables

The Adoptables is a national programme launched by Coram in 2014 funded by The Queen’s Trust. This peer network provides a platform for young people, aged 13 to 25 years old, to discuss their experiences as adopted children at home, in school and in post-adoption support.

Through a series of workshops with pupils, teachers, parents, social workers and adoption agencies, 12 young people trained to become Adoptables Ambassadors, identifying and addressing issues for themselves and others. They delivered 13 workshops to young people across England. Developing their own skills, the project aims to support young people to influence peers, parents, policy and practice to better understand the issues faced by adopted young people.

The Adoptables online magazine provides a platform for adopted young people to identify and address issues which affect them





At the launch of The Adoptables and Coram Life Education's toolkit for schools, (left to right) Coram Chief Executive Dr Carol Homden, The Queen's Trust Director Nicola Brentnall, Ann Gross from DfE, Adoptables Ambassadors Jake Rose and Julia Whitehouse, Adoptables project lead Erina Nalawaga, Adoptables Programme Assistant Lindsay McDougall, Coram's Head of National Programmes Gemma Gordon-Johnson and Dominic Bergin, Headteacher at The Elmgreen School

Young Parenthood Peer Education Scheme

Through Coram's Peer Education for Young Parents project, young parents were able to design and deliver a Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education module to school pupils to raise awareness of the impact of having a child at a young age.

Not only have pupils benefitted from the project, but the peer educators themselves have grown in confidence, developed new skills and increased their employment prospects.

This year, peer educators visited 96 pupils aged 12 -19 at schools in Camden and Islington. Young parents talked candidly to pupils about the impact of having a child at a young age including sexual health issues, pregnancy, the impact on their social lives, finances, housing and relationships. The young people had the chance to discuss the issues and think about the impact of their life choices.

Supporting young people leaving care

Coram provides residential, practical and emotional support to 16 and 17 year olds in Bexley who are in, or leaving, care, to ensure they are well supported in their transition to adulthood. Coram's specialist staff, on hand 24 hours a day, work closely with residents to teach skills such as budgeting, managing a tenancy and cooking, and also work closely with local authority social workers. Many of the young people have experienced trauma in the past. Coram's team is trained to provide emotional support.

"This is what Personal Social and Health Education should be: real issues, real people and real experiences."

Teacher

HALO Programme

Help, Advice and Legal Opportunity (HALO) are the crucial ingredients of enabling young people to take responsibility for their lives and realise their potential.

The new HALO Programme supported by The Queen's Trust is designed to have the 'HALO-effect' by supporting young people to help others through volunteering in our helplines, internships, peer education initiatives and training placements.

The pioneering Young Citizens group will provide a new way for their stories to be told and to influence policy and practice.

In the coming year, a Young Editor will update our dedicated Law Stuff resources to provide young people with information they need.

For more information about the HALO project, see p30-31.

Helping young people influence decisions about their future

Coram Voice works with vulnerable children and young people who have experienced neglect or abuse. The team supports children in and after care who may be dependent on the state, as well as children who live with parents but are in need, to ensure they are treated fairly, receive appropriate support and shape their own future.

Coram Voice provides advocacy services, a national helpline and trained independent visitors for children and young people in children's homes, adolescent mental health settings and residential units to help them understand their rights and get their voices heard.

"Now I feel like I could tell someone how I really feel and make them understand. Before advocacy I couldn't do that. Now I would say to anyone, always speak up!"

Young person about Coram Voice's advocacy work

More than **4,000** children and young people were supported by Coram Voice's services this year, an annual increase of **11%** **99%** of those supported said they were more confident, motivated and felt safer after working with one of our advocates

Increasing outreach

Coram Voice provided advocacy to over 1,000 children and young people across the UK this year, an increase of 29%

- The Newcastle advocacy service was recognised by the Care Quality Commission's Mental Health Commissioner who stated it was the first time she had come across young people with a knowledge and understanding of the role of their advocate in mental health settings
- Coram Voice advocacy and independent visiting services expanded to Manchester and Milton Keynes
- Following a request from the Children's Commissioner for England, Coram Voice and Coram Children's Legal Centre provided advice and support to young people and professionals in Kent in response to the increase in young migrants arriving in the borough
- Coram Voice was re-accredited this year as a City & Guilds approved centre for training

In the coming years, services will be supported by further digital resources.



Alisha's story

"Alisha, 17, had been working with me for several months as she felt her social worker was not paying attention to her. I listened to what Alisha had to say but did not judge or tell her what to do. This approach was successful as Alisha began to trust me and she felt able for the first time to disclose that she had been sexually abused by a foster carer in a previous placement. I explained to Alisha that this had to be shared with children's services and that I would raise a safeguarding alert to protect any children who might still be in the foster home and ensure that Alisha was properly supported. Following our safeguarding alert, children's services took appropriate steps to investigate the disclosure and safeguard any children involved. Alisha's case demonstrates the value of independent advocacy in keeping children safe." *Advocate, Coram Voice*

Stories are real but images are posed by models to protect confidentiality

Bright Spots: the experience of children in the care system

Bright Spots, a partnership between Coram Voice and the University of Bristol, supported by The Hadley Trust, aims to improve the quality of care for looked after children; give children a voice about their own wellbeing; and highlight the 'bright spots' of practice that contribute to children flourishing in care. This year, they published the Bright Spots Wellbeing Indicators and finalised the 'Your Life, Your Care' survey which captures children's experience of care.

500 children and young people from five local authorities completed the Bright Spots survey to share their experience of care; one third of all looked after children in those areas.

Voices 16

To celebrate Coram Voice's 40th birthday and, as a tribute to Gwen James, the charity's late founder, Coram Voice ran Voices 2016, a writing competition for looked after children and care leavers. A total of 70 truly inspiring pieces were entered and celebrated at an awards ceremony in March.

The winning entries were praised for the emotional, lyrical content and for offering a rare and powerful insight into their hopes and fears of looked after children. Shortlisted entries were published online and winners featured in Community Care magazine (see p29).

"I am really overwhelmed that it was good enough to come third in a national competition. It's amazing really how something as little as a piece of writing can mean so much."

Shortlisted young person

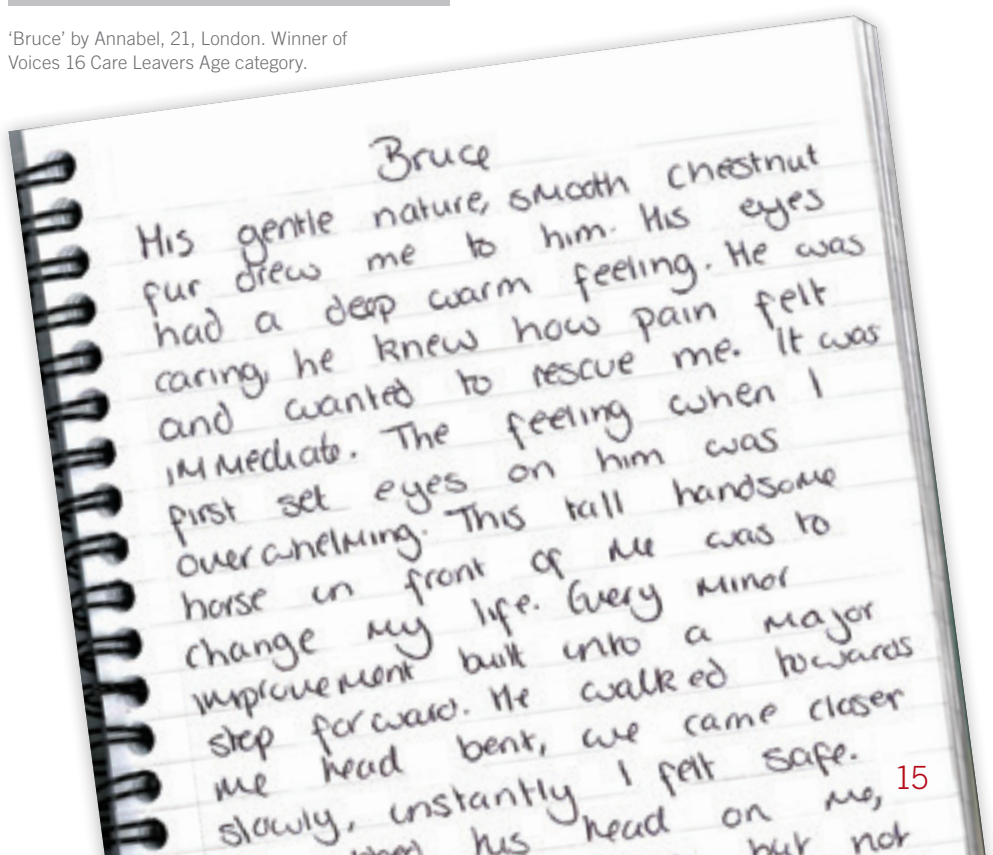
Homeless Outreach Project

The Homeless Outreach Project supports children in care, care leavers and young people who have not been provided with appropriate housing by their council. The project, currently being delivered at two homeless centres in central London, received a recommendation at this year's London Homelessness Awards. Project funders include John Laing Charitable Trust, The Drapers Charitable Fund and PF Charitable Trust.

This year, the Homeless Outreach Project has:

- Provided ongoing advocacy support to **185** young people
- Supported **164** young people in one-to-one sessions
- Held almost **50** advice sessions to the centre's frontline workers
- Made almost **40** visits to homeless centres
- Directly reached a total of **349** young people, while benefiting many others through the advice given to professionals

'Bruce' by Annabel, 21, London. Winner of Voices 16 Care Leavers Age category.



"You have enabled all of us to have a thorough understanding of what we do well and what we need to change from our children in care's perspective."

Strategic Commissioning Officer
at Bright Spots pilot
local authority

Enabling through self-advocacy online

To complement our face-to-face advocacy services, we launched online resources for young people in, or on, the edges of care. Funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the resources are designed to help young people learn about their rights, the support they should be receiving and to have confidence to speak out if they feel they are not being treated fairly. This helped more than 800 young people find their local advocacy service and supported nearly 150 young people to speak out about their care.

Upholding rights for children in the UK

Coram Children's Legal Centre (CCLC) is the dedicated children's rights centre in the UK, upholding the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, helping nearly 150,000 children and families in the UK and millions around the world. Coram Children's Legal Centre strives to promote children's rights through the following activities:

- Direct support to children, families and professionals through free legal advice from the Child Law Advice Service (CLAS)
- Influencing policy through consultations, training, policy boards and providing evidence at parliamentary committees
- Undertaking legal representation and bringing strategic 'test' cases on issues affecting children through the legal practice
- Addressing legal and policy issues affecting migrant children in England

**"Thank you!
What an amazing
organisation. We will
forever be grateful that
you exist and that
you care"**

CLAS caller



Noel Arnold, Director of Legal Practice, became inaugural winner of the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year Awards in the children's rights category.



Together with partners DLA Piper and Allen & Overy, CCLC won a Law Works Award and a Legal Week Award for its Pro Bono Legal Service



Important reported cases for the Legal Practice Unit were *P v Worcestershire County Council* [2016] UKUT 120 (AAC). CCLC appealed on the consideration of costs for the mainstream schooling of children with special educational needs. In *Home Office v VS* [2015] EWCA Civ 1142 it appealed on the unlawful detention of asylum-seeking children.



The first dedicated website for the Child Law Advice Service was launched, funded by a DfE grant, to extend reach and access

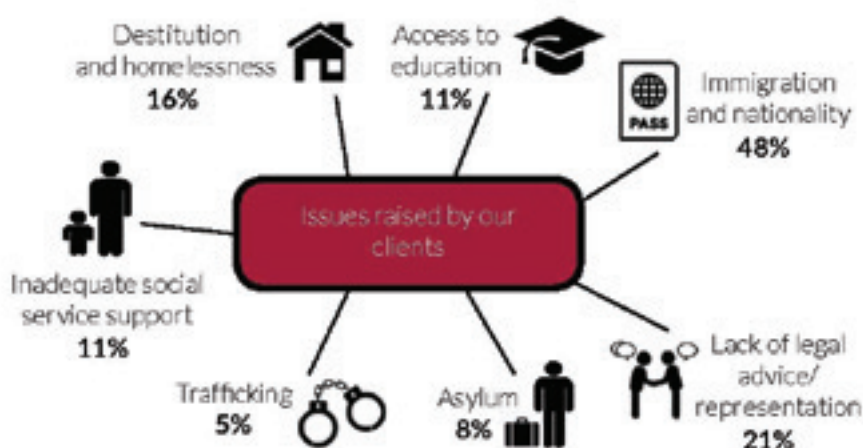
Resolving legal issues for children

The Coram Legal Practice provides legal casework including advice, assistance and representation to its clients, mainly those eligible for legal aid, across four areas of law: community care, immigration and asylum, family (children) and education. The Legal Practice which includes lawyers, paralegals and solicitors, is proud to be host organisation to the Justice First Fellowship Scheme enabling the team to employ a funded trainee solicitor and this year handled 460 cases.

Child Law Advice Service

The Child Law Advice Service provides the only free legal information, advice and representation to children, young people, their families, carers and professionals in England. This year, CLAS handled 14,700 calls and there were 144,400 downloads of information from visits to its new, dedicated website, outperforming its DfE targets by 5%. An annual evaluation of CLAS revealed 71% of callers said the advice they received 'significantly' or 'completely' helped to resolve their problem and 89% said they would recommend CLAS to others.

Issues faced by children and young people contacting the Migrant Children's service



Migrant Children's Project

The 2015 European migrant crisis, of which 25% of migrants are estimated to be children, has meant that the Migrant Children's Project (MCP) has become more vital than ever. Each year in the UK, over 2,000 unaccompanied children claim asylum. MCP has maintained its strong focus on influencing policy, supporting families and children through legal advice and training. Its work, funded by Paul Hamlyn Trust for London and Comic Relief, has featured in several national newspapers. A considerable focus has been, and remains, in Kent where nearly 900 migrant children are in care and a 56% increase of unaccompanied children claiming asylum has taken place since 2014.

Free advice line

MCP published age assessment guidance for social workers as part of a consortium with the Association of Directors of Children's Services. The document, which provides practical guidance on lawful assessment of age for young migrants and refugees, has been downloaded over 20,000 times.

Policy development

The recent Immigration Bill contains provisions for the mandatory transfer of unaccompanied children from one local authority to another. As co-chair of the Children's Subgroup of the National Asylum Stakeholder Forum and chair of the Refugee Children's Consortium, CCLC has worked with stakeholders to scrutinise the voluntary transfer system, and to develop the proposed mandatory system so that children are at the heart of the process.

CCLC's concerns with the Government's provisions were that support could be withdrawn from care leavers with uncertain immigration status. Also that the Immigration Bill's provisions to extend the 'deport first, appeal later' scheme would cover all immigration cases involving human rights. It secured significant changes, for instance, those with an application to the Home Office pending when they turn 18 will still receive leaving care support. The Bill's changes regarding care leavers will also need accompanying regulations. The Home Office has committed to engage with stakeholders during the drafting of these. This will be an ongoing piece of work for CCLC.

"I have a better understanding of where I stand and where I have to go now."

Migrant Children's
helpline caller

Improving practice by training

Over 1,000 social workers and other professionals attended CCLC training relating to the rights and entitlements of migrant and refugee children. 98% of participants said the course would help them improve their practice and 100% said they would apply the learning to their job.

International rights

Coram International provided social-legal research and legal systems design and support to 27 countries (see p26).



Andrew's story

"Andrew called me on the advice line needing proof of his immigration status in order to study biochemistry at university. His refugee status was set to expire one month before he was due to start studying. Andrew had made the correct in-time application for settlement in the UK, without the help of a legal advisor, but the university required an independent verification of his status, without which he was not eligible to study. Usually I only provide callers with legal advice, but on this occasion I wrote to the university on Andrew's behalf and as a result of this Andrew was able to take up his place at university."
Solicitor, Migrant Children's Project at Coram Children's Legal Centre

Helping young people make positive choices

Coram Life Education (CLE) is the UK's leading provider of high quality Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education and works nationally with schools. Educators visit schools in a mobile classroom to deliver life skills to enable children to develop knowledge, confidence and make positive choices. CLE continued to support 19 delivery partners and 4 Coram-led branches in London, Thames Valley, Gloucestershire, and Essex which also extended its reach to children in East Hertfordshire.

Thank you to the hundreds of volunteers nationwide, many of them Rotarians, who supported our delivery across the UK and beyond.

"The CLE team are knowledgeable, approachable, enthusiastic and creative. The positive impact of their work within our school is invaluable to staff and pupils alike."
PSHE lead, West Midlands school

- ✓ Coram Life Education celebrated 25 years of helping more than 5 million children to make positive choices
- ✓ Launched bCyberwise, an innovative and needs-led online resources to support schools in achieving or enhancing PSHE education
- ✓ Achieved NHS England's Information Standard for the fifth consecutive period certifying the quality and evidence-based approach of CLE's programmes
- ✓ Demonstrated its alignment with the Ofsted framework showing how its programmes support safeguarding as well as the revised personal development, behaviour and welfare judgement
- ✓ Created a database to help delivery partners with evaluation and trends analysis
- ✓ Collaborated with Coram's The Adoptables programme to produce an educators' toolkit to improve the experience of adopted and looked after young people in school (see p12)

Inspiring confidence in PSHE

Ofsted's most recent report on PSHE education highlighted the need for major improvements in provision and suggested a lack of teacher confidence in this area. Following CLE PHSE work in nearly 2,500 schools across the UK, 96% of teachers who witnessed CLE sessions said they are now more confident to deliver PSHE activities. Our valued corporate partners include Ansvar Insurance, who donated £30,000 to supporting CLE and Sodexo, who donated £23,000 to Coram Life Education in Salford.

CLE delivered PSHE sessions to **675,000** children in UK primary and secondary schools this year
100% of senior staff said CLE supports the delivery of PSHE.



Celebrating 25 years of creating healthy choices

Coram Life Education celebrated its Silver Jubilee with a special event commemorating 25 years of helping over half a million children in West Yorkshire make healthier choices. Held at Allerton Primary and Nursery School in Bradford the event was addressed by CLE's Patron and President of the British Medical Association, Sir Al Aynsley-Green and with special guests the Lord Mayor of Bradford, Councillor Joanne Dodds and Councillor Ralph Berry, lead on Health

Families and Safeguarding for Bradford Metropolitan District Council. This was followed by celebration events across the country.

Life Education Nottinghamshire also celebrated its 21st anniversary with a competition in which school children submitted creative entries reflecting their healthy choices, with winners attending a special celebration.



Celebrating Coram Life Education's 25th anniversary in Bradford with Professor Sir Al Aynsley-Green, Patron of CLE, Dr Carol Homden, CEO of Coram, Sharon Lambert Headteacher of Allerton School, and its pupils.

Of the 650 teachers who witnessed a CLE session:

100% of senior staff were satisfied with CLE sessions

98% agreed the sessions were well delivered and the quality of the content was good

60% of teachers said they had gained new ideas for their own teaching from the CLE sessions

Evaluation outcomes for teachers

CLE's 2016 Impact Study, supported by Professor Fiona Brooks, found that children who had experienced a CLE session in primary school, were less likely to have experienced verbal bullying, than those who had not.

Increasing children's knowledge about healthy lifestyles

Using 'before and after' questionnaires with school children, it has been shown that CLE sessions increase children's understanding of the prevalence of poor health habits within peer groups.

Validating evidence

Coram Life Education is now preparing to apply for a major validation study to better enhance the benefits of its educational delivery.

"The Coram Life Education Van is an excellent educational tool which informs the children about different aspects of their bodies and how to choose wisely"

Class Teacher, Year 5

SCARF online resource expansion

During the year, CLE launched a new pioneering resource for schools known as SCARF (Safety, Caring, Achievement, Resilience and Friendships). Promoting wellbeing and values-based education, the SCARF materials have been created to equip and support busy teachers at schools throughout the UK to develop and improve their PSHE programmes.

The CLE team will be expanding SCARF online resource following the positive feedback from schools. This extended resource will deliver the effective wellbeing and PSHE elements of the curriculum that help pupils to become more engaged, effective learners, complementing the learning that takes place in the mobile classroom.

We asked a year 5 class: what percentage of 11 to 15 year olds in England do you think smoke regularly?

Only **6%** of children answered correctly before a CLE session. After the session, **75%** knew the correct answer.

Inspiring a new generation of adopters

People considering adopting a child often report feeling confused about the process and unsure about where they can go to for independent advice. First4Adoption (F4A) provides independent advice and guidance to potential adopters in England.

Supported by the Department for Education (DfE), F4A's information line and online guides support potential adopters, helping them to navigate the process, and encourage more people to consider adoption. Over the past three years, the service has established itself as a key national hub for independent information and advice attracting more visitors each year and recognised as an example in its field.

"I have been looking into adoption for years and it was the first time somebody explained to me clearly the facts."

Prospective adopter who called First4Adoption

Key achievements

- First4Adoption website visitors increased by 28% and the agency finder signposted almost 20,000 unique visits to agency websites
- More than 80% of users would recommend F4A to others
- F4A supported 22% of adoption agencies to improve their services through mystery shopping and/or customer service training
- A call answer service was provided to 29 adoption agencies

First Steps e-resource

First Steps was launched in June 2014 to potential and prospective adopters with a free online resource about the rewards and challenges of adoption. The resource has open access to all, but some local authorities have used it as part of their training for prospective adopters. This year, the resource had 2,635 new registrations, a 70% increase from last year.

85% of people who completed First Steps e-resource training were satisfied with it

96% would recommend First Steps to others

93% of visitors to the F4A website were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the service


National Adoption Week


Taking over the reins from BAAF, F4A ran National Adoption Week 2015, publishing new statistics that revealed the plight of older children waiting to be placed for adoption.


To encourage more adoptive parents to come forward, the 'Too Old at Four' campaign secured national media coverage, including the front page of The Mirror newspaper (see p27).

During the week, an image of a boy and the caption 'Too Old at 4?', by celebrity photographer Mary McCartney illuminated London's City Hall (pictured right) and landmark buildings nationwide, while the National Adoption Week Awards were presented by Children and Families Minister Edward Timpson.



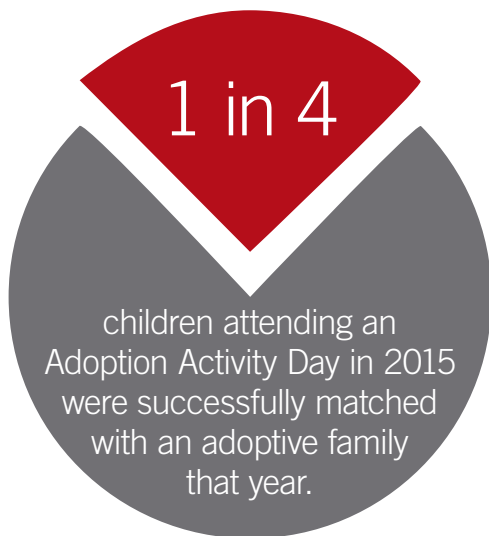
 First Steps e-resource won 'Best Public Sector Project' at the Big Chip digital awards

 F4A's Information Line won second place in the 'Helpline of the Year' award at the Helplines Partnership's annual awards

 The Information Line saw a 77% increase in enquiries, totalling 5,665

Providing national infrastructure for adoption and fostering

Since summer 2015, the Coram group has provided essential services for the national infrastructure for all adoption agencies in England via the Independent Review Mechanism for adoption and fostering, the National Adoption Register and through Adoption Activity Days.



Adoption Activity Days

Adoption Activity Days are a new addition to Coram's family finding for looked after children.

The fun days, funded with a three-year grant from the Big Lottery Fund's Reaching Communities programme, provide an opportunity for prospective adopters to meet children in a supported, safe environment. Many of the children are harder to place, with complex medical needs, disabilities, are from ethnic minority backgrounds, or are aged over four years, meaning they often wait much longer to find a permanent family.



Forward thinking

For some children adoption is not possible and so securing permanence through long term, carefully matched fostering placements can still be a positive outcome. Coram is launching Activity Days for Fostering to bring together children waiting for permanent homes with foster carers who wish to make a long term commitment to a child. Information briefings to agencies and pilot events are being held over the next year.

Improving matching

Funded by the DfE, Coram's adoption matching project developed good practice guidance on how to best match looked-after children with adoptive families. It is based on research with a range of adoption agencies and Coram's analysis of adoption timescale data. Coram has provided a 'matching support offer' to local authorities to help them place children for adoption with families nationally as well as focusing on matching 'harder to place' children. Training for social workers has also been created to help ensure children are placed as soon as possible.

Coram held eight Adoption Activity Days, with **123** children and **168** prospective adoptive families, with **40** children matched with prospective adoptive parents.

"I thought the Adoption Activity Day was really well organised and great fun for the children. All staff were helpful and easy to talk to."

Prospective adopter

The Adoption Register

The National Adoption Register for England is a statutory service to ensure all children are given the best opportunity to find the most suitable adoptive families. This year, 764 children and almost 2,000 adopters who were not successfully matched locally were referred to the register. As a result, 20% of those children found an adoptive family. To increase this further, the Adoption Register is currently testing the scheme, giving adopters and social workers access to the Register so they can undertake searches themselves to find children to adopt.

The Adoption Register also offers a court search service for social work professionals planning possible care options for children in need to gain a national picture of how many adopters across England at that time would accept a hypothetical child with certain specified needs. The team ran 1,122 searches in the last year. The IRM and The Adoption Register are operated by CCLC on behalf of the DfE.

Independent Review Mechanism

The Independent Review Mechanism provides adoption and fostering applicants in England with the option to review an adoption agency's decision not to approve them as adopters. In its tenth year, it handled 15 adoption and 83 fostering applications.

Informing, educating and inspiring adoption and fostering

CoramBAAF became part of the Coram group in August 2015, as the successor to the British Association for Adoption & Fostering which boasts 40 years of expertise. CoramBAAF is a multi-disciplinary membership organisation leading the way in improving outcomes for children in care by supporting the agencies and professionals who work with them, acting as an advocate on behalf of its members to government. Membership of CoramBAAF provides an increasing range of services, including the Adoption and Fostering journal, selected books, and newsletters; access to online resources; the opportunity to help shape the future of the sector through regional and advisory groups; and significant discounts on CoramBAAF's commercial services.

1,200

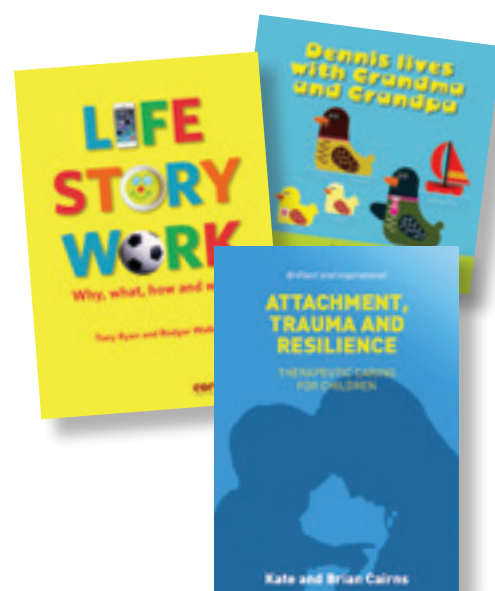
participants professionals attended 130 specialist workshops and training events delivered by CoramBAAF

Advice service

The advice service offers expert advice to members on all aspects of adoption and fostering, including complex practice, legal and health queries, typically handling 100 professional queries per month. It hosted UK wide advisory and special interest groups on health, legal issues, social work practice, research, black and minority ethnic children, special guardianship and private fostering.

Publications

Seventeen new books and two Practice Notes have been published and three editions of the peer-reviewed journal, Adoption and Fostering, co-published with Sage.



Key achievements

- Seven CoramBAAF publications received nationwide recognition in The Guardian, which listed favourite books on adoption chosen by adopted children, during National Adoption Week 2015
- The Adoption & Fostering journal gained global reach and prominence with its inclusion in Scopus, the world's largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature
- CoramBAAF worked with Loughborough University to develop the Cost Calculator on adoption and created draft guidance on adoption matching for Coram-i
- The Access to Care Records Campaign Group, of which CoramBAAF is a founder member, held nationwide seminars and recently published its findings. A key message is that to ensure that adult care leavers receive information and support when accessing their care record, sound policies to secure good practice are crucial.

UK network

CoramBAAF has partnerships with agencies in Scotland and Wales, to provide its members with a range of services, complementing its direct services to England and Northern Ireland.

Representing members

One of CoramBAAF's key roles is to advocate for its members to government and act as an expert voice for the sector. It provides representation on a range of influential bodies, including:

- The Adoption Leadership Board
- Department of Education advisory groups on adoption support and special guardianship
- The All-Party Parliamentary Group on looked after children and care leavers
- The Rees Centre Advisory Group on fostering and education.

Conferences, workshops and bespoke learning

This year CoramBAAF have hosted five conferences in England which included events on neuroscience, with Margot Sunderland; the Adoption Support Fund; adoption matching, attachment and adoption; and the virtual world in family placement. It also delivered 40 specialist workshops and 90 tailored training events, including child development, using the Secure Base Model, supervising social workers, life story work, and helping carers manage stress.

Helping local authorities find lasting solutions for looked-after children

Coram-i works with local authorities to help them improve their services for looked after children. To date, Coram-i has focused mainly on adoption, working with 20 agencies, but it is now starting to provide support for all types of permanence including special guardianship, fostering, and return to birth family. Coram-i has developed a strong reputation for delivering high quality, effective support, helping to raise Coram's profile as an innovative leader in this sector. The team includes social care experts, consultants, analysts and researchers, who tackle problems at a case level, determining whether they are isolated or systemic. This approach provides insight into the wider challenges facing local authorities.

"Coram's drive for good child care planning, performance management and partnership working has impacted permanency planning in children's social care."

Assistant Director, Children's Services, Kent County Council

Supporting improvement and practice

Coram-i was directly involved in the placement of 150 children for adoption through its work with Buckinghamshire, Kent and Northamptonshire councils. The team conducted adoption diagnostics for nine local authorities, producing a report as part of its Innovation project, funded by a DfE grant.

Coram-i developed a new online tool, partially funded by the DfE, to help adoption agencies keep track of the children and adopters they are working with, to help reduce drift and delay in the adoption system.

In 4 years, Coram-i and Kent have placed

531 children with
515 children adopted.

Children are placed with adoptive families an average of **318** days sooner.

Kent County Council saved at least **£2.5m** over that period.

Coram Kent development partnership

Coram-i has worked with Kent County Council for the past four years, managing its Adoption Service. The team developed an innovative approach to providing adoption support, creating an in-house, multi-disciplinary team of social workers, therapists and clinicians so that children and families get timely, appropriate support from the local authority, increasing the chances of adoptions being successful. The Coram-i team is now supporting Kent's Adoption Service and new Head of Adoption as an innovation partner, as they look at creating a regional adoption agency and further improvements.

Regionalising adoption delivery

Coram-i is leading the development of a regional adoption agency (RAA) working with six local authorities (Bedford, Borough, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Central Bedfordshire, Norfolk and Northamptonshire) and three independent adoption agencies (Adoptionplus, St Francis Children's Society and Coram Cambridgeshire Adoption). It secured DfE grant funding and has submitted a Transition Plan for how the RAA will be created. The project is the only one currently not being led by a local authority and aims to create an outstanding agency that finds adoptive families for children as quickly as possible and provides high quality customer service to adopters.



Staff from Coram, the DfE and local authority members of Coram Capital Adoption (l-r): Alex Wylde, Rachel Green, Chris Pelham, Andrew Carter, Jeanne Kaniuk, John Anthony, Peter Tolley, Hellan Timothy James, Annie Crombie, Marcia Brown, Deborah Woolfson, Alice Noon, Dr Carol Homden

Improving outcomes through evidence

Coram is committed to developing and promoting best practice in support of vulnerable children and young people. It does this through research, evaluation and policy development and by speaking out on the issues that matter most to children.

Improving service performance

The Impact and Evaluation team work proactively to maximise Coram's impact and to gather evidence to determine the extent to which services meet users' needs.

Each service is helped to develop a Theory of Change that maps their intended outcomes and how these outcomes are expected to interact and contribute to wider social change.

Measures are developed that reflect these outcomes so that Coram can be clear if services are having the intended effects. This evidence is used to demonstrate the value of these services to commissioners and policy makers and to consider the implications of new external research for our work.

Promoting best practice and policy

Coram's involvement in service delivery makes it uniquely placed to evidence practice and share knowledge to improve outcomes for children. The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation funds the team's work to build an improved knowledge base and influence policy and practice. Highlights for the team include; evaluating the Department for Education grant to deliver life story workshops to professionals and adopters; presenting to practitioners at the Coram Life Education annual national conference and development days for the Council for Disabled Children (CDC); and being commissioned by national charities.

"Taking the monitoring of our Parent Champions work to a new level has resulted in the model being accepted as evidenced practice beyond just childcare."

Deborah Brodie, Project Manager, Family and Childcare Trust

Evaluation consultancy

Other charities in the children's sector have used the expertise of the Impact and Evaluation team to evaluate their work. Final reports for the following projects will be published later this year:

CDC's Social Care Innovation programme

CDC commissioned Coram to evaluate its Social Care Assessment for Disabled Children and Young People Programme. Five local authorities will test new approaches to assess disabled children and their families for support, with the aim of making the process more efficient.

Raising Kinship Children programme

Grandparents Plus and PAC UK piloted a course to address the gap in parenting support available for kinship carers, primary carers of a child who are family friends or non-parental relatives.

Foster Carers Ability to Support Transition to Adoption

The Impact and Evaluation team delivered a number of applied research studies including one looking at how foster carers were able to support children in their move to an adoptive family, the emotional toll that this takes on foster carers and children and how they can be better helped during this key transition period.



Renuka Jeyarajah-Dent, Coram's Director of Operations, leading improvement of outcomes for children through evidence and innovation

Advancing research

Coram works closely with university partners on national programmes of work with specialist advisory groups. We would like to thank our members and partners including Prof. Julie Selwyn and Dr Debbie Watson (Hadley Centre, University of Bristol), Dr Lisa Holmes, Dr Sam McDermid and Dr Helen Trivedi (Centre for Child and Family Research, Loughborough University), Dr Nick Midgley (Anna Freud Centre and UCL), Prof. Fiona Brooks (University of Hertfordshire), Prof. Karen Broadhurst (Lancaster University), Dr Debbie Fallon (University of Manchester), Prof. Judith Harwin (Brunel University) and Dr Judith Trowell (Worcester University).

National representation

Coram's Chief Executive, Dr Carol Homden CBE is a member of the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, and is Chair of the National Autistic Society and of the Connaught group of children's charities. She serves on the National Adoption Leadership Board, for which she chairs the National Recruitment and Matching Forum, along with Dr John Simmonds OBE, Director of Research and Policy at CoramBAAF. Both were this year members of the Department for Education's Expert Group on special guardianship.

Sharing knowledge to improve practice

CoramBAAF hosted a number of courses and conferences in England including;

Neuroscience with Margot Sunderland, exploring the relationship between neuroscience and effective parenting skills

The virtual world in family placement, to help ensure security and stability for adoptive children in relation to their birth families as they navigate the digital world

Attachment in adoptive families, looking at the patterns, profiles and outcomes from early childhood through to adolescence

Improving child welfare across borders

CoramBAAF announced a new major partnership designed to expand and accelerate efforts to improve child welfare systems across national borders and to enhance the lives of the children, adults and families those systems serve.

The new partnership is with The National Center on Adoption and Permanency, a unique 'one-stop' non-profit organisation that provides a broad range of information, resources, consultation and multidisciplinary services relating to adoption, foster care and child welfare across the United States.

CoramBAAF and NCAP will be working together to shape joint programmes and projects as well as to strengthen current initiatives.

"We're very excited about the possibilities of this transatlantic opportunity and believe it will make a genuine difference in both our countries."

John Simmonds, CoramBAAF's
Director of Policy
and Research



Upholding rights for children globally

Coram International at Coram Children's Legal Centre has continued its work globally through research and assessments; policy and law reform; capacity building; and strengthening systems with the UN, governments and civil society across 27 countries to ensure that children's rights are respected, protected and fulfilled.

The Coram International team secured contracts in countries where it had not previously worked, with new partners including UNICEF Cambodia, UNICEF Indonesia, UNICEF Nigeria, and International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) East and South East Asia and Oceania Region and South Asia Region while also continuing to build on its already established relationships with Governments, International Government (IGOS) and National Government Organisations (NGOs) around the world.



The report 'Legal Protection from Violence Analysis of Domestic Laws Related to Violence against Children in ASEAN Member States' was chosen as one of UNICEF's 12 best research studies in 2015.

System reform in Tanzania and Zanzibar

Led by Professor Carolyn Hamilton, Director of Coram International, the team continued the implementation of five-year strategies to reform the child protection and juvenile justice system in Tanzania and Zanzibar. Working with the two governments, they provided technical assistance to review and reform law and policy, providing support to three legal aid projects and community-based diversion and rehabilitation programmes for children in conflict with the law.

They team drafted the Juvenile Court Procedure Rules and the Child Protection Regulations on the mainland and the Children's Court Rules in Zanzibar; which are now in force. Capacity-building training on laws, procedures and programmes were delivered to practitioners, government agencies, child welfare and child justice professionals, and frontline service providers, including remote and in-country coaching and mentoring.

Most recently the team has been working with the Islamic Kadhis Court in Zanzibar to enable it to develop its approach to child protection.

Child protection in Kazakhstan

Relationships with UNICEF Kazakhstan and the Government of Kazakhstan have been continued by securing a new contract to develop the continuum of modernised child protection services for integration of children and adolescents at risk and in justice processes.

The team is developing community-based rehabilitation and psychosocial support services for children in conflict with the law and in difficult life situations. The project involves the development of legal and policy recommendations and an implementation framework for the reform of child protection services, with a particular focus on deinstitutionalisation and the establishment of community-based services. It also involves the provision of technical assistance to UNICEF and local stakeholders in three different regions.

Two research missions were also conducted to the country to work with UNICEF, government counterparts, NGOs, civil society and national experts, as well as children and their families.

Access to sexual health services for young people in Asia

Over the next two years, the team will undertake research for the IPPF in six countries across Asia, examining how law and the perception of law influences access for young people to sexual and reproductive health services.

During the year, researchers undertook missions to India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia to interview young people and service providers about their knowledge, experiences and views. Reports have just been finalised and will be published during 2016. Over the next year, research will be undertaken in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal.

Coram International
worked in **27** countries
around the globe and
produced **20** reports



"This is a remarkably well documented comparative analysis which provides analytical tools that could be used beyond this report."

ASEAN panel member

Coram International and the United Nations

The Coram International team continued to successfully publish on a wide range of children's and young people's issues across the globe together with different United Nations entities.

The report 'Legal Protection from Violence Analysis of Domestic Laws Related to Violence against Children in ASEAN Member States' was recognised by UNICEF in 2015.

The study included analysis of national legislation related to violence against children in each of the ten ASEAN Member States (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam). It uses international laws, standards and best practices as a yardstick against which national legislation is measured and includes a colour coding system to indicate the level of compliance with international standards. The report highlights common issues, concerns, or successes across the countries and makes recommendations for legislative reform.

Professor Carolyn Hamilton, Director of Coram International, was contracted to produce the report 'Children and

Counter-Terrorism' that was published in May 2016 by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI).

The study produced recommendations to help governments integrate domestic and international juvenile justice and child protection standards into their counter-terrorism frameworks. The research report includes an overview of the international legislative framework pertaining to children and counter-terrorism, as well as case studies on two countries with different legal traditions and counter-terrorism approaches (UK and Germany). The findings were presented to members of the UN Working Group on Criminal Justice Sector and Rule of Law of the Global Counterterrorism Forum in Malta in November 2015.

Next steps

Coram International is launching a new website to provide information on the research and range of consultancy services available from the Coram group.



Press highlights

Mumsnet Talk

Guest post: Too old to be adopted?

There is a shortage of parents wanting to **adopt children over four**, but Carol says the best decision she's ever made was adopting five-year-old Thomas



Carol
Posted on: Tue 20-Oct-15
10:42:33
(20 comments)

Social workers were considering keeping Thomas in long-term care as he was getting 'too old' to be adopted.

My son was five years old when I met him - and I was petrified. I wanted to adopt and be a mother so much, but what if we didn't like each other, or I couldn't love him? Thomas was so desperate for a forever family though that he came running up to my car and announced to the entire street "Everyone, this is my new mum". I wanted to run to him and give him a hug, but equally I just wanted to get back in my car and drive away, fast.

Mumsnet
21 October 2015

DAILY Mirror



EXCLUSIVE

WITH her sparkling blue eyes and infectious smile, three-year-old Grace is the picture of happiness.

Yet there is still something missing from her young life. Heartbreakingly despite spending every day waiting to be adopted, Grace has never been able to find the only thing she wants - a new mum and dad to love her. Grace is currently living with foster

parents but authorities have taken the unusual step of opening the prospective families to come forward in the hope they will find someone to adopt the girl.

Foster mum and dad Jill and Paul are nursing excitement and are desperate for the adorable youngster, who they affectionately describe as their "daddy's girl", to find a new family. Jill says: "We're just trying now to get a

David Cameron bids to speed up adoption process

By Jodie Brier
Education reporter

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Prime Minister David Cameron wants to increase dramatically the number of children currently in care who move in with their adoptive families before the required legal work is completed.

Some 10% of adopted children are already placed with families early, according to his office.

But Mr Cameron wants these numbers to double as soon as possible.

BBC News Online
02 November 2015

Mail Online
02 December 2015

MailOnline

Plaid it's nearly Christmas! Helena Bonham Carter looks very animated in head-to-toe tartan as she attends festive celebration

By Rebecca Smith and Caroline

Published: 02:00 02 December 2015 | Updated: 02:00 02 December 2015

Helena Bonham Carter is a special lady who always looks lovely on the red carpet. The 50-year-old was pictured arriving at the Coram's Christmas Celebration 2015 and she was dressed to be seen for the occasion.

Wearing one of her favourite dresses, a black and white tartan, she looked like a queen as she arrived at the event.



Girls in care still at high risk of becoming pregnant

Programmes successfully tackling teenage pregnancy across the UK are failing one group of young women

Nicola Newman

The continuing fall in teenage pregnancy rates in England and Wales, which have halved since 1991, was celebrated this month, but the mainstream pregnancy programmes that made it possible are failing one group of young women: vulnerable teenagers in care. A review of academic papers and research has found that most targeted methods to prevent unplanned pregnancies, such as the provision of contraception, which are not in the "teen schools" - which are not in the "teen schools" - did not help to prevent unplanned pregnancies for young people with experience of care. Research shows looked-after children and care leavers are three times more likely to become teenage mothers than peers who have not experienced state care.

The review, published today by the children's charity Coram, identified several factors that could explain this: missing out on education due to sex and relationship education due to placement moves, increased vulnerability and mental health problems in the absence of a supportive adult in their lives. The best is to ensure who, it is thought, even children in foster care become pregnant.

Dorothy Fothergill, lead author of the review and from the University of Manchester, says: "Mainstream programmes just aren't tailored to the needs of this group of people, and there is surprisingly little being done for them. What we found was a lot of reports and studies saying that something needed to be done about it, but not a lot of work actually being done."

Yvonne Williams (not her real name), who was 16 when she gave birth, was forced to leave her family home aged 15. She had several years of upheaval, and stress moving from hostel to hostel, through a legal battle to get looked-after child status, and then experienced months of meetings with social workers, who she felt were "intruding" into her life after she became pregnant.

She says she received no education about pregnancy at school, beyond "an awkward PSE [personal, social, economic, and health education] session" in which and health education was offered, but advice or guidance was offered when she first became pregnant.



Research shows looked-after children and care leavers are three times more likely to become teenage mothers than peers who have not been in state care (Photograph: Alamy)

I was under a lot of pressure because there are a lot of strict houses and things to jump through with weekly meetings with two social workers. I didn't expect them to be so intrusive."

Williams gave up her baby, but many others in a similar situation have had their babies removed and been placed in care themselves. With financial support, these young, vulnerable women often become pregnant again.

Williams says: "For them, one of the driving factors for having a baby early in their life, we found, is the need to be loved."

She used to help girls understand what it was like to get pregnant. Of course, it might have just been a moment - but what we've found is that fewer of them go forward for contraception, or even just to seek advice about their options, than the rest of the public. At every stage, they get less attention.

"For me, the moral duty for us as a society and a community is to help a young woman have a baby in a way

young woman, aged 16, who had been in care and it was her first baby going up for adoption, and an 18-year-old, pregnant - with a husband full of violence - with a husband full of violence. I still coordinated baby groups - where it is still touch and go whether the baby will be removed when born. It's heartbreaking."

What about her from the review's findings, she says, was the young girl's need for a loving attachment. "Twenty per cent of children who have come into care have been abused or neglected and have been taken away by the courts," she says. "For them, one of the driving factors for having a baby early in their life, we found, is the need to be loved."

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One of the driving factors for having a

co-author of the review, is optimistic that teenage pregnancy could now be developed, she says. "The findings from the review are helpful in thinking about where we might want to develop and testing pilot projects that aim to help young people avoid an unplanned pregnancy, make positive choices about partners and be better prepared for parenthood."

Williams, now mother to a 4-year-old, doesn't regret having her daughter, she wants to help other young people understand the realities of teenage pregnancy. She has been involved in a Coram project for the past year that works in schools in south London educating 14- to 16-year-old girls through these discussions.

She believes the review would work well in schools like the ones she used to live in. "If projects like this are only run in schools, a lot of young people will miss out. We did a lot of work in schools and the feedback was overwhelming," she says.

Off the back of the report, Coram hopes to launch a pilot project that would involve working in schools, at

The Guardian
30 March 2016

Baroness heads back to school

GLoucestershire ECHO

CHILDREN at Hillview Primary School had a visit from an esteemed former pupil this week. Baroness Jan Royall came to the Hucclecote school to inspect the Life Education Centre Bus, which visits Hillview Primary to help children with their mental and emotional wellbeing. Baroness Royall, who is Labour's leader in the House of Lords, went along on Thursday. Headteacher Rebecca Curtis said the school was "honoured" to host the Baroness.

"It was a real honour to have someone so high profile. It's lovely to have someone who has achieved so much as one of our alumni," she said. "It's great for the children to understand that people from Hillview can achieve great things."



The peer and children meet Harold the Giraffe and educator Julie Bignell

CommunityCare
The heart of your social care career

Writing competition for care leavers and children in care launched

Coram Voices wants young people to submit pieces on what makes them happy

by Luke Stevenson on December 8, 2015 in Care Leavers, Children, Looked after children
Looked-after children and care leavers can share what makes them happy in Coram Voice's writing competition.

Care leavers and young people in care can write up to 1,000 words for the competition, which launched today, in any format, including a short story, poem or newspaper article. The story can be about who makes them happy, or what the important people in their life could do to make them happier.

Gloucestershire Echo
14 November 2015

Community Care
08 December 2015

Vision for the future: national centre of excellence for children

In July 2016, work will commence on the construction of The Queen Elizabeth II Centre. Completing phase three of the transformation of Coram's historic campus in central London, the building will provide the focal point of Coram as a national centre of excellence helping to transform lives and increase social benefit.

Charter for Children

Edward Timpson, Minister of State for Children and Families, joined a former Foundling Hospital pupil and one of the youngest children to be supported by Coram (pictured below) at a reception held at the Houses of Parliament to celebrate Coram's 275 years of creating better chances for children. Also in attendance were MPS, peers and the Children's Commissioner.

In the coming year Coram will continue to convey its learning to support policy development and the Education and Adoption Act.

Championing children's rights

The Centre for Children's Rights will bring together and expand the work of Coram Children's Legal Centre and Coram Voice to ensure that the welfare of children is paramount, while further space will enable partnership to extend professional training and impact in education.

In particular, the HALO programme – also generously supported by The Queen's Trust – will enable young people to help others with Help, Advice and Legal Opportunity, promoting opportunities for young people to enter legal-related careers and to increase their own and others' capacity to effect change for themselves and for wider benefit.

Turning research into practice

The Rangoonwala Conference & Learning Centre will enable the dissemination of research into practice, providing extensive seminar rooms and a 100 seat lecture theatre, to host conference and masterclasses and debates, for the training of practitioners.

This will enable the engagement of professionals and the public with Coram as a Centre for Impact developing and delivering best practice through our Academy and influencing policy for the next generation.



This image is included as a tribute to David Blyth who passed away in May 2016.

Next steps

In the coming year, Coram will continue to benefit more than a million children, families and professionals, will work to realise the principles of the United Nations Convention and will advance the development of policy and practice from its unique 3.5 acre campus.

“I believe every one ought in duty to do any good they can”

Thomas Coram, 1738

Treasuring our heritage Informing the future

Skylights, an exhibition by Ken Wilder, Reader at the Chelsea School of Art, will celebrate Coram's historic buildings with a site-specific installation, before the construction of The Queen Elizabeth II Centre begins.

Voices 16 and work of The Adoptables will ensure children and young people inform the development of the new Coram Story Hub, which will build public understanding of the lived experience of children in the care system.

Artists impression of The Queen Elizabeth II Centre



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