



## Streatham Drop-in Centre for Asylum Seekers and Refugees

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Registered Charity: 1156824



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## Funding and donations

### **We are grateful for the support of the following funders**

BBC Children In Need

Lillian Nash Fund

London Catalyst

London Churches Refugee Fund

Streatham Action

The London Community Foundation: Lambeth & Southwark Wellbeing and Happiness Fund

The Peter Minet Trust

Thrale Almshouse and Relief in Need Charity

Trust for London

Walcot Foundation

### **Donations**

Bishop of Southwark

Clapham Methodist Church

English Martyrs Church (Streatham)

St Peter's Church (Streatham)

Streatham Choral Society

Andrew Lidbetter

Multiannual funding attracted from:



funding from the  
**WALCOT FOUNDATION**



*Our vision is a community in which all asylum seekers and refugees are welcomed, valued and able to participate fully in society*

**Mission statement**

Streatham Drop-in Centre provides:

A range of needs-led quality services and activities

Services to enable users make positive contributions in the wider community

Services and activities to promote good health and improve quality of life

Services and activities to promote community understanding and cohesion

Support to users experiencing material poverty / facing destitution

**Strategic aims**

Streatham Drop-in Centre aims to:

Provide learning opportunities

Promote health and well-being

Develop further advice and advocacy provision

Relieve poverty and distress with appropriate assistance

Improve quality of life by accessing facilities for recreation

Develop existing strategic partnerships and identify new potential partners

Provide opportunities for refugees & more established community work together

Provide opportunities which enable service users to make a positive contribution



Users, volunteers, staff and management committee plan services

# Chairs Report

It is our pleasure to present Streatham Drop-In Centre's latest Review, which outlines our services, achievements and the challenges that lie ahead

Streatham Drop-In Centre was founded in 2002 by members of English Martyrs Church in order to meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers in Streatham (LB Lambeth) and the surrounding area. We became a registered charity in June 2004. Since April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 we have been operating officially as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and present a new Charity number: 1156824. In today's challenging environment for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants we remain a most relevant and vibrant organisation.

Our **Crèche and play** introduces families to a range of mainstream services. **Family learning activities** promote creative play in the home environment and a dynamic programme of children and family activities targets the most play-deprived children.

We are thrilled to have been able to expand this year and establish a **Homework and family learning project**. This provides literacy and numeracy support for primary school age children, plus advice, advocacy and training on education for their parents.

We continue to provide **ESOL classes** at a time when English language provision is being squeezed. We have established a thriving volunteer-led ESOL class, which widens access for all our users and provides much-needed extra support for language learners.

Over the last year, **addressing abject poverty** has become an increasingly significant area of our work. We are seeing a rising number of people who are destitute or receiving inadequate levels of support for essential living needs. We continue to work with others on ways of providing required material support. This level of poverty and the complexity of issues faced by users is resulting in an increase in demand for our information, advice and welfare support services.

Many of the people who use our services have poor physical and mental health as a result of traumatic events in their country of origin, which are compounded by challenging contemporary experiences. Our **women's**

**wellbeing project** addresses this by delivering a range of wellbeing activities where participants' are able to gain confidence while acquiring new skills. Feedback from recent wellbeing activities highlighted the long-term lasting positive impacts of peer support and friendship networks.

A successful **recipe sharing initiative** generated confidence and enthusiasm for our participation in **Streatham Food Festival**, where traditional world cuisine dishes prepared by users was enjoyed by colleagues and friends old and new. Our thanks to all who have given so freely of their time and cooking expertise.

We are also especially grateful to two new Streatham supporters: PRS for Music, who generously donated thoughtful Christmas presents, and Streatham Choral Society whose Christmas Concert supported Streatham Drop-in. Also, a huge thank you to trustee Nehal Deepani, for running a half marathon in aid of the charity.

We are deeply grateful to our staff team: Brian McCarthy (Coordinator), Aster Mehretab, Esha Khan and Mehret Zerezgi (project workers), and sessional homework teacher Georgina Lansbury.

We'd also like to thank long-standing partners: Lambeth College and the Health Inclusion Team for rewarding and successful partnerships.

Our services would not be possible without the dedication, energy and ideas of our volunteers. Thank you.

We remain grateful to Fr Liam Gallagher and all at English Martyrs Church for their continued support and generosity.

Finally, we sadly say goodbye to trustees Emeka Duru, Rose Crabtree and Kayleigh McGrath who have contributed immeasurably and we warmly welcome new Management Committee members: Chloe Halpin and David Phillips.

Agnes Woolley

Chair

## General advice, information and welfare support Health advice and advocacy (Health Inclusion Team)

General advice and information is provided by qualified staff and trained volunteers with relevant experience in welfare, housing and consumer rights. We signpost and make referrals to a range of specialist advisory services. Family support is provided on issues relating to children's health, wellbeing, development and educational needs. Strongly rooted in the community, we have an in-depth knowledge of local educational opportunities, voluntary provision as well as London-wide services for our target group.

Addressing abject poverty has become an increasingly significant area of work. Over the last year we been working with an increased number of people, currently without Resource to Public Funds, who are either destitute or in receipt of insufficient income to meet essential living needs. The welfare support provided to people who are experiencing exceptional poverty includes access to food, clothing and toiletries. This is achieved through working jointly with a range of complementary charities. Critically, the support we provide aims to build trust, resilience and confidence and improve access to appropriate mainstream or specialist advisory services in order to facilitate individual long-term solutions.

The **Health Inclusion Team**, part of Three Boroughs Primary Health Care Team - Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, provide health specialist outreach services at Streatham Drop-in.



Our Health Inclusion Team colleagues - Refugee Specialist Nurse, Yvonne Keene and Health Advice and Advocacy Caseworker, John Mumbanga - provide weekly services to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. The people they see have difficulty accessing mainstream primary health care services and often have multiple and complex chronic health problems.

Their health specialist and advocacy service is based on the principal of assisting access into mainstream services whenever possible.

During 2015, the Health Inclusion Team also provided health promotion workshops and valued support to our women's wellbeing activities.

## ESOL and English language support



Enthusiastic students, keen to learn or to improve on their existing language skills

English language acquisition is central to expanding opportunity, choice and integration. A highly successful ESOL class was provided by Lambeth College for Adult and Community Learning until 2015. The class was fully subscribed and Lambeth College reported how ESOL at Streatham Drop-in was the most consistently well attended of their community provision. This class was discontinued as they are no longer able to provide the required ESOL.

Time and again, our users tell us that the one thing they really need is English classes. Access to English learning and a supportive environment to practice conversation remains a key aspect of our support for users. Our weekly volunteer-led classes provide both structured learning and conversation opportunities. We are grateful to our current primarily self-organised ESOL volunteer team who dedicate their time to planning classes and devising group activities. In addition, throughout 2015 a number of volunteers provided one to one and small group learning for people who now, for the first time in their lives, have the opportunity to learn to read and to write.

We will continue to strengthen our volunteer-led classes over the coming year. Streatham Drop-in is also actively seeking funding for the additional high quality ESOL requested and which our committed learners deserve.

See: [Volunteering at Streatham Drop-in Centre](#)

## Crèche play and learning

Streatham Drop-in is often the first community provision used by children and families. **Crèche and play** provides a safe and stimulating environment where pre-school children have the opportunity to interact with others, develop confidence and learn.

The **family learning activities** provided, including art, games and dance, are aimed at increasing levels of creative play enjoyed in the home environment.



Our **programme of community, educational and fun activities** is devised with children and families. In the last year we played in local parks, read in Lambeth's libraries and picnicked at Streatham Festival, Streatham Common Kite Day and Lambeth Country Show. We visited the Horniman Museum and the Science Museum and participated in **Tate Britain Family Day**.

Our trip to West Wittering Beach was enjoyed by all. (Cover; After the beach pic)

In July, staff member Esha Khan and colleagues accompanied 18 families, including 40 children, by train from Streatham to Bankside for the **2015 Tate Modern Turbine Festival**: an audio-visual feast of music, performance, installations and activities - a celebration alongside young people, families, artists, poets, performers and musicians. After activities at the gallery families enjoyed exploring the Southbank.



Christmas, Eid and Ledit have become increasingly user-led celebrations and provide a range of play opportunities for children



Horniman Museum  
*Plantastic* exhibition  
Feb' 2015

## Homework and family learning project

*Our Saturday Homework and family learning project is run by Mehret Zerezegi with Homework teacher Georgina Lansbury and a great volunteer team.*

*Mehret, a founding member of the organisation who champions refugee family education at Streatham Drop-in, writes about the project.*

### **Homework and family learning project**

is about the educational needs of children from refugee communities. It aims to help children do better in literacy and numeracy and to develop a "YES I CAN!" attitude in their learning. Family learning workshops are run alongside the homework sessions to reinforce what we do in the "homework" sessions.



Parents are empowered to participate actively in their children's educational life - so together we can help children to do better. Workshops include, **managing study time** and **developing independent learning skills**. We recently ran two BIG maths family workshops. As part of the workshop, each child was given a practical workbook to practice their multiplication skills at home with their family.

Other workshops are designed to help parents understand the UK educational system, both for the purposes of supporting their children and for their own personal development.

At this stage the project is really taking shape, and we continue to learn and improve. The Homework and family learning project is fully subscribed with over 30 children participating and has been consistently well attended since we began. Each 3-hour session provides the space for children to complete their homework and focus on areas for development. We are supported by at least six volunteers, and three parents of participating children - Sarah, Rita and Medina - have become volunteers helping to run the project.

In December 2015 the younger participants enjoyed an interactive Storytelling event (and a free ice cream) with their parents at the Polka Theatre. A group of older children attended the Christmas pantomime Beauty and the Beast.



Homework teacher, Georgina, passes on a love of reading and literature

### **Encouraging children to become readers for pleasure is crucial to our work**

“Another of our activities with the whole group was a picnic on Streatham Common. We all met with food and drink and the Children were asked to share a book they had read and enjoyed. The children were fabulous in their responses - some brought the book they were reading and all spoke - even children who are self-conscious and shy. It was a lovely afternoon, with prizes given to all the children who participated so enthusiastically.”

**Georgina Lansbury - Homework teacher**

### **Streatham Drop-in Centre is a member of:**

National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education (NRCSE)

## Christmas party 2015

Contributed by Amber Darlington

Over the last ten years I have been fortunate enough to have worked in the capacity as a volunteer and holistic therapist at the centre, so I was thrilled to receive an invitation to another Streatham Drop in Christmas party.



Representatives of Music4Children and PRS for Music distributed gifts

Upon entering I was pleasantly surprised to see several dozen guests, a big increase on previous years I noted, comprising service users and their families, staff, volunteers and representatives from a range of groups including Streatham Company **PRS for Music**, and local charities **Music4Children** and **Streatham Community Stables**. All entered into the true meaning of Christmas by contributing to the community spirit that is at the heart of the charity.

I came to offer soothing shoulder and back massages to tired, slightly frazzled, adults, at what can be a particularly difficult time for many; something which is often reflected in their bodies as head and back ache, muscular tension or stress-related illness. As usual a queue quickly formed and several people gave positive feedback and sighs of relief.

Shortly after, another role came up. Camera in hand, it was down to me to attempt to portray in pictures the spirit of the event; the smiling faces of the guests, adults socialising, children playing and having fun, and all while

enjoying the contributions of a variety of festive world-food dishes, both savoury and sweet.

There was a whole host of activities from face painting, arts and crafts, cookie decorating to drama for the older children. Everyone listened to and enjoyed a variety of music from classic carols to traditional African tunes, a feat only made possible by the assembly of an impromptu sound system courtesy of DJ Christmas 'AKA': Father Liam. These added melodic festive tones to the throng of babies crying, kids' laughter and a multitude of different languages.

Staff told of overhearing conversations new friendships being forged among users, who when chatting realised common ground, discovering they had lived in neighbouring area before coming to this country. Events like these provide a vital forum for intimate interactions between people enabling strong community links to be forged.



A highlight for many must surely have been witnessing the many beautifully dressed children in their colourful dresses and Seasonal jumpers, become excited when it was announced Christmas had truly arrived. English Martyrs Church Community Office became a makeshift Santa's grotto.

Christmas presents generously donated by PRS for Music, Clapham Methodist Church and Downing LLP were duly distributed to excitable children who make up the charity's extended family.

The timeless thrill of receiving a beautifully wrapped present as a child is something we can all relate to and was reflected in the children's sparkling eyes and gleeful faces. Their joy was evident as they all posed proudly with their gifts for the camera and their personalities came shining through.

This festive report highlights just one of many wonderful events hosted by Streatham Drop-In; a resounding community success story, made possible by the many for the many and I feel honoured to be part of it.

## Women's wellbeing project

Our women's wellbeing project provided wellbeing, exercise and tips for a good diet through head and shoulder massage sessions, yoga classes and recipe sharing. Many of the women using the Centre have poor physical and mental health as a result of traumatic events in their country of origin, which are often compounded by their experiences here in the UK.

### Yoga classes

Bespoke yoga for people with varying mobility was developed by experienced yoga teacher **Clare Daniell**. These yoga sessions induced rest and peacefulness through simple stretches, meditation and breathing techniques.

*"The sessions were a privilege to lead and as ever the joy of seeing so many happy faces both familiar and new was great. On one of the sessions everyone finished nearly falling off their chairs laughing so hard after one of the beautiful older ladies admitted she had nearly fallen asleep during relaxation - that was a fun day. The entire event creates a feeling of camaraderie, fun, playfulness, and release for built up body stresses"*

**Clare Daniell - Yoga teacher:**

### Head and shoulder massage

The course of stress and pain management techniques through the medium of touch *"a universal language that can be used to reassure and sooth body and mind"* was developed by **Amber Darlington**. The women learnt how to give and receive basic head, neck and upper body massage and learnt pain and stress management techniques through the medium of touch.



Most of the 30 women participants in the yoga or massage classes reported experiencing significant health benefits, including better sleep, a feeling of being in a relaxed state, reduced stressed, reduced headaches and tension. At least 10 participants reported that they regularly use their newly acquired skills in their home environment.

### **Participants highlight wellbeing impact**

“Yes, I feel good! Are there going to be more of these? I wouldn’t miss this”

“I had pain in my shoulders and felt tired yesterday.”

“I feel good now - I’m happy”

“I really enjoyed it but maybe it could be more vigorous”

“It feels so good I actually fell asleep - scary “

### **Recipe sharing initiative**

The recipe sharing initiative was designed by staff member Aster Mehretab. Participants chose and prepared their favourite signature vegetarian dish from their regions of origin. The initiative provided an opportunity to share skills and prepare traditional dishes in a healthier fashion. Recipe sharing increased participants’ knowledge of foods, people and tastes. It promoted greater communication and nurtured enduring friendships between participants of different backgrounds and cultures. The healthy delicious dishes provided a weekly lunch and became an important focal point for everyone at Streatham Drop-in.

“This is great - I’m learning to cook new recipes and eating delicious food. If I don’t come early it’s because I have appointments or other important stuff to do, but I will definitely be in, so make sure to save some food for me”

**Participant in recipe sharing initiative**

Feedback on the women’s wellbeing programme highlighted how participants looked forward to attending, not only for the activities but also to see new friends.



## Streatham Food Festival



On June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015 the charity participated in Streatham Food Festival. Streatham Drop-in provided a wide variety of traditional vegetarian and meat dishes from around the world, specially prepared for the unique fundraising event. Led by staff member, Aster Mehretab, users prepared delicious food, which was served at Streatham Community Stables, The White Lion.

We were thrilled to have Cllr Donatus Awyanwu, Mayor of Lambeth, Cllr Scott Ainslie and MP for Streatham, Chuka Umunna, in attendance. Mr Umunna addressed the gathering and praised Streatham Food Festival and the Drop-in Centre for coming together to organise the event.

Many of the women (12) who participated in the wellbeing **recipe sharing initiative** were involved in preparing the variety of dishes and supporting the event. We were delighted that the evening was so well supported by colleagues and organisations we work with on a daily basis.



This event provided a wonderful opportunity for service users, volunteers, staff and management committee to work together.

Two families who participate in the **Homework and family learning project** came in order to meet Streatham MP and the Mayor of Lambeth.

*"It is important that my boys can meet Chuka (Umunna, MP) and Donatus (Anywanu, LB Lambeth Mayor) as they both come from our country"*



Over 60 meals were served to colleagues, friends and the Streatham food loving public.

The fundraising meal raised £700 for the charity.

**See event video & pics:**

[www.Streathamdropin.org.uk](http://www.Streathamdropin.org.uk)

Streatham Food Festival short includes Aster, Chuka Umunna, MP and the delicious food

[www.facebook.com/StreathamFood](https://www.facebook.com/StreathamFood)

# Volunteering at Streatham Drop-in Centre

Streatham Drop-in believes that volunteering should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience. The Centre boasts a team of energetic and committed volunteers who play a critical role in service provision. We have a successful track record in supporting service users to make the transition to becoming volunteers and progress while contributing to the work of the charity.

We are also proud that in 2015 a number of volunteers who benefited from bespoke support of the staff team, progressed on to formal training, further education and paid employment.

## **Key volunteer roles include**

- Welcoming people and signposting
- ESOL and English language support
- Crèche and play
- Welfare and wellbeing
- Homework tutors
- Preparation of refreshments and healthy snacks
- Finance, administration and IT

Current opportunities are highlighted at [www.Streathamdrop.org.uk](http://www.Streathamdrop.org.uk)

## **Three volunteer voices**

*“Helping run the classes has been a really good way for me to develop my teaching skills, and I feel I am more confident about speaking in front of groups of people. I believe I learn as much from my students as I hope they learn from me, they consistently bring a range of experiences and perspectives that give me a fresh way of seeing the world. I would recommend volunteering to anyone”.*

**John Sheerman-Chase - 2015 ESOL Volunteer**

*“I wanted to help and to constructively contribute to the life of the community I have been living in. What I did not know was that I was starting one of the most rewarding experiences of my life journey. Beside the fact that my students show a big deal of gratitude towards my work, I have also started to better understand the dynamics within the community in terms of bureaucracy and society. I have been taking on more studies and training, both independently and through Streatham Drop-in. As fluent in Spanish and Portuguese and now qualified as Community Interpreter, I will be able to offer more support to disadvantaged people.”*

**Daniela D’ambra - 2015 ESOL Volunteer**

*“I feel very privileged to be a volunteer in Streatham Drop-in Centre. I teach English on a one to one basis and also very much like to befriend the clients.....There is a wonderful friendly and welcoming atmosphere and so many varied projects. There is also a very positive relationship between staff and volunteers”*

**Eleanor Wiseman - Current Volunteer**



**Volunteer-run small group learning for people who now, for the first time in their lives, have the opportunity to learn to read and write**



## Organisations we work with, supporters and friends

Brixton Advice Centre

Downing LLP

Give A Little (Streatham Charity Shop)

Hands on London

Lambeth Food Partnership

Lambeth Volunteer Centre

London Churches Refugee Network

Music4Children

Norwood and Brixton Foodbank (Trussell Trust)

National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education (NRCSE)

PRS for Music

Polka Theatre

Streatham Community Stables

Streatham Food Festival

Sunnyhill Children's Centre

The Spires Centre

The White Lion (Streatham)

### **Streatham Drop-in Centre is a member of:**

London Churches Refugee Network

National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education (NRCSE)



## Management committee and staff team

### **Management committee members**

Agnes Woolley	Chair
Nehal Deepani	Treasurer
Sabha MacManus	Secretary
Emeka Duru	
Thomasina Woolley	
Andrew Ryan	
Chloe Halpin	
David Phillips	

### **Staff team**

Brian McCarthy	Coordinator
Aster Mehretab	Project worker - Crèche, health and wellbeing
Esha Khan	Project worker - Crèche, play & learning
Mehret Zerezgi	Project worker - Homework & family learning
Georgina Lansbury	Sessional Homework Teacher

## Partnership with Health Inclusion Team

Service Level Agreement between Three Boroughs Health  
Inclusion Team Guy's and St Thomas' Foundation Trust

Yvonne Keene	Refugee specialist nurse
John Mumbanga	Caseworker - health advice & advocacy