



THOMAS CORAM

1668 – 1751

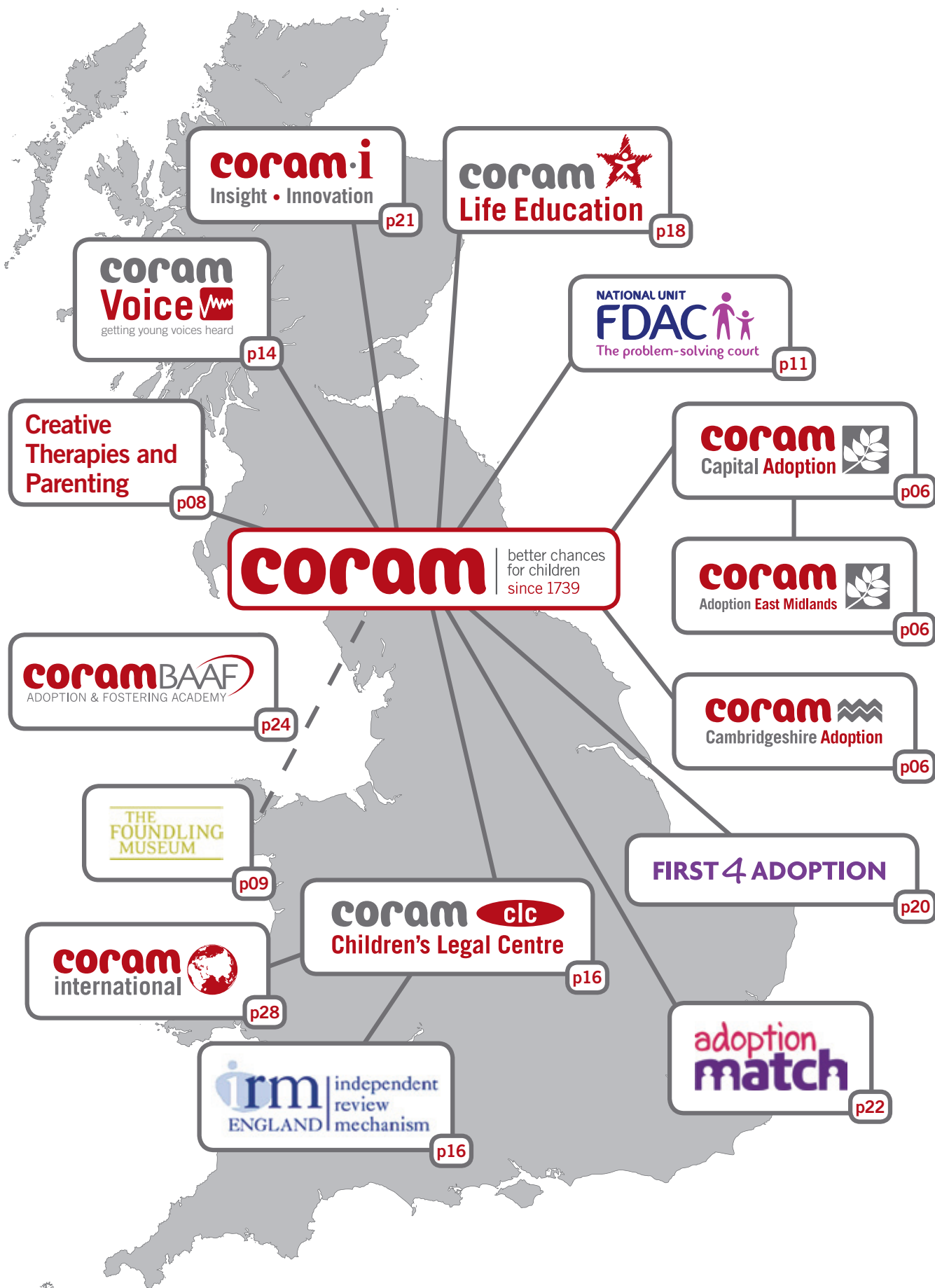
PIONEER IN THE CAUSE OF CHILD WELFARE

Digest of achievements 2016–17

Three centuries of creating change for children

Coram is the oldest and most innovative children's charity. We develop services that are the first and best of their kind, changing lives today and creating solutions for tomorrow.

As a group of specialist organisations, Coram develops, delivers and promotes best practice. We support children and young people who need stable families, assist those who are marginalised or at risk, and work with schools, local authorities, and young people themselves to increase skills and build resilience and sustainability.



Better chances for children since 1739

This year, Coram benefited more than one million children, families and professionals. Work also commenced on the creation of The Queen Elizabeth II Centre, which will open in 2018 as we celebrate the 350th anniversary of the birth of Thomas Coram, our founder and key historic champion of children's rights.

"Coram has always been at the forefront of championing children's rights"

HH Judge Robin Tolson QC,
Designated Family Judge at the
Central Family Court



This year Coram's historic and contemporary role in the advancement of children's rights was recognised in the *Respected and Protected* exhibition at London's Central Family Court, which coincided with the launch of the new LawStuff website (see page 12).

Charter for Children

Coram has consistently championed children's welfare since 1739, when King George II signed the Royal Charter for the creation of the Foundling Hospital in Bloomsbury, London. The Act of Parliament of 1740 then gave birth to the first charity for children and to children's social care.

The principles and objectives for the modern day Coram group over the next 25 years are outlined in the Charter for Children. It calls for increased understanding of child development and the gathering of evidence to demonstrate the importance of positive relationships, security, stability, and educational opportunity for every child.

Digest of achievements

The Digest of Achievements summarises outcomes and progress during 2016–17, which has seen Coram play a significant role across the UK and in 46 other countries worldwide.

With the number of children in care proceedings at an all-time high, a key focus this year fell on advancing permanence planning and championing access to justice, including for migrant and unaccompanied children. We developed understanding of children's own views on their wellbeing, co-produced solutions to the issues they face, and substantially increased access to digital information and advice.

Future strategy

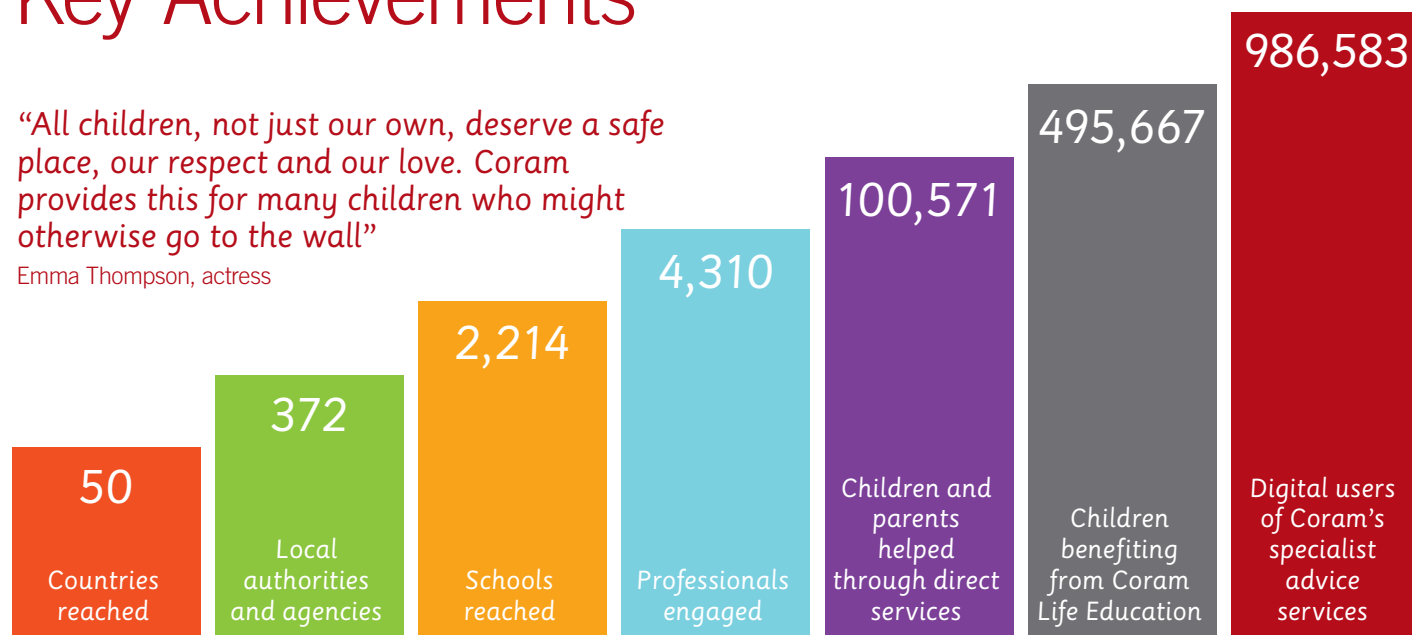
Coram is now developing its historic London campus as the national centre of excellence for children. We will continue to work with partners to realise our vision of a world where:

- The commitments of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child are applied.
- Children have access to quality education, services, and justice.
- Decisions for children are made in their best interests informed by their views and timescale.
- Children benefit from consistently high-quality practice, no matter where they live.

Key Achievements

"All children, not just our own, deserve a safe place, our respect and our love. Coram provides this for many children who might otherwise go to the wall"

Emma Thompson, actress



Securing access to justice, information and advice

- The **Child Law Advice Service** exceeded their expected usage targets, reaching 688,629 unique users online.
- **LawStuff** was launched to ensure young people have clear and easy access to information about their legal rights.
- **Coram Voice** launched online resources, including a 'Find Your Local Advocacy Service', to complement their face-to-face advocacy services.
- Coram Children's Legal Centre's **Legal Practice Unit** supported more than 400 individual clients.

Achieving permanence for children and young people

- Coram was instrumental in 10% of adoptions in England.
- **Coram Capital Adoption** placed 53 children and celebrated 10 years of delivery for the London Borough of Harrow, which was placed in the national top five for timeliness.
- The London **Adoption Support Gateway** was launched to provide comprehensive assessments and interventions for adoptive parents.
- **Coram East Midlands** placed 21 children and was rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted in all areas.

- **Coram Cambridgeshire** placed 42 children, exceeding the expected adoption numbers by 18%.
- Coram's **Adoption Activity Days** found loving homes for more than 120 children who had been waiting for adoption the longest. The team also piloted **Activity Days for Fostering**.
- **First4Adoption's** adoption resources reached more people than ever before.
- The national **Adoption Match** service found families for over 232 children through Exchange Days and national register searches.

Developing sector capacity

- Coram published the **Seeking Support Toolkit** to support all those working with unaccompanied, migrant, and refugee children.
- Coram is proud to be hosting and supporting **Generating Genius**, **Children England** and **Sistema**, as well as the Thomas Coram Nursery, rated Outstanding by Ofsted.
- Work has commenced on the construction of **The Queen Elizabeth II Centre**, which will become a hub for information exchange in the field of children's welfare and rights.

Jeanne Kaniuk OBE, Managing Director of Adoption at Coram (right), celebrates winning the Lifetime Achievement Award at this year's National Adoption Week Awards with host Clare Grogan and former Minister of State Edward Timpson.





Peter Capaldi (centre), who presented the inspiring awards ceremony for Voices 2017, Coram Voice's writing competition for care experienced young people, with the winner of the Care Leavers category and Dr Carol Homden CBE, Chief Executive of Coram.

Influencing and advancing understanding and support

- *Brexit: children's rights at risk or opportunity in the global era?* highlighted the key issues for children in **Britain's transition from the EU**.
- The **Young Citizens** group was formed to enable young ambassadors to address issues faced by migrant children and young people.
- The **Respected and Protected** exhibition in London's Central Family Court examined Coram's role in the advancement of children's rights.
- More than 53,000 people visited the **Foundling Museum** and learned about Coram's historic role.
- The **Adoptables** advanced awareness of the experiences of adopted young people by launching the first ever school curriculum toolkit.
- The Legal & General Real Assets **Cycle to MIPIM** brought the total raised for Coram by Club Peloton's cycling events to more than £1 million over five years in partnership.
- Coutts became the latest leading company to become a Coram **corporate partner**. Coram also benefited from more support from individuals than ever in its history.

Creating system improvement based on children's needs

- **Coram International** worked in the UK and 39 other countries to deliver projects such as the 'Unlocking Children's Rights' programme.
- Coram Life Education launched its online curriculum resources known as **SCARF** and secured more than 8,000 registrations.
- **CoramBAAF** sold 34,000 books, while membership reached over 1,200 individuals and agencies.
- A keynote event with Lord Justice Munby, the President of the Association of Directors of Children's Services, and distinguished academics shone new light on the issue of **risk for children**.

"I'm inspired by Coram's example of courage, compassion and commitment for the most disadvantaged children"

Sir Al Aynsley-Green,
first Children's Commissioner
for England

Quality Recognition



Investors in People Gold Award



Ofsted Outstanding for adoption and fostering



Lexel accredited for legal practice



Department of Health Information Standard



Helplines Standard accredited

coram Voice
getting young voices heard



As part of the Bright Spots project, Coram Voice and Bristol University published *Our Lives, Our Care*, the first report designed by children in care – rather than carers and professionals – to examine how the care system does and should look.

83% of children said being in care had improved their lives

1 in 5 young people in care aged 11 to 18 years had low wellbeing

50% of children aged 4 to 7 years do not understand why they are in care

Next year the survey will be extended to 20 local authorities and expanded to examine care leaver experiences.

Loving families that last

Each year there are around 4,000 children in England who are unable to grow up with their birth families and need to be adopted by loving, permanent families. These children have been let down by the adults in their lives, many might have been neglected or abused: they will need a lot of patience and devoted care to help them recover.

Coram runs one of the largest and most highly acclaimed independent adoption agencies in the UK. This year Coram's adoption services were influential in 10% of adoptions across England. Coram Cambridgeshire Adoption exceeded its expected placement numbers by 18%, Coram East Midlands pioneered concurrent planning in the region, and the new clinically-led multi-professional adoption gateway service opened in London. We are particularly grateful to Terra Firma for their continued support of children and families in the borough of Southwark.

*"With your help,
the families Coram
brings together will stay
together, with love that
lasts a lifetime."*

Peter Capaldi's BBC Radio 4 Appeal

116 children placed for adoption in London, the East Midlands, and Cambridgeshire

76 adopters approved

120 children matched through Adoption Activity Days (see page 23)

232 matched through the national Adoption Match service (see page 22)

An acclaimed service with national impact



Jeanne Kaniuk OBE, Managing Director of Adoption, won the Lifetime Achievement Award at the National Adoption Week Awards 2016.



Coram Adoption East Midlands was rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted in all areas.



Coram Capital Adoption has been appointed to develop and implement a quality mark for early permanence by the Department for Education.

Advancing early permanence practice

A national learning network

The Coram Centre for Early Permanence (CCEP) works with local authorities and independent adoption agencies across the country to develop and share expertise. They seek to ensure more children can live with their potential permanent carers at the earliest possible stage of the care process.

The Early Permanence National Network has 24 members comprising 15 local authorities and nine independent adoption agency members. Last year members placed over 100 babies and young children in Foster for Adoption and concurrent planning placements, an increase from 82 in 2015–16.

Developing a Quality Mark

Coram has achieved a Practice Improvement grant from the Department for Education to develop a new Quality Mark in Early Permanence. This is being developed in close consultation with the sector to encourage and facilitate the timely identification, matching and placement of children. It draws on Coram's experience, longitudinal research, and effective practice in action.

"Coram wants the best for the child. They want to make the process as seamless as possible and ensure the child is in a good home"

– Coram adopter



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Coram Capital Adoption celebrates ten years of partnership

In 2016 Coram and the London Borough of Harrow celebrated the tenth anniversary of their partnership, which has pioneered Coram's integrated delivery of local authority adoption services. Coram's expertise has helped enable Harrow to provide early intervention and permanence planning for children in the borough. Harrow is now the second fastest English authority in moving a child from care to living with adopters, and the fourth fastest in deciding on an adoptive family for a child once the court has agreed that adoption is the right option.

In the last 10 years Harrow has placed:

- 79 children for adoption
- 10 children via concurrent planning



Leading the way in adoption support

Championing life story work

Life story books are an essential aspect of informing adopted children about their history and identity. If they are sensitively and accurately produced they are also a valuable tool for exploring the child's background and experiences. Last year, Coram delivered ten life story workshops, training a total of 76 social workers and 131 adopters. In the coming year, Coram will work with a Fellow from the Royal Literary Trust to advance writing practice among professionals.

Supporting children with developmental delay

Coram's clinically-supported monthly open access groups enable adopters of young children to meet each other and seek the advice of Coram staff and therapists. These pioneering sessions aid the parents of children with developmental delay. In the coming year, Coram plans to extend this service across London as part of the commitment to advancing early placement in the capital.

Adoption Support Gateway

Adopters are often concerned by the insufficient and inconsistent delivery of support and regularly state their preference for an integrated service from a trusted source.

The new Adoption Support Gateway provides adoptive families and special guardians with fast and easy access to a range of expert assessments and programmes, including art and music therapy, mentalization-based therapy, and child and family psychology support.

The service has been developed by Coram, in conjunction with the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families, the South London & Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust and Faith in Families. During its first six months, the gateway service consulted with 16 local authorities, helping 43 children from 37 families to access a range of services. In the coming year, we will further extend the range of offered services to include peer support by and for adopters and teenagers.

Support for the whole family

Coram offers parenting programmes tailored to the unique needs and ages of adopters and adopted children (see page 10 for more information).

Mentalization-based therapy for adoptive families (MBT-AF) aims to improve family relationships by supporting family members to reflect and try to understand each other. The therapy, originally developed at the Anna Freud National Centre for Children, is being piloted with adoptive families with teenagers at Coram as part of a Department for Education grant.

"With this service I can really get to grips with what this family needs right now."

Social worker on the Adoption Support Gateway

Changing lives through music and art

Throughout its history, Coram has maintained a strong association with music and art, with the artist William Hogarth and composer George Frideric Handel both early supporters. Today, Coram is pioneering the use of creative therapies and educational art projects to benefit children and young people and build evidence of their impact in changing young lives. Using art materials, musical instruments, movement and play, therapists help children to make sense of their world, express their anxieties, and improve emotional resilience in the face of trauma and loss.

This year Dr Jasmine Chin took up a new clinical leadership role alongside a team working from Coram's new purpose-built centre, the Pears Pavilion. They also work in schools, nurseries and youth settings, supporting hundreds of children who would otherwise struggle. All existing community contracts were renewed or extended, with all delivery requirements met or extended.

These programmes are made possible thanks to the generous support of the Pears Foundation and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, as well as schools and commissioners.

In-school programmes

For the past decade, Coram has provided in-school music or art therapy through one-to-one support and self-referral groups. Ongoing work in one primary school in Haringey in London indicates how an integrated provision of this kind can maximise on-site expertise to benefit the whole school community, enabling direct benefit to children and speedy referral to higher tier services if needed.

Children with learning difficulties

This year, 33 children and young people at a Special Educational Needs school in Camden received music therapy. Since the start of the contract in July 2013, children have demonstrated notable improvements in their behaviour and expression.

Coram also trained staff in music therapy techniques, with 100% reporting that they had identified elements from the training that they could incorporate into daily practice.

Young people who are excluded or at risk

Art therapists have been working in four specialist Camden schools to improve outcomes for young people who have been excluded from mainstream education.

It aims to develop positive connections with participating peers and staff and to improve both educational attainment and life chances for the students.

Evaluations of this three-year contract demonstrated improvements in rankings for emotional issues, conduct problems, hyperactivity, and peer problems.

Coram also provides accessible therapy in Kensington and Chelsea to help young people in or at risk of entering the criminal justice system to get the help they need in youth settings.



173 children and young people received creative therapy from Coram's experienced therapists

57 children at four specialist schools in Camden were helped to address behavioural and communication difficulties

100% of head teachers and teachers were satisfied with Coram's creative therapies service

“Staff and students learn new strengths and we’ve seen significant increases in students’ emotional resilience”

Head of Special Educational Needs at a school working with Coram’s music therapists

Children experience life as a foundling as part of the Picturing Hetty Feather exhibition.



Pioneering adoption support

Creative therapies form a central pillar of Coram’s ground-breaking Adoption Support Gateway. This integrated service provides fast and easy access to a wide range of therapeutic assessments and interventions in order to meet the specific support needs of adoptive parents. See page 7 for more.

Next steps

In the coming year, Coram will complete a literature review of evidence on creative therapies to inform practice development. Two of Coram’s therapists will also present at the World Federation of Music Therapy conference in Japan.

Engaging the public in Coram’s story

The Coram collection of art – including major works donated to the organisation by William Hogarth and others – is displayed in our historic home by the Foundling Museum. This year more than 53,000 visitors learned about Coram’s evolution.

Special exhibitions included Feeding the 400, to which Coram made significant loans from its extensive archive. Picturing Hetty Feather also featured items from Coram’s collections and was based on the dramatisation of Jacqueline Wilson’s novel inspired by her exploration of Coram’s history during a fellowship at the museum.

Arts engagement for young people

Coram supported adopted and migrant young people to engage in professionally-supported theatre productions as a way of exploring their stories. This work will be developed further in partnership with major national arts organisations over the coming year.

Next year will see the launch of a new Thomas Coram module for 9 to 13 year-olds to celebrate the 350th anniversary of his birth and examine the historical development of rights for children. Voices, the annual writing competition for young people in and from care, will run for its third year.



Ryan’s story

Ryan was three years old and had been recently diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. He was having difficulty interacting with other children and was struggling to relate to adults, including his mum. Coram’s therapists observed Ryan’s behaviour and recommended that he attend a one-to-one music therapy session.

At the sessions, Ryan was able to channel his frustrated feelings into play and to develop his communication skills through interactive music-making. He has now developed the ability to play collaboratively and he has been able to relate better to both the music therapist and his mum. Ryan’s mum noticed the change: “I was able to connect with him on a completely different level.” The sessions proved so successful that Ryan had music therapy written into his Education, Care and Health Plan. Now a Coram therapist visits him at nursery once a week.

Enabling parents to support their children

Children depend on their parents to provide them with the safety, love and nurturing care they need to thrive. Coram provides the advice and support they need at all stages. Our specialist training and support groups enable parents, foster carers and adopters to gain the skills and confidence they need to help their children, from infancy to the teenage years. If parents are struggling to cope, Coram offers early help so they can be empowered to provide a loving and secure environment for their children or, if this is not possible, to ensure that a decision is made in an appropriate timescale for the child.

"We now live in a much calmer house! Happier parents and happier children!"

Father reflecting on the Incredible Years parenting groups



iStock

Young parents

Coram is a specialist in the support of young parents, enabling them to develop the skills needed to care for their baby and engage in education. This now extends to a peer education programme in schools, enabling young parents to help others to understand the impact of teenage parenthood and to gain confidence in building their own futures (see page 13).

13,467

parents advised by Coram's direct access helplines

Parenting programmes for adopters

Coram offers parenting programmes tailored to the unique needs and ages of adopters and adopted children. Parents of children aged eight years or under took part in the Parenting Skills for Adopters programme, based on Webster-Stratton's Incredible Years, 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 parents. 94% of adopters were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the programme, and 97% would recommend it to a friend.

Stay and play

When children are adopted at a very young age, parents might need help in overcoming the impact of the early adversity their children have experienced. This is often difficult to access in mainstream settings.

Coram's stay and play events are supported by a child psychotherapist to enable adopters to build suitable foundations for their child's development and access additional help if needs are identified.

- 44 families attended stay and play groups throughout the year
- 100% of parents would recommend the service

Parenting service achievements in Thurrock

Since 2009, Coram has worked with Thurrock Borough Council to deliver a range of accredited parenting programmes and one-to-one parenting interventions. These focus on building parental and family resilience and strengthening family and community attachments.

This year, 270 parents in Thurrock took part in parenting programmes or received one-to-one support from Coram. The service expanded by adding Incredible Years, a parenting skills course for those who had children under the age of eight years; STOP, a parenting programme for parents of teenagers; and Pit-STOP, a one-to-one version of STOP.

The 'Good to be me' programme, which addresses self-esteem and confidence issues, was also run in conjunction with the Thurrock Adult Community College.

"You've taught me so much and made me realise that I'm not alone."
- a parent in Thurrock



Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities (SFSC)

Last year there were 252 referrals to SFSC, a 13 week preventative parenting programme for parents in Thurrock with children aged three to 18 years. This universal programme aims to increase parental self-esteem and achieve positive long-term changes in family relationships. Participants saw particularly significant benefits to their emotional wellbeing, with 86% of parents indicating improvement.*

Mellow Parenting

There were 21 referrals to the mothers strand of Mellow Parenting, a 16-week intensive programme focusing on complex attachment issues and a parent's own childhood experiences. Coram's Impact and Evaluation team also carried out an evaluation of a new mixed-group format and provided recommendations for future effective delivery of mixed group sessions.

Angela's story

"FDAC helped both myself, and the professionals around me, find the shades of grey in an otherwise impossibly black-and-white situation. Being able to work with the same key worker and judge throughout proceedings made me feel I was treated as an individual, not a statistic. They challenged me to gain insight, helping me find the courage to confront my situation and the conviction to act on it.

Throughout proceedings, I found the strict control over my son and myself difficult and overwhelming. However, these boundaries helped me to lay the foundations for a strong and healthy future together. With the insight I gained, and the boundaries I still keep in place for myself, I now have a loving and happy son who, in turn, has a healthy mother who is free from addiction"
- a parent's reflections on FDAC



Managing risk for children

The Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) works with families and their professional networks to achieve better outcomes for children and families during care proceedings. Coram works in partnership with the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust to implement this innovative problem-solving court approach, helping parents control substance misuse and other related problems so they can be safely reunited with their children. When this is not possible, it aims to ensure that the best possible evidence has been put before the court and that parents feel they have been fairly treated.

Research and evaluation has found FDAC to be more successful than ordinary proceedings in helping parents achieve abstinence from drugs and alcohol and enable more children to be reunited with their parents. There are currently 9 FDACs across 17 local authorities sitting in a total of 13 courts.

The FDAC system brings vital cost savings, with research showing that for every £1 spent on the service, £2.30 is saved to the public purse. Coram is committed to continuing national rollout of the FDAC model, ensuring its sustainability and exploring how it could apply to more cases in care proceedings.

Since launching in 2015, the national FDAC community has:

- Worked with over **590** families, **970** parents, and **980** children.
- Set-up **13** FDACs across **21** local authorities and **16** courts and supported collaborative working between Children's Services, Judiciary, Cafcass, Public Health, and other key agencies.
- Hosted over **60** training and networking events.

Enabling young people to help others

Coram believes that young people can change their own lives and the world around them by taking social action as young ambassadors, peer educators and volunteers. By providing opportunities for placements and co-production, Coram enables young people to further their own skills and access careers in law, advocacy, communications and social care. At the same time, it helps improve the availability, relevance and effectiveness of services for young people in need.

This year the HALO programme, generously supported by The Queen's Trust, helped young people raise awareness on key issues and gain access to legal advice and rights. In particular, it has worked to develop understanding and address the challenges facing adopted children, young parents, and young migrants and refugees.



The Adoptables

The Adoptables is a national peer network that provides a platform for young ambassadors aged between 13 and 25 years to address issues faced by adopted young people. Through workshops across the country, the Adoptables work with other adopted children to identify and tackle the issues they face. This year, nine workshops addressed challenges around telling your own adoption story, experiences of cultural insensitivity in schools, and social media use for parents.

Influencing practice nationally

Young ambassadors receive safeguarding, presentation and media training in order to help them take on an advocacy role for others. This year the Adoptables influenced parliamentarians, ministers and professionals through meetings, offered support to consultations, and aided the development of the first Adoptables local group in Kent.

During this year's National Adoption Week, 15 young people shared their experiences of growing up as an adopted young person in a performance in front of over 100 people at the Stratford Circus Arts Centre.

Coram also completed a literature review on the views of adopted children to inform the design and development of Regional Adoption Agencies. In the coming year, the Adoptables will develop a new regional group for adopted teenagers in London.

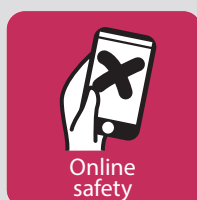


This year the Adoptables co-produced a schools' toolkit with Coram Life Education's specialists to raise awareness about adoption issues within school – find out more on page 18.

LawStuff

LawStuff is a website launched to help young people access information about and understand their legal rights. The site was developed by a young editor volunteering as part of Coram's HALO programme and provides free legal information to young people on issues including police and law, abuse and bullying, and children's services.

The website was visited more than 20,000 times in its first three months after launch.



Young parent peer education

Being a teenage parent brings many challenges. Coram's Young Parenthood peer education programme gives those who have become a parent at a young age the opportunity to raise awareness of their experience by designing and delivering a PSHE education module in secondary schools. These sessions discuss issues around sexual health, pregnancy, social lives, finances, housing and relationships.

The Young Parenthood programme has had an important impact on young people's confidence and understanding about issues relating to pregnancy. In the last year it reached 239 pupils, almost three times more than the previous year. The peer educators themselves grew in confidence, developed new skills, and increased their employment prospects.

After secondary school students attended PSHE sessions run by a peer educator:

95% had a better understanding of what it would be like to have a baby.

84% said they preferred learning about sex and relationships from young people.

HALO: Help, Advice and Legal Opportunity

To address the need for Help, Advice and Legal Opportunity for young people, Coram has launched the HALO programme, a charity-wide initiative providing opportunities for skilled 16-25 year olds to help their peers.

This year, 50 young people were involved in volunteer opportunities, internships and placements. These included:

- Volunteer advisors in the Child Law Advice Service and Coram Voice helplines.
- Youth Rights Trainers who developed and co-delivered training courses on children's rights and the law.
- A Trainee Solicitor in the Legal Practice Unit representing children, young people and their carers in court proceedings.
- A young editor of lawstuff.org.uk, a website on young people's rights.

These young people helped at least 1,108 others directly and 10,932 indirectly. New opportunities this year will include marketing, social media and further career development.

In the coming year, the HALO programme will expand to help young people benefit from Heritage, Arts and Literary Opportunity. This will take place in a new reading room and studio in The Queen Elizabeth II Centre.

"I have gained the understanding of what it is like to have really impacted someone's life"

HALO volunteer working on the CLAS helpline

Young Citizens

Young Citizens is a new ambassador programme for young migrants and refugees. The scheme, which builds on the success of the Adoptables, enables young people who have successfully established themselves in the UK to work with and represent the views of children and young people who are doing the same.

The Young Citizens – who include young people from countries such as Afghanistan, Eritrea and Ethiopia – are working with Coram Life Education to create teaching resources that address issues they have experienced in schools and respond to requests from teachers for help in ensuring effective integration of children in school.



Eve's story

"Life as a young parent has at points been stressful and complicated. It included moving around to various mother and baby hostels and dealing with the challenge of having professionals involved in my life that were not there before, such as key workers and social workers.

Relationships and sexual health awareness are areas that are not addressed enough in schools so it's exciting to have the chance to develop these programmes. My experiences as a peer educator have enabled me to help others and give them the knowledge I was never given. It can change their lives and make them feel as empowered as I do."

– Eve Clarke, Young Parenthood peer educator and project manager

Helping young people influence decisions about their future

Coram Voice is a leading youth advocacy organisation which helps young people access appropriate support and shape their own future. It supports children in and after care, as well as those who are otherwise in need and dependent on the state to ensure that they are treated fairly.

Coram Voice provides advocates, a national helpline, and trained independent visitors for young people in children's homes, adolescent mental health settings and residential units. The team works with local authorities to understand children's experiences of the care system, and celebrates the successes and creativity of young people in and on the edges of care. It also enables young people to develop the skills they need to influence decisions that affect their future.

"Bright Spots has made senior management listen to the voice and wishes of young people and made them address the key deficiencies in the service."

Local authority service manager

More than **3,000** children and young people were supported through telephone and direct access services.

97% said Coram Voice had helped them with their problem.

Our Lives, Our Care showed that **83%** thought being in care had made their lives better.

The Voices writing competition received **50%** more entrants compared to the previous year.

"Being in care has been the best thing that has happened in my life. I have gained more awards, I have become a volunteer at the local youth centre, and I feel loved, cared for and part of a family."

- Young person aged 11 to 18 years old

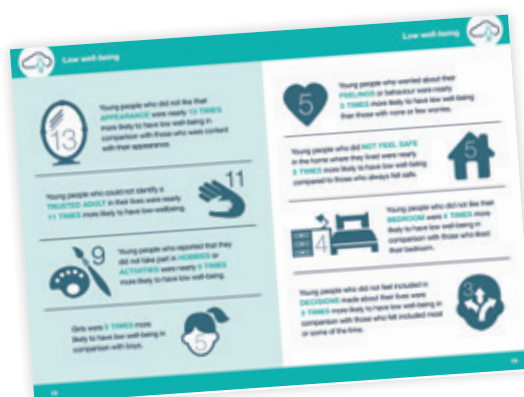
"I would like to know what my social care is. I don't really know what is going on and I want to know everything...I would like to be asked about what I want."

- Young person aged 8 to 10 years old

Bright Spots

Bright Spots, developed by Coram Voice with the University of Bristol and supported by the Hadley Trust, aims to help local authorities assess looked after children's subjective wellbeing, based on what is important to them. This year, the Bright Spots team published *Our Lives, Our Care*, analysing the insights of the first 611 children in care to complete a survey on their wellbeing. The survey, which achieved exceptionally high response rates, represents the first study of subjective wellbeing of looked-after children designed by the young people themselves (see page 5).

Over 2,300 children and young people from 16 local authorities have now completed the Bright Spots survey – one third of all looked after children in those areas. These results will be published in the coming year.



Providing a voice for those in need

This year, Coram Voice provided advocacy services to over 3,000 children and young people across the UK. Coram Voice's national helpline, available to over 95,000 children, continued to provide information about and access to direct advocacy support across England. Its invaluable support and increasing reach would not have been possible without the dedicated support of skilled and experienced helpline volunteers. Callers are referred to a Coram Voice advocate or a local advocacy provider as soon as possible, or signposted to other organisations and services that can help.

The Coram Voice advocacy service directly protected 162 children from abuse by providing a safe space to express what is happening to them. This year, advocacy and independent visitor services were expanded into Shropshire and Lincolnshire.

Coram Voice championed the voice of children in policy and practice and launched online resources to complement face-to-face advocacy services. These included a 'Find Your Local Advocacy Service' and were accessed by 9,961 users over the last year. In the coming year, Coram Voice will work with the new national safety net to ensure all young people in care can access the help they need.



Jackie Long, Channel 4 presenter and Social Affairs Editor, at the Voices 2017 ceremony

Writing new futures

The annual Voices writing competition celebrates the powerful and unique voices of children and young people in and from care. This year saw a 50% increase in the number of young entrants compared to 2016. An esteemed panel of judges praised the young writers on their powerful and creative expressions of changes and opportunities in their lives based around the theme of 'New Beginnings'.

The shortlist from this and last year's competitions are featured in Creative Voices, a new app developed in partnership with Pearson Publishing. The entries can be seen and heard at www.coramvoice.org.uk/voices-2017.

"Before he won the Voices competition his behaviour at school was always disruptive, with numerous phone calls home. After winning the competition we saw a noticeable improvement – he's gained in confidence and self belief and knows that with hard work he will achieve his goals."

– Mother of winner of Voices 2016



"Every young person gave powerful insights into their lives and experiences – their creativity, talent and resilience shine through."

Peter Capaldi, host of the Voices 2017 awards ceremony

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. Aided by the generous contributions of Comic Relief, the Drapers Charitable Fund and the PF Charitable Trust, this unique project removes the barriers homeless young people face when seeking help, most notably through our innovative partnership with the New Horizon Youth Centre.

Next steps

In the coming year, Coram Voice will enable more young people to gain skills and influence the effectiveness of practice by working as young trainers, while the LILAC programme will be relaunched to enable young care leavers to help assess and improve local services. A National Voice has joined with Coram Voice to advance further improvements to local services.

This year, the Homeless Outreach Project has:

- Provided ongoing advocacy support to **286** young people.
- Supported **116** young people in one-to-one sessions.
- Directly reached a total of **402** young people, while benefiting many others through the advice given to professionals.



Natalie's story

"The first time I met Mark, my allocated advocate, I was homeless, had no source of income, barely any clothes and was in my final year of secondary education. Mark supported me and was by my side through the whole process of waiting to be housed by the local authority. He was more than a knowledgeable professional – he was also an amazing friend, giving me the support I needed to ensure that my present circumstances didn't affect my future. He taught me my legal rights, but also that as a young person my voice is important and what I have to say matters. I am now currently studying my A levels and hope to go to university next September." – beneficiary of Coram Voice's Homeless Outreach Project

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. This year it helped nearly 529,000 children and families in the UK and millions more around the world. CCLC provides free legal advice, works to influence policy, provides legal representation, and addresses legal and policy issues affecting migrant children in England.

"I would like to record my delight that our case succeeded and to say how much I have admired your own and the Centre's legal work and commitment."

Client of Coram Children's Legal Centre's Legal Practice Unit



Responded in the Law Society Gazette to the debate on whether lawyers should be able to attend special educational needs tribunal hearings.



Important education law cases in which we successfully represented young people in the Upper Tribunal were officially reported. These included Gloucestershire County Council v EH [2017] and S v Worcestershire County Council [2017].



Noel Arnold, the LPU's Director of Legal Practice, sat on the judging panel for the 2016 Lawyer of the Year Awards after winning the inaugural children's rights award in 2015.



Contributed to a special supplement of Legal Action called 'Use it or lose it: children and legal aid', for which Noel Arnold was the legal editor and co-ordinating author.



Member of the drafting group of the Viability Assessment Toolkit published by the Family Rights Group.



Retained the Lexcel accreditation, the Law Society's quality mark for excellence in legal practice.

Resolving legal issues for children

This year, Coram Children's Legal Centre's Legal Practice Unit (LPU) continued to provide legal advice, assistance and representation to clients – predominantly those who are eligible for legal aid – across four areas of law: community care, immigration and asylum, family (children) and education. The LPU is proud to maintain its Lexcel accreditation, the Law Society's legal practice quality mark for excellence in legal practice management and client care.

This year the LPU spoke at or provided training to: the UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group, a group of independent reviewing officers for looked after children, a group of voluntary adoption agencies, and the Victoria Climbié Foundation UK conference on communication in child protection.

Independent Review Mechanism

The Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) provides people in England who have been to a fostering or adoption panel – either as first time applicants or approved foster carers or adopters – with the opportunity to be reviewed by an independent panel. Applications can be made to the IRM after the Agency Decision Maker has indicated that they will not be approved as foster carers or adopters.

In 2016-17 the IRM received 109 fostering and 13 adoption applications. Next year the IRM plans to trial the use of video-based panel meetings.

Child Law Advice Service (CLAS)

CLAS provides legal advice and information on child, family and education law through our dedicated website and advice line. It remains the only free legal source of information, advice and representation to children and young people, families, carers and professionals in England.

This year CLAS handled 17,298 calls and supported 688,629 unique visitors to its website – both considerably exceeding targets set by the Department for Education. Evaluation showed 97% of users were very satisfied with the service and 99% would recommend it to other users.

This year CLAS launched a new online school subscription service and continued to grow its capacity and reach by supporting volunteer placements by law students from the University of Essex.

LawStuff

This year the new LawStuff website was launched to provide young people with free information about their legal rights and explanations of complex terms.

It was visited more than 20,000 times in the three months after its launch. For further details see page 12.



Migrant Children's Project

The Migrant Children's Project's (MCP) services are more in need than ever. Increased numbers of refugee children arrived in the UK last year, with over 3,000 applying for asylum alone. Many children have been unable to access the legal advice and support they need and local authorities have required training and guidance on how best to care for them.

Last year MCP's advice line dealt with more than 1,200 calls from families, children, practitioners and professionals. Of these one-off interventions, 94% of callers felt they were given clear next steps to follow. The MCP's Greater London outreach service, which works with hard to reach migrant groups, dealt with 482 cases benefitting more than 1,400 people. The new Exceptional Case Funding project secured legal funding for 42 vulnerable families who could not otherwise afford representation.

Improving practice

The MCP launched its fifth revision of *Seeking Support*, a guide to the rights and entitlements of separated children, following the distribution of 3,000 copies of the previous edition.

CCLC trained over 1,000 social workers and other practitioners on the rights and entitlements of migrant and refugee children, covering 40 local authorities in England.

As part of Coram's HALO programme (see page 13), nine Youth Rights Trainers aged 18 to 23 and with direct experience of the immigration system underwent training and accreditation to help co-design and co-deliver the training courses. They focus on developing new courses with non-legal professionals, families and young people.



Policy and legislation development

As co-chair of the National Asylum Stakeholder Forum Children's Subgroup and chair of the Refugee Children's Consortium, CCLC has worked hard to improve the treatment of unaccompanied children in the asylum system. The team greatly influenced revised Home Office guidance on processing children's asylum claims, as well as the Department for Education's guidance on the care of unaccompanied and trafficked children. It also influenced the government's decision to grant refugee status to Syrians.

The MCP has introduced new awareness raising and training courses on the rights of children from EU countries, and in the coming year will continue to work on protecting the status of this group when the UK formally leaves the EU.

Upholding international children's rights

This year Coram International provided socio-legal research and legal systems design and support to 39 countries (see page 28). This has covered issues including child trafficking, slavery, migration, and juvenile justice reform.



Harry's story

Harry was an undocumented 17 year old living with a single father and lacking basic necessities when his girlfriend first contacted the Migrant Children's Project. Harry's father suffered from mental health issues, but his unusual nationality issues held the key to Harry proving his status as a British citizen and being able to begin an exciting new apprenticeship.

The MCP advice line solicitor met with Harry and after some investigative work found proof that he was actually British. Armed with this evidence, Harry's social worker was then able to help him to apply for a passport so he could begin his training.

Supporting schools to address children's needs

Coram Life Education (CLE) is the UK's leading provider of high quality personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Aligned with the Ofsted framework, it helps to develop children's knowledge, skills and confidence to make positive choices and navigate the risks around them. Coram is at the forefront of a growing range of online resources and targeted programmes, which this year included workshops for gifted children, and new peer education delivery in schools.

Coram Life Education works in **1 in 8** UK primary schools with **8,000** teachers subscribed to the SCARF online forum.

475,000 children in over **2,000** UK schools benefited during the academic year.

97% of teachers surveyed believe CLE helps their school meet Ofsted requirements for wellbeing.

Life Education was delivered to over **40,000** children in Cyprus, Finland and Barbados.

CLE achieved NHS England's **Information Standard** for the sixth consecutive year.

Promoting a whole-school approach to wellbeing

This year CLE launched SCARF (Safety, Caring, Achievement, Resilience and Friendship), online curriculum resources that gained 8,000 school-based subscribers in just over six months.

More than just a scheme of work, SCARF offers a whole-school approach to children's mental health and wellbeing – keeping children safe, promoting resilience and raising achievement. It supports great teaching and learning via online, easy-to-use curriculum resources and planning tools that are developed by teachers for teachers in order to make their lives easier.

SCARF is flexible, regularly updated and adaptable to a class' age, stage, and curriculum framework. It is evidence-based, regularly evaluated, and designed to help schools meet Ofsted inspection requirements.

In the coming year, Coram will develop the SCARF portal to increase access to a wider range of services for schools, including legal help, art therapy, and improvement support.



Inspirational learning

CLE's mobile classroom provides children with a magical and memorable experience. In the coming year, Life Box, an alternative, more transportable method of delivering lessons, will be developed and implemented.

"Dear Harold, I hope you come and visit me soon. My favourite part was when you told us how to keep our bodies healthy. I felt really happy in the classroom, I hope you come back every single day!"

– a student in Year 1

Raising awareness of adoption experiences

The Adoptables Schools Toolkit is a free set of resources containing lesson plans, teachers' guidance, films and activities designed to raise awareness of the school experience of adopted young people.

So far the toolkit has been downloaded 150 times, potentially reaching as many as 10,000 students. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and a similar toolkit for schools to promote integration of migrant children will be developed in collaboration with Coram's Young Citizens (see page 13) over the following year.



Programmes building resilience and understanding

- **bCyberwise**, CLE's internet safety programme, promotes positive cyber citizenship and teaches children how to be respectful and safe online.
- **Time for Change** is a module on puberty, which from next year will be delivered as a Relationships Education programme in partnership with Ecclesiastical Insurance. This comes as the government announces plans to make Sex and Relationship Education statutory from 2019.
- **Captain Coram** is a module which links with the History, Art and English curricula by exploring the story of Thomas Coram and his vision to improve the life chances of children in the 18th century and beyond. It includes images of original documents and paintings that inspired the popular 'Hetty Feather' stories, and examines the role of artists who supported Coram, including Hogarth and Handel. These resources will enable schools to celebrate the 350th anniversary of Thomas Coram's birth in 2018.

Increasing children's knowledge about healthy lifestyles

CLE sessions increase children's knowledge of the prevalence of poor health habits within peer groups, such as smoking. Almost half of 11 to 15 year olds have experimented with smoking or drinking. CLE educators asked a Year 5 class to say what percentage of 11 to 15 year olds in England they thought smoked regularly. Only 6% of children answered correctly before a CLE session – afterwards, 75% knew the answer.



3D versions of Harold the Giraffe joined this year's Cycle to MIPIM (see page 32). Harold also appeared on a card given to riders to thank them for their hard work raising valuable funds for Coram.

"What a treat to have such high quality engaging resources at our fingertips. Thank you!"

Teacher from Myrtle Park Primary School discussing SCARF resources

Tomorrow's Achievers

In April 2017, the Coram group were delighted to welcome Tomorrow's Achievers, a programme of workshops for gifted children that recognises the issues they can face. Since its launch in 1998, over 18,000 children have benefited from access to Tomorrow's Achievers Master Classes, which will now sit within Coram's education and wellbeing programmes.

Over the coming years, the classes will be developed to reach greater numbers of pupils at the Key Stage Two stage of schooling, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Generating Genius

Coram is proud to host and support Generating Genius, which helps young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to realise their potential in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths). Through a programme of science leadership, academic interventions and industry-linked opportunities, it helps put disadvantaged young people in the running for places at the UK's most selective universities.

In the coming year Coram will complete an impact evaluation of the programme and help to develop its first alumni support programme.

Inspiring a new generation of adopters

People considering adoption often report feeling confused about the process and unsure about where to go for advice. First4Adoption (F4A) is the national adoption information service for adopters and professionals working in the field. Over the past four years it has established itself as a key national hub for independent information and is recognised as an example in its field by professionals and practitioners.

F4A offers the only national public helpline for adopters in England and runs one of the biggest adoption awareness-raising initiatives in England – National Adoption Week. F4A's comprehensive online resources also help prepare adopters for the process and encourage more people to consider adoption.

"First4Adoption provides adopters with all the advice, guidance and support that they need"

Edward Timpson,
former Minister for Vulnerable
Children and Families

Last year First4Adoption's services reached a record number of people:

290,787 unique website users, **1,223** emails and **3,943** calls.

First Steps e-resource

First Steps is a free online resource designed by experts to help adopters understand the rewards and challenges of adoption. Using video, audio and online lessons, it provides real insights into life as an adopter to help users decide whether adoption is the right choice for them. Last year, First Steps was downloaded by 2,558 individuals and used by adoption agencies in their training for prospective adopters.

Coverage of this year's National Adoption Week in the Daily Mirror.



Prime Minister Theresa May during National Adoption Week with Cornerstone founders Clare Brasier and Helen Costa. Cornerstone's peer mentoring programme was evaluated by Coram this year (see page 27).

National Adoption Week

Last year First4Adoption also ran the second National Adoption Week, an annual event which aims to clarify the adoption process, reflect on the challenges of adoptive parenting, and share individual stories. National Adoption Week's news and online activity, which involved a wall of fame showcasing supporters and a partnership with Mirror newspapers, reached 10,870,000 people.

The National Adoption Week Awards were also held at the Foundling Museum in London to recognise exceptional achievement among those working or involved in adoption. Jeanne Kaniuk, OBE, Managing Director of Adoption at Coram, won the Lifetime Achievement Award for her groundbreaking work in the field, especially the development of the pioneering concurrent planning project.

- 85%** of people who used F4A's services felt they made a positive difference to their adoption journey
- 97%** of people who used F4A services were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied'
- 96%** of professionals who had contact with F4A would recommend it to adopters



Helping local authorities find lasting solutions for permanence

Coram-i works with local authorities to help them improve their services for looked after children. The team, which includes social care experts, consultants, analysts and researchers, has developed a strong reputation for delivering high quality and effective support. Their work has helped to advance Coram's profile as an innovative leader in tackling isolated or systemic issues facing local authorities.



The Kent post-adoption support team who have worked with Coram-i to develop innovative services

Coram Kent development partnership

Kent County Council has worked in partnership with Coram-i since 2012. Last year the council focused on developing its innovative adoption support offer. Our clinicians and therapists work alongside Kent's social workers to offer high quality in-house support to adoptive families, thereby increasing the chances of successful adoptions.

This unique approach has been identified by the Department for Education as an example of an effective partnership working to deliver excellent outcomes for children. Learning from the partnership has been influential in helping Kent move forward with plans to establish a Regional Adoption Agency.

Regionalising adoption

Coram-i continued to lead the Central East Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) project, working with seven local authorities and three independent adoption agencies. The project was designated as one of five demonstration projects in 2016–17 leading the way in developing RAAs. It is still the only project aiming to create an RAA that is not wholly owned by local authorities. As part of this work, Coram-i introduced a new approach to matching, helping the local authorities find suitable matches at a quicker rate and informing the region's recruitment strategies.

Coram-i also provided support to the design and implementation of the London, Adopt Thames Valley, and Kent, Medway and Bexley RAA projects.

Supporting improvement and practice

The team supported Slough Children's Services Trust as they prepared for their first Ofsted inspection. They also completed adoption diagnostics for three local authorities, supporting them to identify drift in adopter journeys and find solutions to delays.

The team also won a second Department for Education grant to improve the quality of permanency planning and the stability of long-term foster placements. Coram-i will work in partnership with the City of Manchester, Northamptonshire County Council, Slough Children's Services Trust, and Wandsworth Borough Council to minimise both case level and systematic delays in achieving permanency. The team will introduce robust tracking and performance management tools, test early family finding techniques, and develop scalable approaches that can be used by any local authority, regardless of their size or structure.

The project will also provide the four pilot sites with the opportunity to access expertise from a range of organisations, including the Centre for Child and Family Research (CCFR) at Loughborough University, CoramBAAF, and Cambridgeshire County Council.

Coram-i placed **100 children** for adoption as part of ongoing work with Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire County Councils. This work has resulted in combined savings of over **£3 million** over the past two years as a result of children spending less time in care.

"Our work with Coram-i has shown that cross sector partnerships focused on delivering excellence in outcomes for children can be successful."

– Philip Segurola, Director for Specialist Children's Services, Kent County Council.

Securing family matches for the children who wait the longest

Coram contributes essential services towards the national infrastructure for adoption and fostering, working to ensure that children in England have the best opportunity to find suitable families. The Adoption Match service secured homes for 232 children, whilst Coram's pioneering Adoption Activity Days have achieved impressive outcomes in finding families for more than 100 additional children perceived as harder to place. New Activity Days for Fostering have also been successfully piloted.

"One year ago today I saw my little man's profile at an Exchange Day. I highly recommend them"

Adopter who used the Adoption Match service



iStock

Adoption Match

Adoption Match is the national matching service that runs the statutory Adoption Register for England. In 2016-17, 1,387 children who had not found a local match to a family within 90 days, as well as 1,313 families looking for a child to adopt, were referred to the register.

The service matched 232 children who had been on the register for an average of 308 days. Over 120 of these were confirmed from links made at Exchange Days held across the country, with the remainder the result of child-specific searches by the specialist team.

In July 2016, Adoption Match started a pilot service which allows adopters from 28 agencies and practitioners from across the country to directly access the service in order to search for and identify links. This has already resulted in a 20% increase in links identified.

Nearly 1,000 court searches for practitioners considering a child's permanence plan were made during the last year. The service's dedicated staff also received 3,500 calls from adopters and practitioners seeking to find suitable homes for children.

Celebrating social work

In March, Coram held a special forum to examine the past, present and future of social work. It marked the publication of Professor Mark Doel's *Social Work In 42 Objects* (below), which includes a token from the Coram archive as its first entry. The event featured Isabel Trowler, Chief Social Worker for Children and Families, and John Simmonds OBE, Director Policy, Research and Development at CoramBAAF.



Aaron and Maria's story

Siblings Aaron and Maria were five and six years old when they were referred to Adoption Match. Despite the obligation to refer at 90 days, their adoption agency had not referred the siblings for 882 days. Upon receiving their referral, the service carried out a search on the same day and forwarded ten links to their social worker. One family soon proved a successful match and now provides a stable and loving home for the siblings.

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



“As soon as I saw him I just thought, ‘he is my son’. Our paths crossed and I’ve got that Activity Day to thank for that”

Coram adoptive parent

Adoption Activity Days



Coram's Activity Days give prospective adopters and foster carers the opportunity to interact with children in a safe,

supported and fun environment. This enables them to discover whether they feel an emotional connection, rather than relying on a written profile.

Supported by the Big Lottery's Reaching Communities Fund, Activity Days are delivered by specialist staff who ensure that the children involved enjoy an exciting day. They are now fully embedded into Coram's range of family finding services for looked after children.

“You can look at the picture and read the profile but to actually interact with them and see their personalities was a huge benefit.”

– Parent participating in an Activity Day

Activity Days are a unique means of family finding for children deemed harder to place. Of children who attended an Activity Day in 2016–17, 60% had a learning or physical disability, 43% were deemed older (aged between five and nine years old), and 60% were part of a sibling group wanting to be placed together.

An independent evaluation of Adoption Activity Days was undertaken last year, with important findings:

- Prospective adopters who attend an Activity Day are subsequently prepared to broaden their matching criteria, even if they are not linked to a child on the day.
- 85% of adopters said it would be detrimental to not have Adoption Activity Days as part of their family finding journey.

Activity Days for Fostering



This year also saw the successful development and piloting of Activity Days for Fostering. Three pilots were held in Kent,

Slough and Wolverhampton. Foster carers wanting to make a long term commitment to a child were invited by their agencies to attend.

Children attending these events were typically over nine years old – yet the day was the first time during their time in care that they had been able to directly participate in their own family finding.

Outcomes from these pilots provided encouraging signs that a target matching rate of 20-30% could be achieved. Further events are planned for the coming year to build on these initial pilots and make the case for social investment.

20 Adoption Activity Days were held throughout the year, including the first in Wales

457 children attended an Activity Day (up from 288 the previous year)

469 adopters attended an Activity Day (up from 393 the previous year)

120 children were matched with families



Leading adoption and fostering policy and practice

CoramBAAF's members continue to make up the largest community of agencies and individuals dedicated to securing the best outcomes for children separated from their birth parents. The multi-disciplinary organisation supports agencies and professionals and acts as an advocate on behalf of its members across the UK.

This year CoramBAAF served around 1,200 members, including 900 individuals, 169 local authorities, 112 independent fostering providers and 30 voluntary adoption agencies. It also developed new partnership activities in Northern Ireland and with AFA Cymru and AFA Scotland. All members share a common commitment to standards of practice based on the welfare of children. A survey of our member agencies in England has helped shape plans for the coming year.

4 editions of *Adoption & Fostering* quarterly journal published

38 workshops and conferences provided in England

93 commissioned training courses delivered to **1,650** professionals

1,200 queries to our advice line answered

Membership included **147** local authorities in England, all **22** local authorities in Wales, all **5** health and social care trusts in Northern Ireland

34,000 books sold

Conferences, training and workshops

Our conferences in England, Wales and Northern Ireland focused on contemporary sector issues including attachment in adoptive families and the future of special guardianship.

Bespoke training courses delivered included skills-based courses for fostering, care planning, and the Secure Base Model. Popular workshops were held on a range of topics such as assessment panels and life story work.

Advice

CoramBAAF advisers respond to queries on social work practice, legal issues and complex cases. Information officers responded to queries from government departments and news services seeking statistical information, research needed in preparation for court, and resources and guidance on various issues.

"The CoramBAAF Advice Line helps us seek the expertise and knowledge that we require to keep abreast of developments in policies and practice. We can always seek the views of CoramBAAF if we are unsure of any fostering or adoption related matter" – Jo Ogier, Senior Social Work Practitioner, States of Guernsey.

"CoramBAAF publications draw on the very best internationally renowned research to apply what we know is helpful to the daily lives of families" – Professor Gillian Schofield, Centre for Research on Children and Families, University of East Anglia.

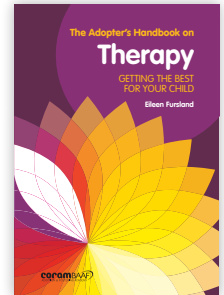
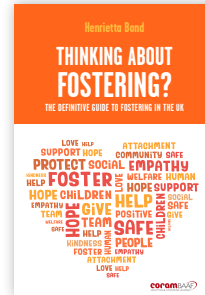
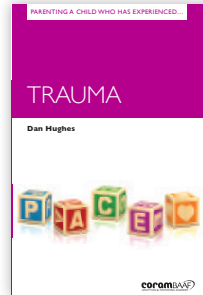
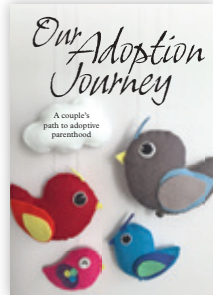
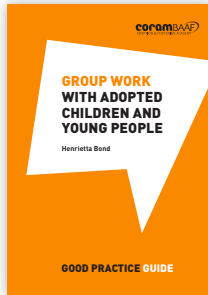
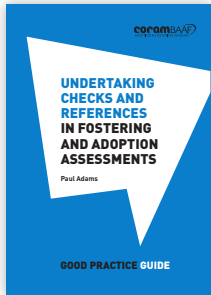
Informing and educating

Seventeen new titles were published on subjects including good practice guidance on adoption by foster carers, access to information for adult care leavers, and group work with adopted children. Revisions were made to bestselling guides for those considering adoption or fostering, as well as guides on fostering panels, life story work, and the adoption process.

Two titles on sexual abuse and trauma were added to the Parenting Matters series, and four editions of *Adoption & Fostering*, a quarterly peer-reviewed journal, were published.



John Simmonds OBE, Director of Policy, Research and Development at CoramBAAF, and Paul Curran, Vice Chairman of Coram, at CoramBAAF's Agency Members' Annual Reception in September 2016.



Advocating and influencing

CoramBAAF's consultants continue to engage with members, provide advice on policy and practice, recommend best practice, and contribute to the shaping of national policy.

The organisation responded to the Inquiry into Fostering and to a number of other public consultations on issues including looked after children's mental health, attachment-based interventions, and achieving permanence.

CoramBAAF is represented on the Adoption Leadership Board, the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Looked After Children and Care Leavers, the advisory group on adoption support, and the Kinship Care Alliance.

CoramBAAF identified and conveyed sector concerns on proposed clauses in the Children and Social Work Bill which were ultimately deleted by the House of Lords. Although re-introduced at the House of Commons stage, they were later struck out for a second time.

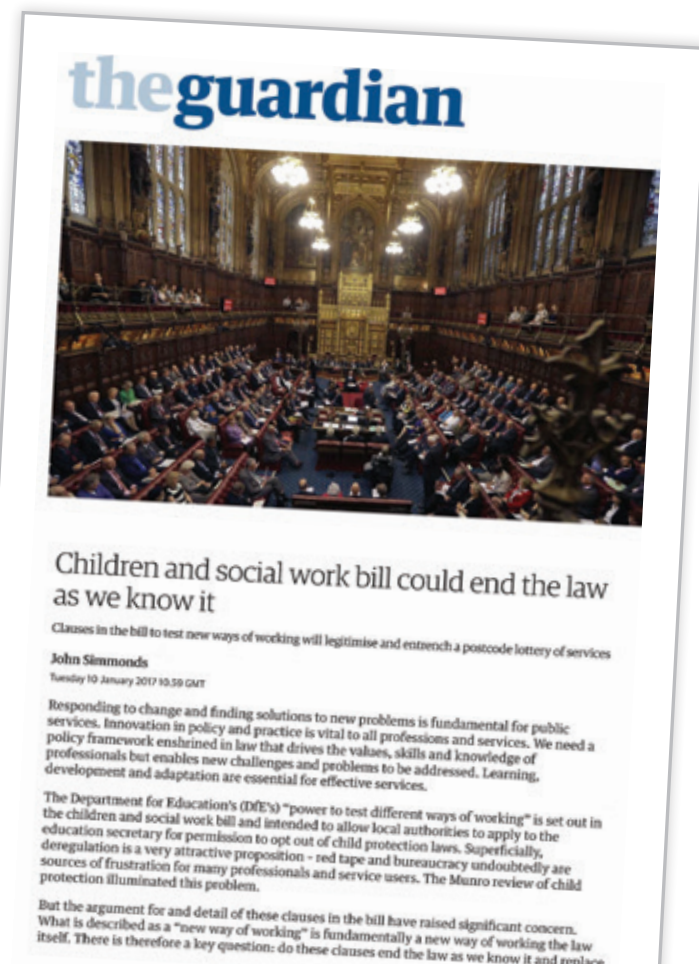
Multi-disciplinary committees, special interest groups and practice forums met regularly to discuss and debate new developments and practice dilemmas and contribute to the shaping of policy and practice.

Next steps

CoramBAAF's new website will offer greater functionality and a comprehensive members' area. Our participation in key national committees and networks will include the Government's Fostering Stocktake. Good practice guidance will be published on fostering for adoption, managing allegations against foster carers, and undertaking special guardianship assessments.

"The quality of research and advice continues to ensure that CoramBAAF is at the centre of policy and practice development"

Ian Brazier, Executive Director,
The Foster Care Co-operative



Improving outcomes through evidence

Coram is committed to developing and promoting best practice in support of children and young people. The charity's diverse range of experts conduct research and evaluations, influence policy developments, and speak out on the issues that matter most to children.

Coram's Impact and Evaluation Centre works alongside professionals from Coram-i, Coram International, CoramBAAF, Coram Adoption and Coram Voice to synthesise learning, communicate findings to wider audiences, and both codify practice and develop resources for external professionals.

Improving service performance

The Impact and Evaluation team works to maximise Coram's impact and ensure its services are optimised to best meet user needs. Insights from rigorous measurements and evaluations are used to improve performance outcomes and demonstrate impact to commissioners and policy makers.

Supporting vulnerable children and families

Exploring the benefits of cultural education for looked after children

Responding to a request by A New Direction and with financial support from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the team conducted an exploratory literature review investigating the nature and impact of arts and cultural education on looked after children. The report contributed to debates over whether a version of Artsmark should be developed for virtual schools.

Evaluating an approach to Community Based Assessment

The team examined the experiences of referrers to Community Based Assessment (CBA), a service offered by Coram and the London Family Drug and Alcohol Court in Thurrock. CBA provided expert assessment of families with children in need or at risk of being removed.

Promoting best practice and policy

Coram's service delivery makes it uniquely placed to provide evidence on practice and disseminate knowledge across the sector. In coming years, Coram will continue to build an improved knowledge base and work to further influence national policy and practice.

Children in the global era

Following the June 2016 referendum on Britain's EU membership, Coram grew concerned that discussion on trade and tariffs was obscuring the need to protect the welfare of children. In response, Coram prepared a briefing paper entitled *Brexit: children's rights at risk or opportunity in the global era?* It called on the government to address and frame provision on rights and opportunities for children in the UK and to recognise their need for stability. The paper received influential press coverage and was well received by peers in the House of Lords. Further publications on issues such as undocumented children will follow in the coming year.



Other policy responses

The team also responded to the Department for Education's call for evidence on the mental health and wellbeing of looked after children, consultation on reporting and acting on child abuse and neglect, and the consultation on the National Assessment and Accreditation System for social work.

Risk in social care

In October, Coram's first Institute Forum on Risk met to debate the issues around decision-making for children. Speakers included Lord Justice Munby, President of the Family Division; Dave Hill, President of the Association of Directors of Children's Services; Professor David Spiegelhalter, Professor of Risk at the University of Cambridge; and Professor Anthony Finkelstein, Chief Scientific Adviser for National Security.



The launch of the Bright Spots report in the Foundling Museum in March 2017.

“Professional, insightful and used robust outcomes measures to evidence impact”

Grandparents Plus on a Coram evaluation

Evaluation consultancy

Other children's sector charities have used Coram's expertise to evaluate their projects. In the coming year, support will be provided to the Carers' Trust and Generating Genius as part of the development of the Coram Centre for Impact.

Coram is one of 18 organisations selected to support other voluntary and statutory agencies that have received grants from the Department for Education Innovation Fund.

Enhancing understanding of adoption matching

The team analysed adoption data to identify promising matching practice and undertook interviews with agencies that were placing children quicker. They also worked to support matching in local authorities. A summary guide was made available to the professional community with support from the Department for Education.

“Practical, helpful and compelling”
– expert reviewer on Coram's adoption matching research.

Evaluating adopter mentoring and restorative parenting training

The team evaluated the effectiveness of two schemes offered by Cornerstone, which seek to increase adopter confidence and thereby create more stable adoption placements.

Researching the experiences of vulnerable children

The team also undertook research and provided a suite of resources under the Department for Education's Practice Improvement programme. This included research on children's transitions from foster care to permanent adoption placements, analysis of post-adoption support services in Kent, and evaluation of attachment training for practitioners and foster carers.

The Our Lives, Our Care report examined the personal views of 611 looked after children (a response rate of 25-40%) in five pilot local authorities. This was the first time survey work has been conducted with children aged under seven years (see page 14).

The Impact and Evaluation team are working alongside Coram International to deliver a new project for the Office of the Children's Commissioner, which aims to capture the perspective of vulnerable children on their own unique experiences.

Advancing research

Coram works closely with university partners on national programmes of work with specialist advisory groups. We would like to thank our partners and advisors including: Prof. Julie Selwyn and Dr Debbie Watson (Hadley Centre, University of Bristol), Dr Lisa Holmes and Prof. Harriet Ward (Loughborough University), Prof. Judith Masson (University of Bristol), Dr Nick Midgley (Anna Freud National Centre and UCL), Prof. Fiona Brooks (University of Hertfordshire), Prof. Judith Harwin (Lancaster University), Sir Alan Wilson (Alan Turing Institute), Prof. Eamon McCrory (UCL), Dr Ann Hagell (Association for Young People's Health), Irina Morosanu (Anglia Ruskin University), Sir Michael Rutter and Dr Judith Trowell.



National Representation

Coram's Chief Executive, Dr Carol Homden CBE, is a member of the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, Chair of the National Autistic Society, and a board member of the Association of Child and Adolescent Mental Health. She serves on the Children's Inter-Agency Group and the National Adoption Leadership Board, for which she chairs the National Recruitment and Matching Forum.

Dr John Simmonds OBE, Director of Policy, Research and Development at CoramBAAF, serves on the advisory board of the Rees Centre, as well as the Department for Education's Adoption Leadership Board and Adoption Support Advisory Group. Jeanne Kaniuk OBE, Managing Director of Adoption, is a member of the Department for Education's Expert Group on Early Placement.

Brigid Robinson, Managing Director of Coram Voice, is the Chair of the National Children's Advocacy Consortium and Linda Briheim-Crookall chairs the Alliance for Children in Care and Care Leavers. Kamena Dorling, Head of Policy for Coram Children's Legal Centre, chairs the Refugee Children's Consortium, and Noel Arnold, Director of Legal Practice, is the Vice Chair of the Association of Lawyers for Children.

Upholding children's rights across the world

Coram International has continued to promote and implement children's rights, working in 39 countries over the last year – more than ever before. As well as conducting research on issues relating to children, the team's work contributes to the development of policy, law reform, capacity building and system strengthening for the UN, governments and civil society to ensure that children's rights are respected, protected and fulfilled.

Our new website (coraminternational.org) showcases the global work of Coram Children's Legal Centre in protecting children's rights through research and consultancy work around the world and strives to broaden awareness of the expertise available from the Coram group.



Internal migration in Vietnam and the Philippines

Coram International carried out research on behalf of Plan International exploring the experiences and gender dynamics of young internal migrants in Vietnam and the Philippines. The research found economic issues to be a key driver behind youth migration, with young women in the Philippines in particular expected to migrate to support their families. It identifies policies and programmes that promote safe migration and support young people to take full advantage of their migration status.



Tackling violence against children in Cambodia

UNICEF Cambodia contracted Coram International to develop a Theory of Change (TOC) on how to eliminate violence against children in Cambodia. The TOC sets out clear steps that the government should take in order to prevent and respond to all types of violence experienced by Cambodian children.

The wide-ranging study was used to inform the development of a National Action Plan to prevent and respond to violence against children in the country.

Combating child trafficking and slavery in Vietnam

Coram International has been awarded funding from the Home Office's Child Trafficking Protection Fund (CTPF) for a two and a half year project that aims to help end the trafficking of children within and from Vietnam. Partnering with UNICEF Vietnam and Unicef UK, the team will acquire much needed evidence about the patterns, trends and factors that put many children at risk of trafficking and slavery. It will strengthen multi-agency coordination, prevention and response through workshops and capacity building.



Published two research reports in partnership with the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) on the influence of law on young people's access to sexual and reproductive health and rights in Nepal and the Philippines.



The Chief Justice of Zanzibar adopted the Children's Court Rules drafted by Coram International. They are now applied across Zanzibar.



Carried out the first ever comprehensive mapping and analysis of the child protection systems in Cross River and Gombe State in Nigeria, and identified ways to reform and strengthen these systems.



A study on Children and Counter Terrorism was published by UNICRI and discussed at an Experts Meeting in Malta in 2016.



Concluded a project with UNICEF Bangladesh to provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Law and Parliamentary Affairs on the implementation of the Children Act 2013.



Evaluated UNICEF Myanmar's strategy on child protection since 2012.



Pixabay

Alternative care in Cambodia

The team completed the first in-depth study on the use of alternative care in the community for UNICEF Cambodia. The findings indicated that, contrary to generally held views, it would be difficult to safely return children in residential care to their families without significant changes in social attitudes, family support and financial assistance.

The study provided information and evidence and offered comprehensive recommendations for national authorities as they seek to implement the National Action Plan for improving childcare. This has a target of safely returning 30% of children in residential care to their families by 2018.



Child protection and justice in Nigeria

Through a contract with UNICEF Nigeria, the team is supporting the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development and nine state ministries across Nigeria to develop a model for child protection. It is also helping to create a standard set of regulations and guidance to allow the model to be rolled out nationally in the coming years.

Coram International is also providing technical assistance to aid the reform of the juvenile justice system. This includes the development of pre-trial diversion programmes and forms part of our extensive range of work in youth justice.



Child justice reform in Tanzania

For the past five years, Coram International has been supporting governments in Tanzania and Zanzibar to reform their child justice systems. The team have developed laws, regulations and guidance, supported the establishment of Children's Courts, and launched pilot programmes to support vulnerable children in conflict with the law.

Unlocking Children's Rights

Coram International has led partners from ten EU member-state countries in developing an innovative training resource for professionals and practitioners. It seeks to strengthen their knowledge of children's rights and ensure that children participate meaningfully in the decisions affecting them. The resource from the project, which was co-funded by the Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme of the European Union and part-funded by the Evan Cornish Foundation and the Allan & NESTA Ferguson Charitable Trust, has been successfully piloted across Europe and is freely available on Coram International's website.



Professor Dame Carolyn Hamilton, Director of Coram International, whose service to children's rights was recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2017.



Funded by the European Union

Media highlights



The Huffington Post
3 March 2016

Buzzfeed
18 January 2017



The Guardian
24 May 2017

Community Care
9 March 2017



Champion supporters

Coram is committed to providing support to children and young people wherever our help will make the biggest difference. We work with statutory authorities and the government, but in cases where children and young people fall through the net we depend on individuals, trusts, and companies. These generous contributors help to ensure that all children get a fair chance in life and that we are able to gather evidence to influence the future design of services and policies. Thank you to all of those who help to make Coram's work possible.

"Coram has an amazing history, and where it was founded from and what it's become today is very moving – it's a fantastic charity"

Rider in the Club Peloton
Cycle to MIPIIM

Cycle of value

Club Peloton is a fundraising charity that uses cycling as a platform to raise money to improve social outcomes. Over five years, Club Peloton's riders and sponsors have raised over £1 million for our work, making it the biggest and most valuable supporter in Coram's 278-year history.

This year's Legal & General Real Assets Cycle to MIPIIM was a record-breaking event, raising in excess of £400,000 for Coram. Almost 200 cyclists completed the 1,500km journey from London to Cannes, spread, for the first time, across two routes. As a result of its tenacity and teamwork, Club Peloton's partnership with Coram was recognised as a 'Best Cross-Sector Charity Partnership' finalist in the Charity Times Awards.

Strategic funding from foundations

Multi-year funding from trusts and foundations enables Coram to plan on a longer timescale. It also means we can build vital evidence of sustained impact and address the needs of the most marginalised in practice and in policy. This year we were fortunate to partner with many inspiring grant-making organisations.

- **The Queen's Trust** has committed £2 million to the construction of The Queen Elizabeth II Centre, Coram's national centre of excellence for children (see page 34). The Trust has also made generous contributions towards the HALO and Adoptables programmes, enabling young people to impact issues that affect them and their peers while also building their own skills.

- The **Paul Hamlyn Foundation's** support of £150,000 over three years for the Migrant Children's Project enabled Coram to support undocumented children and build evidence on the complex issues that affect them.
- The **Hadley Trust's** generous funding of the Bright Spots project has enabled Coram Voice to build robust measurement of the subjective wellbeing of looked after children so that their views and experiences can influence the way services are delivered.
- The **ZVM Rangoonwala Foundation's** commitment of £1 million will fund the construction of the Rangoonwala Conference & Learning Centre on the Coram campus.



Bill Hughes, Head of Real Assets at Legal & General Investment Management, celebrates finishing the Cycle to MIPIIM event between London and Cannes to raise funds for Coram's work.



Jon Carman was one of 33 runners who ran the 2017 London Marathon. Jon ran for his grandmother, who was a pupil of the Foundling Hospital.



Lulu, James Naughtie, Dr Carol Homden CBE, and Joanna David at the Coram Christmas Celebration.



David Blyth (right), a former pupil of the Foundling Hospital, at Coram's 275th anniversary reception.

Corporate support

Many companies supported Coram through foundations or staff engagement. Principle supporters this year include **Coutts**, which has chosen Coram as its new charity partner. This year 98 staff members completed the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge, the first in a programme of fundraising events planned for 2017 and beyond.

- **Ecclesiastical Insurance's** support of £50,000 to Coram Life Education will enable a new Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) toolkit to support some 200,000 school children as schools strive to fulfil the new statutory requirement for teaching in this area.
- **Balfour Beatty** donated £44,000, meaning the partnership has now raised over £450,000 since 2010. This funding has allowed Coram to place 27 children in stable adoptive homes, provide creative therapy to 150 vulnerable children, and deliver Coram Life Education to 30,000 school children across the UK.
- A £33,000 donation from the **Mace Foundation** in 2016 enabled Coram Voice to reach homeless young people and took the total raised during the course of the partnership to £170,000.
- The **Chaucer Foundation's** gift of £26,000 further supported care leavers into secure, permanent housing.
- **Ansvar Insurance** donated a further £30,000 to Coram in support of Coram Life Education. They also sponsored the Coram Christmas Celebration and our Handel Birthday Concert.
- **Engie UK** employees cycled, ran, quizzed and baked, raising over £22,000 for Coram.
- **Terra Firma Capital Partners** donated another £22,000 to continue their support of Coram South London Adoption, impacting children and families in the borough of Southwark.
- The **Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation's** donation of £18,700 supported expansion of Coram Life Education in the Greater Manchester area.
- Property firm **Delancey** donated £14,000 to support the expansion of Coram Life Education in London through the development of a new 'Lifebox'. **Alpha Plus Group**, the schools group owned by its client fund, is also busy fundraising.
- **Morgan Stanley** adopted Coram Life Education for its Strategic Challenge Challenge, helping to shape the delivery of national schools resources.

Individual support

Coram's dedicated individual supporters have raised valuable funds to help us advance projects, carry out research, and develop our London campus.

- The Coram team of 33 runners raised over £80,000 in the **2017 London Marathon**, the highest total ever.
- Coram has more **Charter Patrons**, who support with gifts of £1,000 per annum, than ever before.
- The Coram **Christmas Celebration** featured singer Lulu, actress Joanna David, and the choir of Trevor-Roberts School.
- Life Governor Philippa Dodds John organised the **20th Handel Birthday Concert**. Over 200 people attended the event, which raised over £12,000.
- Many individuals support Coram after their death or support our work anonymously. We thank them all and remember in particular **David Blyth**, former pupil of the Foundling Hospital, whose major legacy is enabling us to develop the Coram Story Centre.

Details of how to support Coram can be found at www.coram.org.uk

Vision for the future: a national centre of excellence for children

In the coming year Coram will complete the construction of The Queen Elizabeth II Centre to coincide with the 350th anniversary of Thomas Coram's birth in 2018. Generously supported by The Queen's Trust and the ZVM Rangoonwala Foundation, the new centre will help Coram and its network of partners to transform the lives of children, completing phase three of the regeneration of Coram's historic campus in central London.

Championing children's rights

The Centre for Children's Rights will bring together and expand the work of the Coram Children's Legal Centre and Coram Voice. The HALO programme, also supported by The Queen's Trust, will further enable young people to develop access to Help, Advice and Legal Opportunity. New volunteer placements and professional entry roles will give them the opportunity to increase their skills and capacity to affect positive change.

Best practice in action

All parts of the Coram group will contribute to the Academy programme, which will train professionals in a range of best practice models. Our Centre for Impact will continue to build evidence advancing the discourse for children in readiness for the opening of the Rangoonwala Conference & Learning Centre in the new building.



Realising our plans

This year we were privileged to recognise and celebrate the life of Romey Brown by opening the Peter & Romey Brown OBE Education Suite. Their gift contributed to the Coram Appeal for the construction of The Queen Elizabeth II Centre. We also gratefully received contributions from the estate of former governor Lady Peggy Gordon, the Cadogan Family Trust, and the Garfield Weston Foundation.

Sir David Bell, President of Coram; Asif Rangoonwala, Chairman of the ZVM Rangoonwala Foundation; and Nicola Brentnall, Director of The Queen's Trust at the groundbreaking event for The Queen Elizabeth II Centre in March 2017.

Charter for Children

Coram's new national centre will bring us closer to the vision set out in the Charter for Children, which was published as part of our 275th anniversary celebrations in 2015.

- Decisions made in the timescale of the child promoting their stability and security, and early permanence enabled for more children in the care system.
- Access to justice through advocacy and representation for all children, including those who are undocumented.
- Educational inclusion and access to services, in particular those addressing mental health needs.
- Equality and fairness for all children achieved by closing the performance gap between different regions.

Producing solutions together

Coram's young ambassador programmes enable young people to co-produce solutions to the challenges they face in conjunction with Coram's expert professionals. In the coming year, the Adoptables (for young people who are adopted), the Young Citizens (for migrant young people) and A National Voice (for young people leaving care) will have the opportunity to work at national and local levels to ensure the views and skills of young people improve the services from which they benefit.

Treasuring our history and heritage

The Coram Archive, held in the London Metropolitan Archive, is the longest continuing historical record of social care for children. The new Story Centre in The Queen Elizabeth II Centre will stand on the site of the old mortuary, providing a dedicated reading room and studio for young people to benefit from Heritage, Arts and Literary Opportunity. Story telling, story making and professional life story programmes will continue Coram's historic legacy and ensure that the past continues to inform the future.

"I believe every one ought, in duty, to do any good they can"

Thomas Coram, 1738

Last year a site-specific installation by Dr Ken Wilder, a Reader in Spatial Design at the Chelsea School of Art, celebrated the mortuary prior to construction of The Queen Elizabeth II Centre (pictured below).

In the coming year students will work to design a permanent feature for the Campus using reclaimed material.



Be part of the Coram Story



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Keep up to date with the latest
news and events on our website:

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