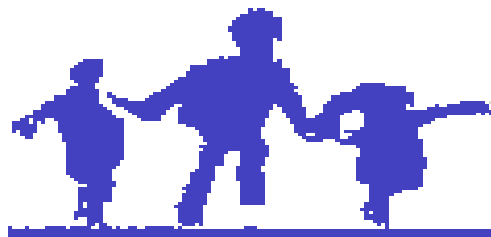


LEWISHAM PARENT PARTNERSHIP SERVICE



Supporting Parents of Children
and Young People with Special
Educational Needs

ANNUAL REPORT 2009-2010

Managed by the Pre-school Learning Alliance



Funded by the London Borough of Lewisham

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THE AIM OF THE SERVICE

The aim of the Parent Partnership Service provided for Lewisham by the Pre-school Learning Alliance is to deliver independent information, advice and support for parents. This helps to enable parents to feel informed and confident to work in genuine partnership with schools and the Local Authority in order to achieve the best outcomes for their children.

We work with mothers, fathers and carers who have children and young people with Special Educational Needs by:

- enabling families to believe that by working positively with us they can help us to find the best way of helping their child
- carefully assessing their need to ensure support is targeted appropriately from a flexible menu of services offered
- working in partnership with other professionals, including schools and the Local Authority, to enable barriers to learning to be removed or reduced
- ensuring that parents' views and wishes – and where appropriate those of their child or young person - are heard and taken account of
- supporting the prevention and resolution of misunderstanding and disagreement
- supporting parents' understanding of the SEN process and related documentation
- supporting parents to have realistic expectations of the support their child can access
- empowering parents to feel confident to play an informed and active part in their child's education
- ensuring that the welfare, safety and rights of children and young people are central to everything that we do

SUMMARY OF THE YEAR

2009-2010 has been a challenging year. In Summer 2009 the Parent Partnership Service was put out to tender. The Pre-school Learning Alliance submitted a tender for this Service and also for the Choice Advice Service to offer additional support to families throughout the Secondary Transfer process. However shortly after submission, the tender process for both services was aborted by the Local Authority.

Since this point, the Local Authority has asked the Pre-school Learning Alliance to continue with the provision of the Parent Partnership Service, initially until March 2010. This was then extended to August 2010, although with a reduced funding level. We have now secured a further extension at this funding level until March 2011.

During this difficult period, we have continued to give vital independent information, advice and targeted support to parents in order to help them achieve positive outcomes for their children, working with 12% more parents than in 2008-2009.

Over 60% of staff time continues to be devoted to direct work with parents, much of it over the telephone. The Service has also developed a wider range of Information Sheets during the year, which are all downloadable from our dedicated website.

We held another successful Secondary Transfer Workshop this year with Local Authority partners, which was attended by 60 parents. Staff have also attended a wide range of events throughout the borough to publicise the Service, including the Dads Conference and Under Fives Funday, and have held 2 open mornings at Limelight Children's Centre and Clyde Early Childhood Centre.

Thank you as ever to the PPS Staff Team: Jennifer Becon PPS Manager and Sharon Carter and Teresa Weller, PPS Officers as well as to Jo Cooper, PPS Clerical Officer. Particular thanks to Jennifer for putting together this Report which shows the breadth and scope of the work of the Parent Partnership Service in Lewisham across the last year, and the vital support it offers parents to help their children enjoy, achieve and succeed.

VAL POPE

Pre-school Learning Alliance Lewisham Manager

WORKING WITH PARENTS

CONTACTS DURING APRIL 2009 – MARCH 2010

Enquiries from parents and carers have steadily increased during the year, which is a positive sign that wider promotion of PPS is leading to a greater level of parental awareness of our service. The increase of cases is mainly due both to the strengthened profile of PPS through publicity and networking, and also because we ensure that the information and support provided to parents and carers is of a consistently high standard.

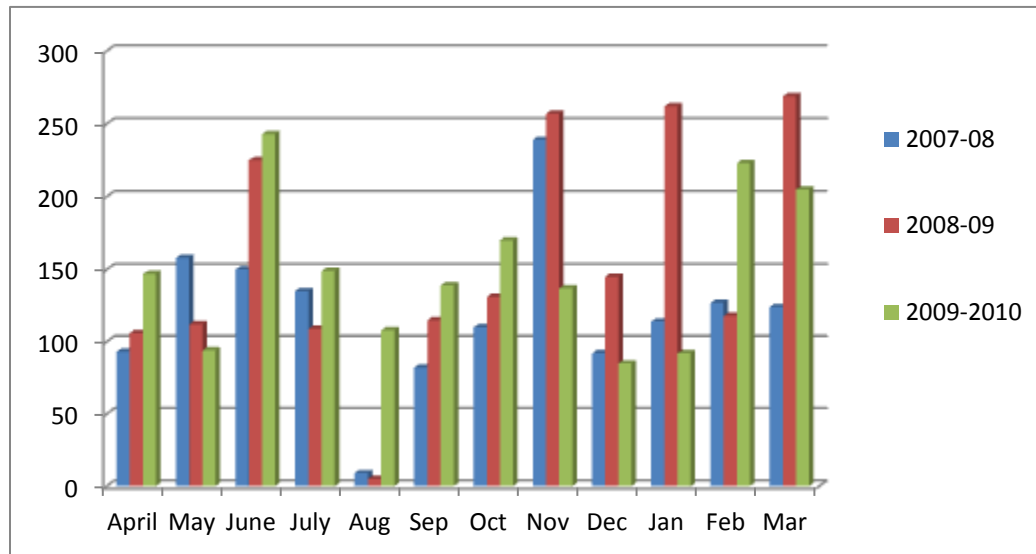
The service is constantly reviewing its policies and working procedures to ensure that PPS delivers a quality service. A Professional Practice document for staff has been introduced to ensure a timely and quality service continues to be given to parent/carers when referrals are received

	2008-09	2009-10
▪ Total contacts with parents:	1859	1799
▪ Level of families supported:	334	418
▪ New cases/re-referral:	249	302
▪ Single contacts:	no stats	35
▪ Closed cases:	72	326

The level of families supported this year represents a 12% increase on those dealt with during 2008-2009, which in turn demonstrated an 8% increase on the previous year.

The Service has continued to fulfil all core activities, although due to limited resources and capacity issues, some aspects are only able to be addressed intermittently. PPS continues to work hard to make sure that it delivers a service which parents recognise as independent and that they can rely on for impartial advice which focuses on the rights of children and young people to have a positive experience in their school or setting and one which allows them to enjoy and achieve..

MONTHLY CONTACTS



Contact with parents peaked during June 2009 and February 2010. Undoubtedly contact in February was in line with parents of children with a statement receiving the named school for secondary transfer. June's increase was twofold. PPS ran its secondary transfer workshop, and parents of pupils without statements, were expressing concern regarding the secondary school allocated to the pupil for September. It would be at this stage that parents would be going to appeal and in need of advice. Surprisingly, what has historically been a quiet period for PPS to 'catch up' on non-case work, August, was in 2009 a considerably busy period as parents were receiving letters from the Local Authority regarding the intention to cease transport. PPS worked closely with both the LA and parents to help resolve these concerns.

During the year, PPS supported 21 families who had decided to proceed to Tribunal. PPS worked closely with the parents offering information and support preparing for the tribunal. Parents were always encouraged to continue with discussions with the Local Authority in the hope of negotiating a resolution to the issue without going to the length of a hearing. 20 of these cases were subsequently withdrawn while one continued to the Hearing with the support of IPSEA.

Work with parents includes provision of information and support, casework and group work and is the key focus of the work of PPS, and ensures that parents' and pupils'

views are heard. Approximately 60% of PPS staff time is dedicated to direct work with parents in this way.

Most referrals come direct from parents, as PPS prefers to give support when parents/carers have requested this themselves.. However, with increased multi-agency working, referrals/enquiries from other agencies are now steadily increasing. We always ensure, of course, that parents have given their consent to this referral.

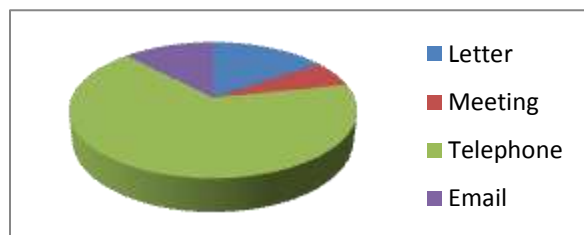
Referrals are usually through telephone contact or email, although new case work is also often generated through attendance at events, where contact is made directly with parents. On first contact with the service, parents are advised of operating standards including PPS policies on Impartiality, Safeguarding and Confidentiality. Parents are also informed that service policies are on our website, along with other key information they may find useful.

66% of support is given via telephone contact and conversations can last for over an hour, with PPS offering information, advice and simply listening. Many parents have said that they feel this is the first time they have been actively listened to, and this is a vital part of the individualised service we offer PPS keeps in contact with parents to inform them of any progress or to clarify a situation following communication with other services.

Some cases have taken a length of time to resolve as parents come to terms with situations, rights and responsibilities. It is often difficult to measure the impact of PPS input where there can be long gaps between contact from parents as they navigate their way through the system, but often no contact means that the situation has calmed down or been resolved, and parents have been empowered to work with the school or setting positively.

Annual Review	67
Bullying	11
Fixed Exclusion	65
Transport	81
Post 16	10
Permanent Exclusion	42
Primary Transfer	37
SA	159
School Issue	202
School Placement	141
Secondary Transfer	90
Speech and Language	17
Statement	153
Support	309
Tribunal	78
Unofficial Exclusion	18
Out of School	12
Other	138

REASON FOR CONTACT



TYPE OF SUPPORT OFFERED

As the Service has raised its profile, there has been a significant increase in the amount of families supported by PPS. PPS also continues to give support to families where the issues are complex and long term.

There has also been a pleasing increase in families gaining confidence and empowered enough to engage in discussions with agencies without direct support. This is encouraged by directing parents to our website where parents can gain access to an extensive range of information and links to other local and national agencies. Parents are also informed of their legal rights and the SEN Code of Practice.

Other work undertaken includes:

- Attending meetings with parents
- Giving advice and support in writing letters and reviews
- Helping parents understand and complete documentation
- Sign-posting parents to local services and provision
- Attending parent support groups for advice and information
- Talking matters through with parents and discussing range of options available
- Helping parents respond to Proposed Statements
- Helping parents/carers understand the implications of objectives set out in Statements.
- Providing informal mediation
- Providing information and advice about the SEN & Disability Tribunal
- Helping parents to prepare for SEND Tribunal
- Providing support and advice in opening/continuing dialogue with the LA during the appeal process
- Giving support leading up to and following fixed and permanent exclusion from school.

Cases are closed following three months of having no contact from the parents, either because the service is unable to make contact or because the parent indicates they have ceased requiring support.

It should be noted that 'cases' are classified as such when there has been more than one contact with parents. Statistics separately highlight a single enquiry. Where a case may overlap with more than one category the predominant issue indicates how data is noted. For example our statistics would show a permanent exclusion even when there are additional issues such as school placement or support.



CASE STUDY ONE

14/05/09 Parent contacted PPS service. He was in receipt of proposed statement of SEN and wanted to know if he could name a special school in part 4. Parent sent proposed statement pack and booked a place on PPS Secondary Transfer Workshop.

19/05/09 Accompanied parent to meeting at School. Discussed secondary transfer. School felt A needed a small school. Also discussed looking at other schools.

20/05/09 PPO Went through the proposed statement.

24/06/09 40 minute conversation regarding a letter from the LA concerning the statement. PPO advised parent of rights of appeal.

25/06/09 Contact with LA on behalf of parent, which continued throughout.

17/07/09 PPO contacted parent as unhappy about named school in part 4. Parent decided to exercise right of appeal. Further information given. PPS contacted LA.

20/07/09 PPO suggested Disagreement Resolution Service for mediation and gave details.

27/07/09 Parent emailed date for mediation. PPO confirmed availability to attend if necessary.

27/07/09 Date for mediation confirmed.

28/07/09 PPO and PPS Manager have meeting with parent to discuss and complete form for tribunal.

29/08/09 Mediation meeting was held with LA.

16/09/09 Parent contacted PPS to inform PPO LA had agreed to name parental choice of school in Part 4 of the statement.

Tribunal avoided.

CASE STUDY TWO

2/09/09 Parent contacted PPS because she felt the school did not want her child as she was being told the school could not meet B's needs. She wanted support at meetings. Parent asked for reassurance that PPS is independent from the school and Local Authority.

9/10/09 PPS attended a meeting at the school to discuss concerns of school and parents. School agreed to send TA to Down's group to learn strategies.

14/10/09 Meeting held with parent. PPO looked through the statement which had been finalised but lacked vital reports. Discussed how and if the statement was meeting B's needs. Parent said the school were asking for child to be reassessed. IPSEA details given to parent.

9/11/09 MAPP meeting held. It was suggested that child should be re assessed, but parents firmly against this. LA agreed to amend the statement when further reports were received.

7/12/09 B excluded from the school play. PPO called the school and had a detailed conversation with the Head Teacher. Issue also raised with the SEN School Improvement Officer.

A letter of complaint went to the School Governors.

4/01/10 PPS attended a meeting with School Governors. The Governors upheld the Head Teacher's decision. Two further meetings were attended with PPS input at the school.

5/5/10 B excluded from a school trip. SEN SIO informed.

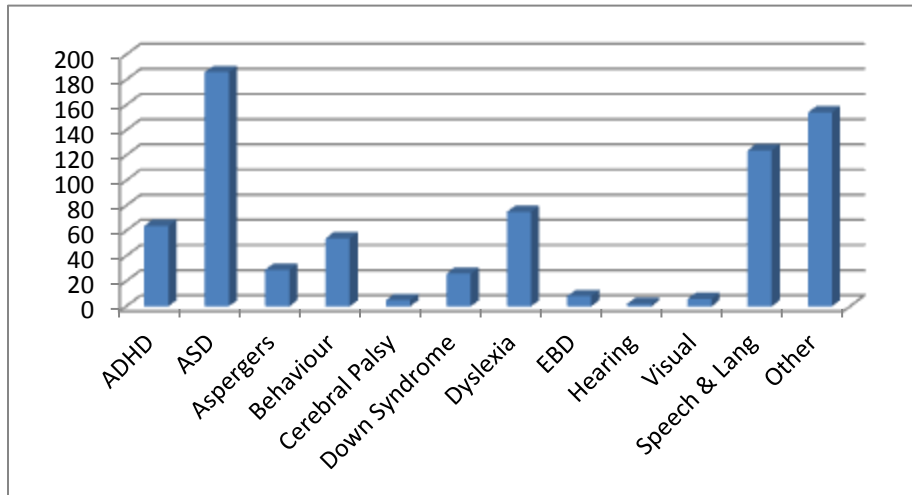
/6/10 School wrote to parents and LA indicating that they felt they could not continue to meet the complex needs of B. LA panel agreed and referred to Part 4 which said it is recommended that B requires a Special School which parent disagreed with.

Parents liaised with another mainstream school which B is due to start in September 10. Parents are very happy for B to have a new start.

PUPIL PROFILE

The tables below demonstrate the profiles of the pupils, with respect to gender, age, ethnicity and type of need. The statistics also highlight school type, collaborative and at what stage of the SENCOP pupils are on at the point of contact with the service.

In line with many of our colleagues across the Parent Partnership network nationally, we are experiencing an increase in the complexity of calls from parents. This includes more calls about exclusions, and in particular more calls from parents whose children are on the Autistic Spectrum or have social and communication difficulties.



TYPE OF NEED

Bangladeshi	1
Indian	2
Sri Lankan Tamil	2
Black African	48
Black Caribbean	85
Black Other	28
Asian and Any Other Ethnic	2
Any Other Mixed	19
White and Asian	2
White and Black African	14
Refused	19
White British	102
White European	2
White Irish	2
Other White Background	3
Turkish Cypriot	3
FTA	43

ETHNIC BREAKDOWN

SCHOOL STATISTICS

	07-08	08-09	09-10
SENCOP STAGE			
EY A/A+	NA	1%	1%
SC A/A+		38%	42%
SA AGREED		3%	3%
SA REFUSED		5%	5%
STATEMENTED		25%	42%
NOTE IN LIEU			1%
TYPE OF SCHOOL			
MAINSTREAM	77%	82%	89%
PRIVATE	2%	1%	1%
SPECIAL	15%	7%	10%
RESIDENTIAL	NA	NA	1%
COLLABORATIVES			
NORTH	20%	17%	22%
EAST	12%	15%	14%
SOUTH	22%	34%	33%
WEST	18%	20%	18%
OUT of BOROUGH	12%	3%	5%
AGE RANGE			
NURSERY	16%	23%	7%
PRIMARY	50%	32%	57%
SECONDARY	30%	29%	26%
FTA	4%	16%	9%
GENDER			
FEMALE	28%	31%	26%
MALE	64%	69%	70%
FTA	8%		4%

INFORMATION & PUBLICITY

PPS produces its own leaflets on a range of topics relating to SEN procedures, legislation and the SENCOP. These are regularly monitored for impartiality by staff. Additional leaflets have been produced this year entitled 'Primary Transfer' and 'Transition', and there are several leaflets and Information Sheets on a range of topics including Secondary Transfer and Working in Partnership with your child's School. More Information sheets, including 'Obtaining the Views of the Child', will be added during the forthcoming year.

The dedicated PPS website www.lewishamparentpartnership.org.uk has been a successful tool for parents to gain information and help them to address issues without additional targeted support. Parents are able to read or download our information leaflets and keep informed of any PPS events and other local events and information. It is regularly updated and PPS will be introducing an evaluation page during the coming year to allow parents to give feedback more easily and make comments regarding the service, as well as ask questions and receive prompt answers. It is also an accessible method of referral to the service for many parents.

PPS, as in previous years, continues to produce a Newsletter at the beginning of each term, which has up to date local and national information. All services, schools, early years settings and Children's Centres, as well as the parents using these services, receive copies when published. The Newsletter is also added to the website for easy access and available to download.

Gathering and updating information about a wide range of local services and their referral routes has proved invaluable in providing parents with helpful information about their own area. Maintaining up to date knowledge of National guidance and initiatives, and undertaking regular training, enables the team to provide a clear and impartial clarification of the local educational environment.



TRAINING, ADVICE & SUPPORT

There is a limited budget for staff training which dictates the range of courses that can be accessed by staff. Specialist training can often be prohibitive because of the cost. One member of the team is likely to attend training and cascade the information to the rest of the team.

It is vitally important for the team to receive training appropriate to their role and to keep up to date with changes in the law as well as local policy and practice. This has been achieved through staff attending the following training:

- Autism Awareness Seminar
- Managing Successful Meetings
- Grievance and Discipline Training
- Safeguarding Training
- ACE Admissions Training
- Exclusions Training
- SEND Training

All members of the team also attended an adult teaching course (PTLLS) to support and enhance their ability to deliver information clearly to parents, particularly through group work.

SECONDARY TRANSFER WORKSHOP

Our 5th Secondary Transfer Workshop was very successful with a total of 60 parents attending which is more than previous years.

Speakers included Garry Cambden and Margaret McMillan from the SEN Team, Ann Monk and Linda Freeman from the Admissions Team and Jo Ashby – Senior Consultant for SEN Secondary Transfer. The secondary transfer process was explained in relation to pupils with and without statements, followed by a question and answer session. As well as the Information packs prepared for all attendees by PPS, a large range of additional information was displayed and available for parents to take away.

WORKSHOP EVALUATION SCORES	1	2	3	4
How useful was the event?	12	21	8	0
How was the venue?	8	23	10	1
How useful was the information you received from the speakers?	21	14	3	0
How useful was the written information you received from us?	13	22	4	0
Was the workshop well organized?	17	19	5	0

1 = excellent 2 = good 3 = satisfactory 4 = poor



PPS also held 2 information mornings for parents to come along and have the opportunity to speak to a member of the team with any concerns they might have. These were held at The Limelight Children's Centre and The Clyde Early Childhood Centre. Both received a positive response from parents who valued being able to have instant advice and information. If capacity permits, we hope to run these again in future in venues across the borough, enabling PPS to reach more parents/carers on their doorstep.

Close relationships with statutory and voluntary organisations remain a high priority, to promote and develop the Service and to deliver appropriate support to parents. PPS does not offer a direct Independent Parental Supporter service, but rather works with support agency partners to ensure targeted support is available if a parent needs this.

PPS has established successful partnerships with local and regional agencies which will be built on further in the future to raise the PPS profile, exchange information and benefit families. As part of this, PPS has networked/participated in the following:

- London Regional Parent Partnership
- Lewisham Transition event
- Dads conference
- National Parent Partnership Network
- Tower Hamlets PPS
- Fun Days, including Under Fives Funday
- Carers Lewisham
- Contact a Family
- Accessing Parents Together
- Choice Advisors

INFORMING & SHAPING LOCAL POLICY & PRACTICE

In March PPS sent out 313 evaluation forms to parents for feedback on the service provided. Only 31 parents returned the form as of 1st June, a slightly disappointing 10% which is 4% less than the previous year. In response to this, the evaluation process will be reviewed and we will add the evaluation form to the website, for parents to easily access to complete and email back to the service.

Evaluation results:

How did you find out about the Parent Partnership Service?

From a friend or family member	6	From a school	10
From the local authority	8	From GP or other health professional	2
From a website	1	From leaflet or newsletter	3
Voluntary organisation	3	Unanswered	2

Please tell us how much you've used the following aspects of the Parent Partnership Service.

	Unanswered	No	Yes, a bit	Yes, a lot
Getting Information	0	2	15	14
Receiving advice on a particular issue	1	1	11	18
Helping me resolve a problem or dispute	7	9	5	10
Accessing support groups or networks for parents	6	15	8	2
Accessing one-to-one support	5	18	4	4
Attending training events	5	20	2	4
Help with paperwork	4	15	4	8
Preparation/support at a meeting	4	14	3	10
Other (please state)	30	0	0	1

What does the Parent Partnership Service do best?

- They help with information
- They provided me with answers to my questions both verbally and confirmation in writing. They provided additional information that I may have needed. They were very understanding and showed empathy
- Give quality time and advice with full support, take time to listen and discuss issues.
- Helps parents who don't know where to turn
- They listen to you as a concerned parent, give you support, moral support and give you information and how to help you with your problem
- Help families deal with situation with information that real people can understand and in good time scale too
- I have used PPS only a couple of occasions and have been very happy with the service provided. An extremely worthwhile organizing with very accommodating and friendly staff.
- Provide good information leaflets. Knowledge of staff when you call up.
- Give support to vulnerable families. Encourage those who are vulnerable to stay focused and strive. All there when needed. Kept appointments and all kept their promise to help.
- Excellent advice. Very knowledgeable
- They explain issues a bit clearer than most, help you to understand different issues, help with letter writing etc.

What could the Parent Partnership Service do to better meet your needs?

- Advertise a bit more
- Respond to calls but I understand that you were short staffed
- Have specific information leaflets about different SEN conditions
- Maybe open more. Follow up phone calls more quickly. Follow up any issues to check if being resolved.
- I'm not sure, mine were met.
- Respond quicker to enquiries
- Work more harder and close to schools, by having a representative in schools

DCSF EXEMPLIFICATION OF MINIMUM STANDARDS

PPS carried out its second self-assessment in 2010 against the DCSF minimum standards for Parent Partnership Services. For most categories, we have achieved 'Good Practice' or 'Best Practice'. However, we are unfortunately 'non-compliant' on 2 areas: *Management* and *Informing and Shaping Local Policy and Practice*. This is because we have so far not been able to work positively with the Local Authority to set up a Management Steering Group or to establish a mechanism for the Service to inform local policy and practice – although plans are in place for this to happen in 2010-2011.

SERVICE AREA	RATING
Funding	MINIMUM STANDARD
Management	NON COMPLIANT
Working with Parents	GOOD PRACTICE
Information & Publicity	BEST PRACTICE
Training, Advice & Support	GOOD PRACTICE
Networking and Collaboration	GOOD PRACTICE
Informing & Shaping Local Policy & Practice	NON COMPLIANT
Location	BEST PRACTICE

Further measurement of Parent Partnership Services is also undertaken by the National Parent Partnership Network (NPPN) through Benchmarking which involves all PPS around the country. PPS provide information on budgets, number of staff employed (and their hours), age range and the extent to which the service influences policy and practice through its involvement in strategic groups in its local area. In addition there are questions on the extent to which services are compliant with the DCSF Exemplification of Minimum Standards. The published report from NPPN each year shows data for all PPS services nationally, with PPS being identifiable to enable comparison with regional neighbours and/or others with similar demographic profile and number of schools.

Pre-School Learning Alliance, as provider of the Parent Partnership Service in Lewisham, believes that every child and family really matters and is entitled to receive support targeted to their individual needs.

We continue to deliver a high-quality responsive service to children, young people and their families and give excellent value for money to our funders.