



# ST MARY'S COMMUNITY CENTRE TRUST

## Annual Report

April 2017 to March 2018





St Mary's Community Centre Trust (SMCCT) is a registered charity that has been working in north west London for 12 years with vulnerable children and young people aged 6 to 25, covering the local Camden wards of Primrose Hill, Haverstock, Belsize, Hampstead and Swiss Cottage.





# The background



28% of our local children and young people live in poverty



15% of those we support are female

In our area, an average of 28% of children and young people live in poverty. SMCCT aims to improve their opportunities – particularly those at risk of social exclusion, those with mental health problems, facing violence, domestic abuse, drug use at home and on the streets – by providing an ongoing, safe and reliable service in their lives.

Our youth service supports 85% / 15% young men to young women. We very much want to grow our resources and give equal support to young women because their needs are as great as the needs of young men. From April 2017 to March 2018, out of 191 young people we mentored, only 15% were young women. SMCCT would like to expand our work with them. To do so we require appropriate mentors and resources, and for this we need extra funding.

In 2017-18 we worked intensively with 191 young people recording 9,984 mentoring sessions focussed on self-development. Additional ongoing work includes:

- working in the streets and estates where these young people live
- supporting young people leaving prison
- careers and social enterprise
- out of borough residentials
- leisure and mentoring

- working with schools to identify vulnerable, at-risk children and PRU (Pupil Referral Unit) work. A PRU is a type of school that caters for children who aren't able to attend a mainstream school. Pupils are often referred there if they need greater care and support than their school can provide.

See page 7 onwards for more details of the examples and evidence of work carried out in 2017-18.

## Local funding cuts

In 2016-17, because of local authority cuts, council youth service budgets were cut by 25% in Camden and 15% in Islington with a further 26% reduction planned in Camden for 2017-18, plus severe cuts in adjacent Westminster.

- in the past five years the average council spend on youth services has reduced by 36%
- 30 youth centres have closed across London with Camden proposing a further 3 youth centre closures in 2017-18
- job losses for youth workers stand at 40% between 2011-17
- grants to support external youth work have been cut by 15% in Camden from 2011-12 to 2016-17

Such significant ongoing funding cuts lead to fewer safe places for young people to go to keep them off the streets and prevent them becoming involved in gangs.

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we prevent further violence happening

## Socio-economic issues

The police and social services regard young people in our area as seriously at risk from violence and crime. Statistics show the rising rate of serious crime and 4 gang-related murders since January 2018. SMCCT worked with all 4 individuals over the last few years and their deaths are undeniably a source of trauma for other young people in the community. We work with young people in live situations where they want to carry out reprisal knife attacks and we prevent further violence happening.

Home Office figures put the cost of a murder to society at £1.7m in health and police costs. A fraction of this money is required to support SMCCT on an annual basis and provide a better life for young people, helping prevent violence and unnecessary deaths. The work carried out by SMCCT is quite literally a lifeline to the vulnerable young people that use our services. They are “the forgotten members of society” and have been excluded from many of the main structural pillars of society such as school, education and the job market, and they find it difficult to take part in basic social activities that most of us take for granted such as playing local sports and going to the cinema. SMCCT is a constant in young people’s lives for years from junior school through to early adulthood and beyond.

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# How many young people?

With additional funding and resource, we could help many more of the most vulnerable young people in our society have access to the safety and reliability of SMCCT’s services.

Currently our service is running at maximum capacity with 191 young people recorded as using the service intensively in 2017.

The table below shows ward populations for young adults and children in the SMCCT area. If, as statistics show, 28% of the population of young people are living in poverty, this equates to 4,599 young people. If we assume 20% of those living in poverty are in need of using a safe and reliable community service, this equates to 920 young people needing access to the service.

	AGE	AGE	AGE	TOTAL
WARD	0-9	10-19	20-29	
Belsize	2,012	1,144	1,904	5,060
Camden & Primrose Hill	1,447	1,263	2,551	5,261
Haverstock	1,773	1,600	2,809	4,682
Hampstead	1,678	1,065	1,415	4,158
Swiss Cottage	1,972	1,271	2,600	5,843
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,882</b>	<b>6,343</b>	<b>11,279</b>	<b>25,004</b>
<i>50% of total for 0-9 and 20-29</i>	<i>4,441</i>		<i>5,640</i>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,441</b>	<b>6,343</b>	<b>5,640</b>	<b>16,424</b>

SOURCE [www.citypopulation.de](http://www.citypopulation.de)



28% of our local children and young people live in poverty



20% of them are estimated to need our services

that's a target group of



of whom we currently serve



191



SMCCT is a unique service offering young people up to the age of 25 a safe place to go 24x7x365 every year.

This is a vital differentiator as no other local community-run service operates this level of access.

This is what we did in 2017-18.



## Estates and street work

Our youth team go out to where young people are at risk hanging out on the housing estates in our wards. We make contact with those young people that other youth services cannot reach. The sessions, held three times a week, form our street and estate work programme and often our most effective work is done at these times. We meet more people and communicate on their home ground. For example being on the Wendling Estate in Queen's Crescent at 11pm is where some of the core of the work is completed with these young people. The Chalcots Estate was recently evacuated, leaving families out of their homes and young people with little to do: we were there to offer support at any time of the day or night.

This work is essential for meeting young people who are most at risk and don't engage with other youth services. We support those that slip through the net and find themselves in and out of the criminal justice system. We engage with them in their own space. We understand their complex, often dangerous, environments.

Street work has offered our young people many great personal journeys. In the past year we supported eleven people into education and training and fourteen into employment.

## Prison work, gang work and gang interventions

In 2017-18 we undertook many prison visits, on average 3 visits per month. We give intensive support to young offenders who are approaching release and returning to our community. In the last year two individuals have had St Mary's Youth Centre as their first place of call on leaving the prison. We help them to make plans for a new way of life and find understandable goals that have meaning for them.

Gang work has continued throughout 2017-18 with high levels of conflict endemic in our wards. In the past year three gang intervention workshops were held, possible only because of the high degree of trust that enables this mediation.



We currently work collaboratively with various borough-wide youth services and local schools around preventative measures for young people that are heavily involved in violence, excluded from society and known to the criminal justice system.

Working with various different gangs in the borough we help reduce violence by supporting live interventions and preventing young people feeling like they have to take action into their own hands. Following the spate of stabbings in Camden in early 2018, our youth workers spent many hours talking to young people engaged in gangs, dissuading them from carrying out revenge attacks. This certainly avoided several further tragedies.

Our Youth Work Manager Jason Allen sat on Camden's Youth Safety Taskforce in 2017-18 where the councillors, police and other local partners worked on a co-ordinated response across Camden to tackle the increase in knife crime by coming up with possible solutions to the problem before it gets worse. This is classed as a public safety issue and the work SMCCT is involved in is leading conversations both locally and nationally.

## Work with local schools

Our youth workers have developed good working relationships with local schools, regularly visiting primary and secondary schools and, at the suggestion of pastoral teaching staff, mentoring a number of young people at risk. During 2017, at the request of UCL Academy, we started operating a regular mentoring group for a cluster of young people in particular need. At times of particular local tension, head teachers have frequently asked our youth workers to be present outside the school gates at the end of the school day, to help defuse trouble and prevent violence. We also operate exam revision sessions during the school holidays.



## Careers and social enterprise

Four individuals we have mentored intensively over the years have started businesses as part of our social enterprise work.

One was helped to develop a coaching academy, one works on a food stall business making juices, and one is providing a professional fitness coaching service. The fourth has started as a DJ providing music and entertainment for children's events.

Regular sessions are held to help young people with skills that are not taught anywhere else: how to fill in forms, write CVs, and apply for jobs.

With our support, 11 young people in 2017 went on to further education and five young people were assisted to get jobs, which included stewarding, working in a hotel, and being employed as a PE teacher.

## Residential

Extended periods of time spent away from their usual environment give young people new experiences, but also a safe place away from the threat of violence. We took 17 young people on two residential trips in July and August 2017: one group of under 13s and one up to 18. In this dedicated time we worked intensively with them, and they were able to talk about real problems, and feel relief at being in a place of safety.

The limits of your experience can form the limits of your world. For some of our young people this is the first time they have been with a group of individuals relaxing and supporting each other in safety.

Our residential are less activity based with more focus on self-development and general life skills. We run specific programmes around young men's identity and behaviour.





## Leisure and mentoring

We held four weekly football sessions, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at Swiss Cottage five a-side hard football pitches for children aged 10-15. Allied with our Social Enterprise work, the coaching academy was devised and set up by one of our young people who was heavily involved in gangs from an early age but with intensive support has been able to develop this footballing project with us.

On Thursday evening we have a football session for young people coming out of prison. 6 of our young people attended on an ongoing basis throughout the year which provided a positive and enjoyable activity which they would not otherwise experience.

All of the sessions are used by our youth workers to identify those who need mentoring, are experiencing challenges at home or on the streets and who need extra help in their lives. As the young people grow in confidence they become volunteer helpers with these projects.

We hold two open drop-in sessions each Friday, including holidays, one for those aged 7-12 and one for the 13-18s. These include activities such as music, art, table tennis and cooking. St Mary's on Friday evenings is well-known as somewhere to go, to have fun and make friends in a safe place.

Although our work on the streets, in housing estates, in prisons and with gang members addresses the most urgent problems, these regular sessions are equally important, because they prevent other young people from getting involved in gangs and crime. These sessions are the core of our preventative work: through them we build relationships with vulnerable young people, providing unprescribed time for the youth workers to discuss their individual concerns or problems, and building up these children's confidence.

Health and fitness sessions, combined with mentoring, are held on Mondays and Tuesdays. These are crucial for our 16-25 year olds to engage with us and we have a valuable one-to-one opportunity to work on violence reduction.

## JAMES

“

Without St Mary's supporting me I would still be in prison. There have been loads of times I call Jason late because I know I'm about to make a bad choice and he calms me down. Just knowing I have someone that I can rely on has helped me. Social services, family, friends have been there for me sometimes but St Mary's has been there for me all the time no matter what.'

James has been a part of SMCCT since 2006 when he was 10 years old. James was never accepted into mainstream education and had to go into the pupil referral unit where he wasn't able to achieve his real potential. His family environment where he grew up had its own problems and created in him a feeling that he had to face difficulties beyond his years particularly because he had no positive male role models. James was involved in serious youth violence from the age of 12 and he struggled to express himself without constantly using anger. Influenced by negative people in the local community he found himself in situations which he found he couldn't get out of. At the age of 16, he got arrested in possession of a large quantity of class A drugs and was sentenced to two years in a juvenile prison.

Whilst he was in prison we consistently visited him and mentored him to make plans for what he could do when he was released. We supported his development and showed him that there were people outside prison who cared about him. On the day of his release James came straight to St Mary's Centre. We were able to support James into getting a job doing stewarding at public events. We have also helped him onto an ADD apprenticeship course working on trains which will, if he does well, result in him having a growing career path.

Key things that SMCCT has done:

- support through mentoring and youth groups at the pupil referral unit
- regular visits in prison
- support when he was released from prison
- setting up his stewarding job
- helping him complete his application for college
- mentoring him during college.

St Mary's Centre has supported James consistently through many difficult obstacles he has faced during his childhood and teenage years. The positive situation he is in now would not exist if it were not for the care and mentoring and leadership that we have been able to give to him. This is just one example of how SMCCT has turned a life around and created a good future for one at-risk young person.

James completed his ADD course. He began to develop a passion for healthy eating and wanted to share his interest and knowledge with others. We have supported him to build a business plan around healthy food and natural juices. He has been working on three local market stalls showing talent and ability and marketing healthy food and we continue to mentor him as he progresses in a good and rewarding direction.

# What makes us different?

There are a number of other community run projects in neighbouring boroughs but SMCCT is different from the other services because it:

- operates 24 hours a day, every day of the year – including Christmas and Easter, when other youth services are closed
- focuses fundamentally on violence reduction and self-development of vulnerable young people
- constantly works in the streets and estates where these young people live, but has created at the St Mary's Centre a trusted, safe space that these young people will go to
- provides live interventions preventing violence and reprisal gang attacks
- continues the journey with young people at risk up to the age of 25.

This level of access over long, sustainable periods of time, focussing in depth on individuals and working right at the heart of where these young people live makes SMCCT unique.

## We need to do more

In 2017 just under 200 vulnerable people were supported on an ongoing basis by the service. The statistics on page 6 show that over 920 young people could potentially be in need of SMCCT's services. This is 20% of the 28% of the young population below 25 years old classed as living in poverty.

This means that nearly 5 times the number of young people that are currently accessing the service may be in need of it. Additional funding is therefore required to not only keep the service open but to enable the reach to be significantly increased to cover the most vulnerable young people in our area that are at constant risk of serious violence and death.

# Funding needs

SMCCT currently receives approximately £68,000 per year which covers:

- 1 x Youth Manager (full time)
- 1 x Support Youth Worker (full time)
- 3 x Session Youth Workers working 5 hours each per week (paid per hour)
- 3 x regular volunteers (unpaid)
- 5 hours admin support per week
- youth work activities and equipment costs

SMCCT has never been funded by the government; it relies on multiple charities providing donations each year plus individual donations amounting to approximately £68,000 in total. These donors require individual funding applications to be submitted annually, many of which are between £2,000 – £7,000. To obtain funding to cover the £68k, applications need to be submitted on an ongoing basis, written by volunteers from the SMCCT Committee. All have families and full time jobs meaning they are time constrained and struggle to complete the necessary funding applications required. Due to funding issues, the service rarely has more than 6 months secured funding at any one time. During 2017-18, shortage of funds forced us to cut the working hours of one of our youth workers for 12 months, at a time of worsening violence on local streets.

To ensure that this critical service is able to continue, a more sustainable 3-5 year funding plan is required, to relieve the Youth Work Manager's heavy workload and to give more young people access to mentoring from qualified youth workers.

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## Long term funding

To provide much needed additional resource and support for the young people in our area additional funding is required for:

- An additional full-time Youth Worker to work in specific estates and develop relationships with the most vulnerable young people in these areas. Targeting one-to-one self-development, school work and PRU (Pupil Referral Unit) support as well as residential to deepen and develop the relationships through trust and constant access to the Youth Worker
- An additional part-time Young Women's Worker to provide similar services to young girls and women, develop relationships building on trust and security, support career and social enterprise work, address issues of domestic violence or sexual abuse
- Funding for mental health support working with local registered groups that provide counselling and mental health treatment at reduced rates
- An increase in the funding for Youth Activities and to enable the new Youth Worker and Young Women's Worker to develop relationships through activities such as meals out
- An increase in operating expenses to cover additional travel, phone and expense costs of the additional staff
- Additional residential so each of the permanent Youth Workers can take their groups on more residential per year

We want sustainable funding for our youth services. We are building close relationships with local funding partners. We have created a micro-brewery that will expand and fund our work. We intend to care seriously for our local young people now and in the future.



# JORDAN

“ If it wasn't for St Mary's I really don't know where I would be. Probably in and out of prison. Many of my childhood friends have been murdered or are in prison. Jason never gave up on me and his persistence and belief in me has changed my life. I'm a PE teacher now!

I am very grateful for all their hard work, mentoring and belief in me and St Mary's always will be my home away from home. I have a lot of love for the support they gave and give me.’



We have worked with Jordan for 9 years. During Jordan's secondary school years he came down to the youth club centre twice a week for open drop-in sessions and we built a very good relationship with him. Jordan was always a very positive, funny young man but it was his funny jokey side that would land him in a bit of trouble at school. When his school repeatedly set him detentions and Jordan was not responsive to his punishments the school opted to contact us at St Mary's Centre and ask if we could come in once a week to mentor Jordan. His head of year had stated how his teachers could really see a positive change in Jordan's behaviour after only a few months.

Even though Jordan's behaviour improved in school he started hanging around his estate a lot more after school and mixing with a not so friendly crowd. He would often sneak out without his parents' permission to chill on the estate where he developed popularity and started getting involved in anti-social behaviour and a lot of gang activity. Unfortunately Jordan's gang involvement would catch up with him. He ended up getting arrested but was fortunate to avoid a jail sentence.

After the arrest St Mary's Centre kept up a really close relationship with him. He would come down to the youth centre a minimum of twice a week and we helped him in every way we could. Jordan had told us that there were times he feared for his life from other gangs and knew if he went on

hanging around with the same people he was at high risk of getting sent to prison or causing harm to others. He said the only real safe place for him was the youth centre and that's where he would spend most days after school and he started even volunteering with our football projects and our other sports activities. Jordan knew it was time for him to make a lifestyle change so we decided with him to create a plan of what he enjoyed doing. He had expressed often how much he enjoyed leading our sports sessions and how one day he would like to do something in the sports field. So we supported Jordan to find a level 3 course in personal training which he has now completed. Recently we have helped him to get onto a level 5 course in PE leadership. Through all this time he was still struggling to break away from the gang culture. Keeping in mind his new qualifications we identified a few job opportunities and found a PE teacher role in a primary school. Straight away we set to work and helped him write up his CV and got him prepared for his interview using role play tasks. Jordan was offered the job.

Now Jordan is happily in employment. He is also hoping to work on his further education that will lead him to become head of year one day. He still regularly comes into the youth centre for a quick chat and still helps out volunteering at our sports sessions.

Become part of our story today – we rely entirely on the generosity of our supporters to continue our work. We receive no government funding. Donations both large and small make our lifesaving outreach possible.

## HOW CAN I GIVE?

Regular giving by direct debit is the easiest way for individual supporters to give, or a one-off donation can be made online, by post or by bank transfer.

### ONLINE

Just Giving  
[www.justgiving.com/smcct](http://www.justgiving.com/smcct)

### POST

Please make your cheque payable to 'SMCCT' and post to:

St Mary's Centre  
Elsworthy Road  
London  
NW3 3DJ  
UK

### BANK TRANSFER

Account Name: SMCCT  
Bank: Santander  
Sort code: 09-01-50  
Account number: 04555171

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'Many of these young people  
don't see another way of life.  
We show them that there is  
another way of life.'

*Jason Allen*

*Youth Work Manager*





# Thank you to our funders

ExPat Foundation  
Friends of St Mary's  
St Mary's PCC  
Trust for London  
Trustees of Social Concern  
The Hampstead Wells & Campden Trust  
Garfield Weston Foundation  
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