



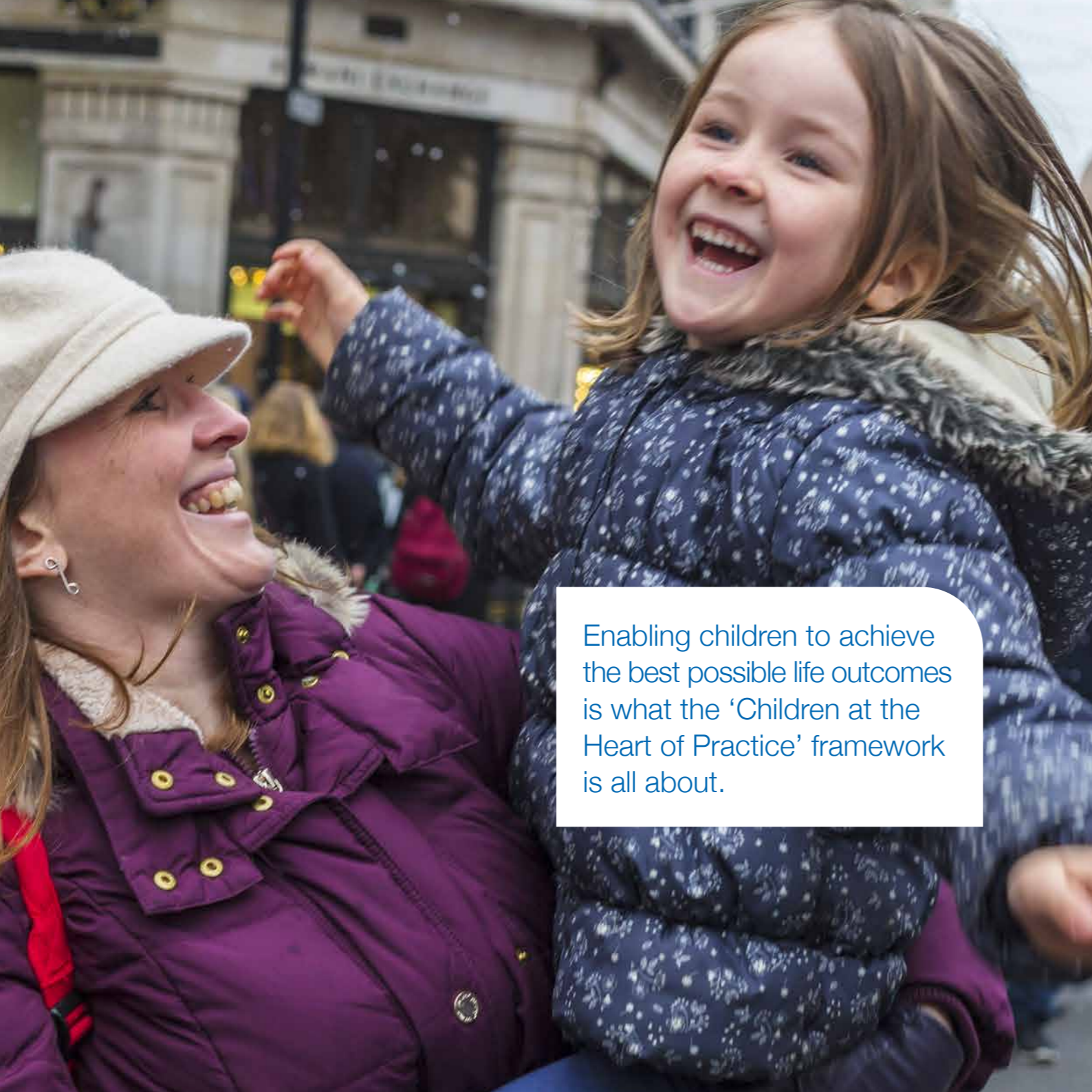
Lambeth:  
**Children  
at the Heart  
of Practice**

Lambeth's  
approach to  
**supporting  
children &  
families**

In Lambeth we value and  
invest in our social workers.



**Lambeth**



Enabling children to achieve the best possible life outcomes is what the 'Children at the Heart of Practice' framework is all about.



## Welcome

“Lambeth is an exciting place in which to grow up, live and work – I should know, I have done all 3! It is a diverse borough where many children and families live and thrive.

As a local authority, we have been on an ambitious improvement journey which has yielded positive results for children and families.

Ofsted judged our children’s social care services to be requiring improvement to be good in February 2018 and HMIP similarly judged our youth offending services to be requiring improvement to be good in January 2019. We are continuing to make strong progress through a relentless focus on practice and the conditions which support practitioners.

Our Children’s Social Care service has adopted a systemic approach to social care practice through our Children at the Heart of Practice framework. This means that when we work with families, we are committed to starting from a position of

strength, empowering families to build on the things that are working well for them so they can make the necessary changes to improve their quality of life and outcomes for their children.

**Enabling children to achieve the best possible life outcomes is what the 'Children at the Heart of Practice' framework is all about.**

Please do read on to find out more about how our approach inspires and enables Lambeth social workers to do amazing social work.”

*Alex Kubeyinje*

Alex Kubeyinje  
Director, Lambeth Children’s Social Care



## Our vision:

We want Lambeth to be one of the best places in the world for children and young people to grow up. We want every child and young person to:

- Achieve
- Be healthy
- Be safe
- Be resilient

## Our values

Our Children at the Heart of Practice framework is founded on the following values. We believe in:

- Keeping families together wherever possible
- Strengths-focused change
- Creating space to build relationships
- Open and collaborative partnerships
- Community-based early intervention
- Kind, compassionate and respectful practice

We want Lambeth to be one of the best places in the world for children and young people to grow up.



## Our interventions:

We use systematic interventions and consultations to empower families to make positive changes.

- We have adopted systemic practice to help us understand children's lives and the important people around them. Our use of systemic practice also helps us think about ourselves and our ethical and statutory obligations.
- We draw upon Signs of Safety resources to articulate and structure our work with children and families in our conferences and strategy meetings
- We are partnered with the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care, drawing on evidence-based tools and piloting innovation projects such as social work in schools and family group conferences at the earliest stage of statutory intervention.
- We use ideas about trauma to inform our practice, providing a lens to understand what is happening in children and families' lives. We think about the strengths that children and families hold and view their resilience as an asset to build upon.
- We use multi-disciplinary early help services to deliver interventions to families within their local community.
- We use custody diversion programmes and restorative justice approaches to divert children from the criminal justice system and prevent re-offending.

We have adopted systemic practice to help us understand children's lives and the important people around them



## Our practice:

We want to ensure we always consider who families are, where they come from and where they are going, so we can positively influence their journey. Our commitment to systemic practice means we focus on the relationships families have with each other, their local community and professionals so we can tailor our support to their needs, recognising that each family is different.

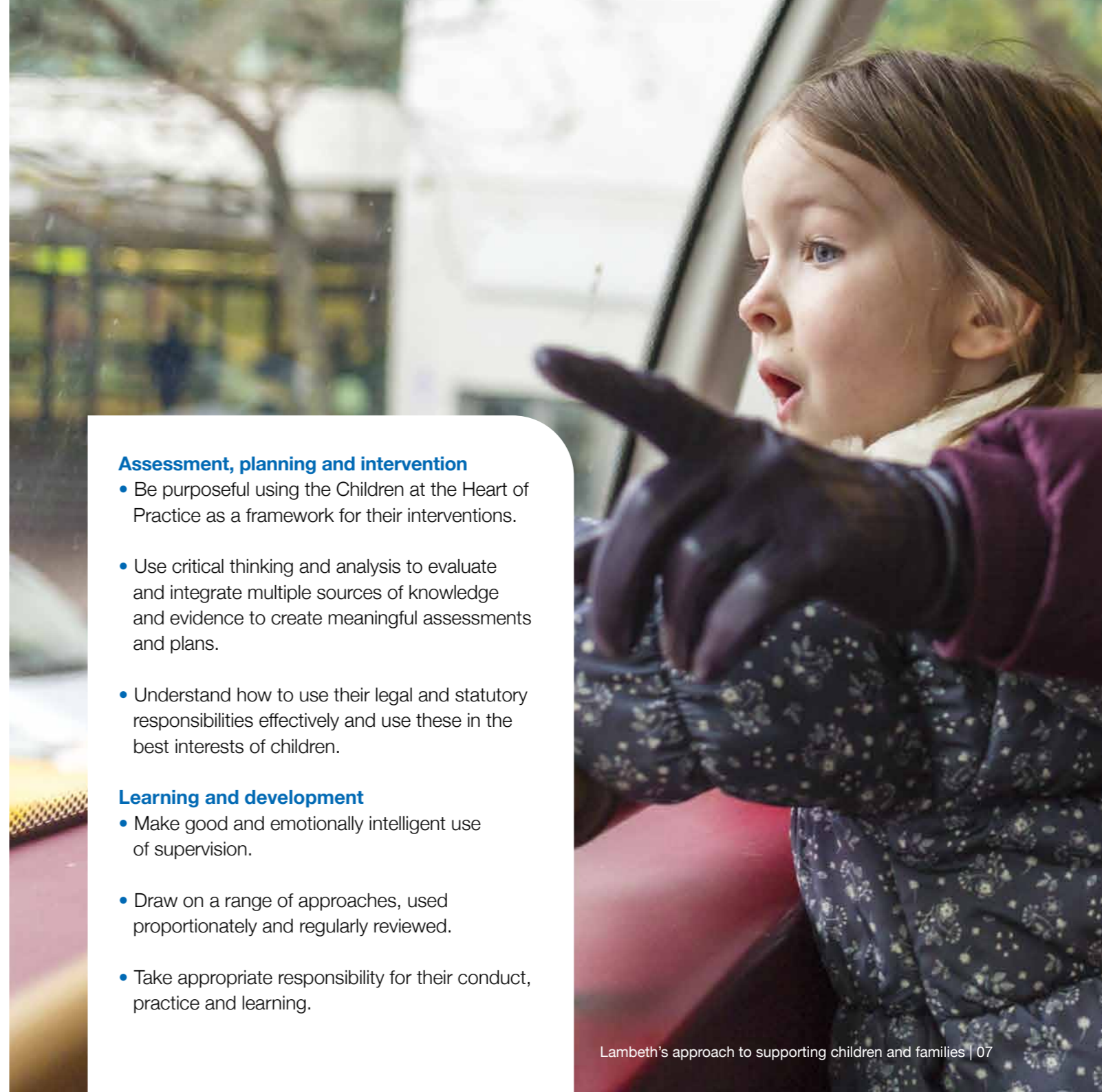
Using the Children at the Heart of Practice framework, we support our practitioners to:

### Engagement and relationships

- Be curious and reflective as well as being authoritative and tenacious in improving life outcomes for children.
- Always ask themselves what do they want to achieve with this family and to consider how realistic are the goals we have set; the aim should always be to collaboratively agree a plan to support the family to achieve these goals.

- Approach families with empathy, compassion and creativity, using relationships for positive change.
- Build skilful and influential working relationships with other professionals and agencies.

We want to ensure we always consider who families are, where they come from and where they are going, so we can positively influence their journey



### Assessment, planning and intervention

- Be purposeful using the Children at the Heart of Practice as a framework for their interventions.
- Use critical thinking and analysis to evaluate and integrate multiple sources of knowledge and evidence to create meaningful assessments and plans.
- Understand how to use their legal and statutory responsibilities effectively and use these in the best interests of children.

### Learning and development

- Make good and emotionally intelligent use of supervision.
- Draw on a range of approaches, used proportionately and regularly reviewed.
- Take appropriate responsibility for their conduct, practice and learning.



## Our innovation projects:

In Lambeth, we are currently trialling a range of innovative ways of working with children and families within both statutory and universal services.

### Early Help and community-based interventions

- We've worked with Healthwatch to develop a capacity building early help model for universal partners. We use our community Locality Action Panels (LAPs) to identify and support children within the community who may have additional needs including those linked to risks associated with violence and exploitation.
- Divert Youth is an exciting custody intervention programme supported by Children's Services, Lambeth MPS and Juvenis (a youth charity). The intervention includes bringing together health, youth and early help practitioners to support young people whilst they are in police custody and beyond. The two-year programme is being evaluated by Manchester Metropolitan University.

- Lambeth was one of 3 authorities to put forward a successful proposal to The What Works Centre (WWC) for funding to place social workers in schools. The pilot is part of a feasibility study in the (WWC's) Change Programme which aims to assess whether school-based social work reduces the need for higher levels of statutory social work involvement.

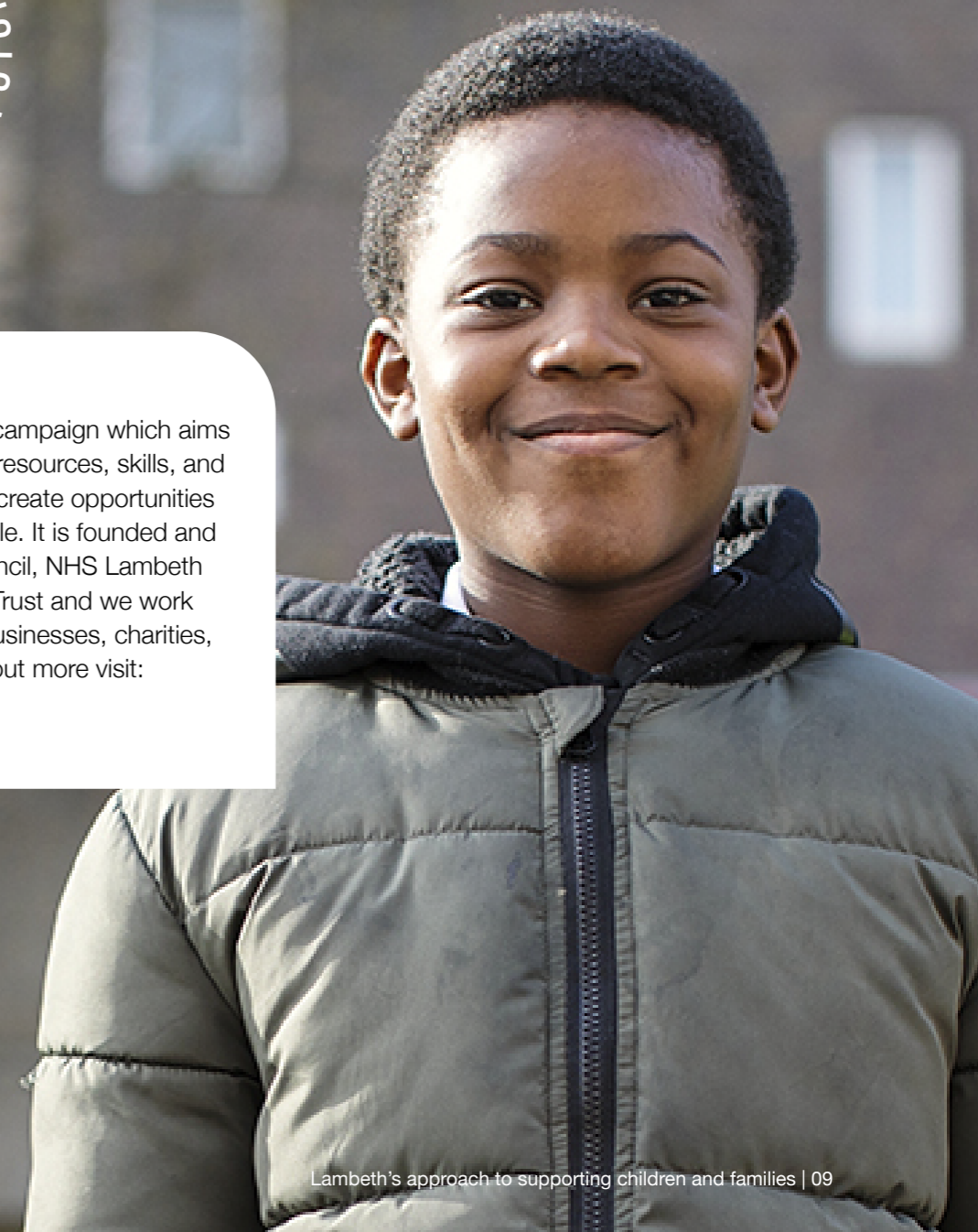
### Adolescent Safeguarding

- As a council we are committed to tackling Serious Youth Violence (SYV) through the adoption of a borough-wide public health focused SYV strategy. We look at how we can support individual risk factors, family-level risk factors, school-based issues such as low academic achievement & exclusion from school and community factors such as neighbourhood poverty and disadvantage, and the illegal drugs economy.



### Lambeth Made

- Lambeth Made is a unique campaign which aims to mobilise all of Lambeth's resources, skills, and imagination to improve and create opportunities for children and young people. It is founded and supported by Lambeth Council, NHS Lambeth and Guy's and St Thomas' Trust and we work with a growing number of businesses, charities, community groups. To find out more visit: [www.Lambethmade.org](http://www.Lambethmade.org)

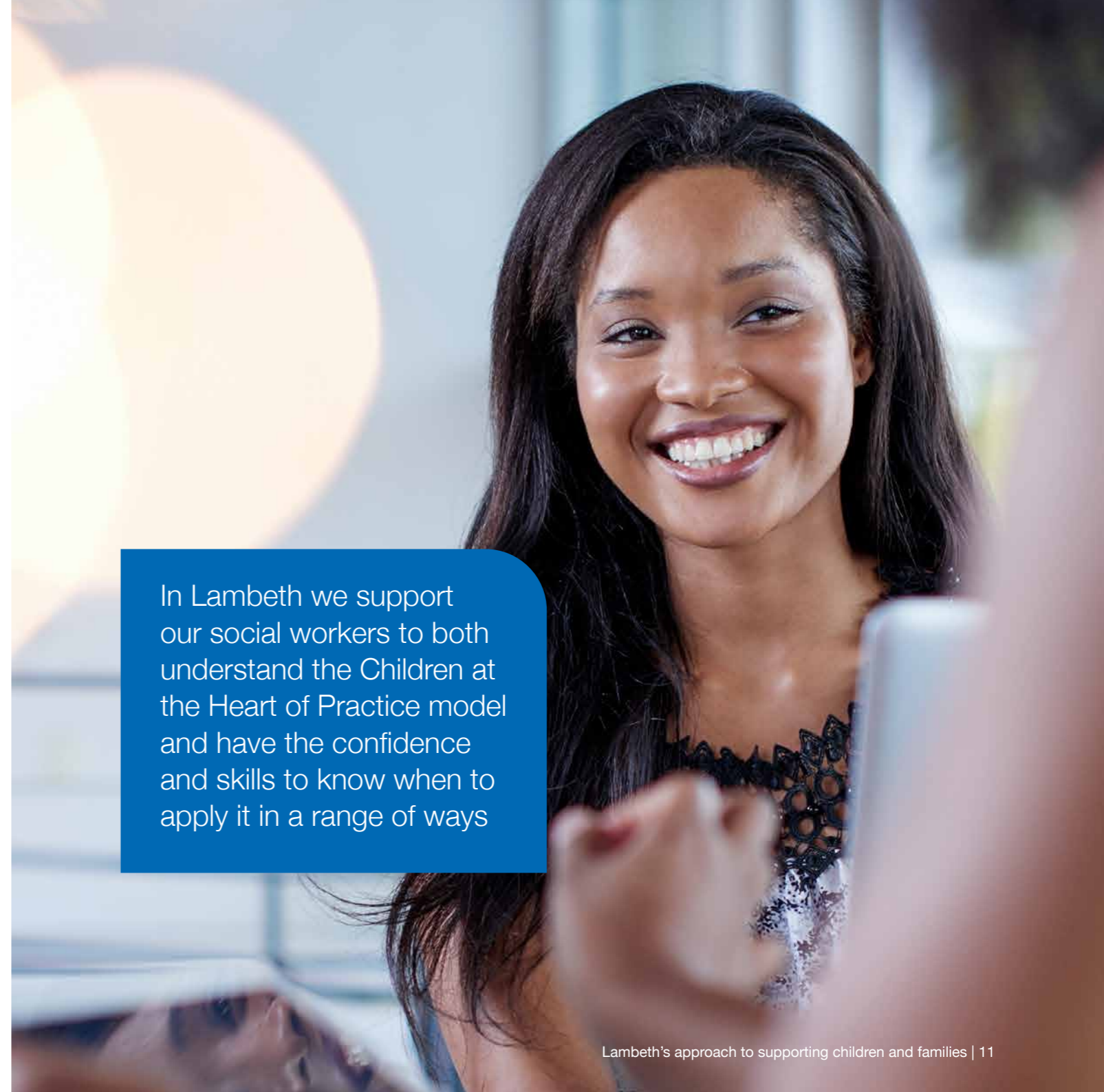




## Our support

In Lambeth we support our social workers to both understand the Children at the Heart of Practice model and have the confidence and skills to know when to apply it in a range of ways:

- Lambeth has invested in the rollout of systemic practice at all levels with training and support tailored for all practitioners, managers and leaders.
- Our team-based advanced practitioners provide hands-on support to help social workers reflect on the most appropriate intervention and manage the most complex situations.
- Our practice development leads, led by our Principal Social Worker, shape good practice and support the implementation of our practice values, supporting social workers to do their best work.
- There is regular team-based group supervision led by our advanced practitioners as well as individual supervision with team managers. This allows social workers the time and space to reflect on their work with children and families. Practice clinics, market days and an ongoing audit programme are integral to our commitment to being a learning organisation.
- We continuously challenge ourselves to think and reflect on how we can improve practice that makes a difference for children and families. We promote staff engagement through our Health Check survey, suggestion box and senior leadership accessibility.
- Our senior leadership (Service Managers, Assistant Directors, Directors and Strategic Directors) have been supported to embed our model through training from practice experts from the Institute of Family Therapy.



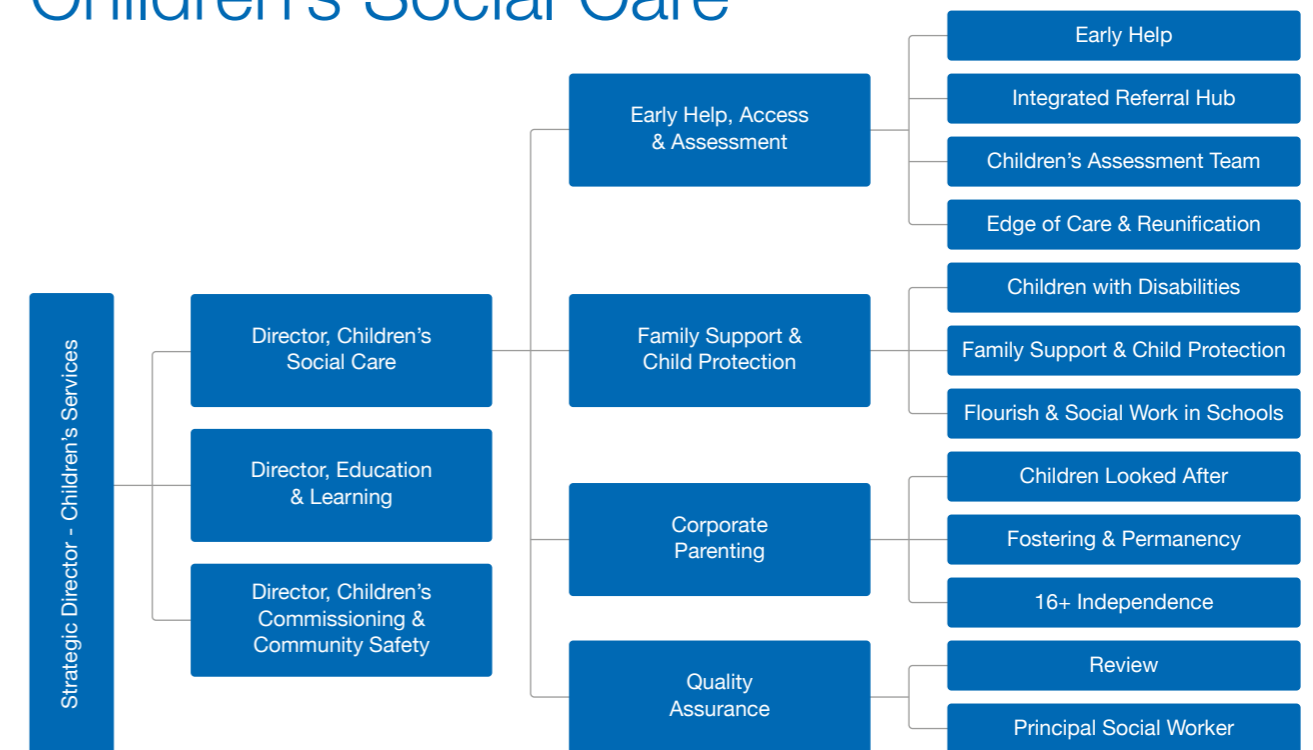
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## Our structure

We have:

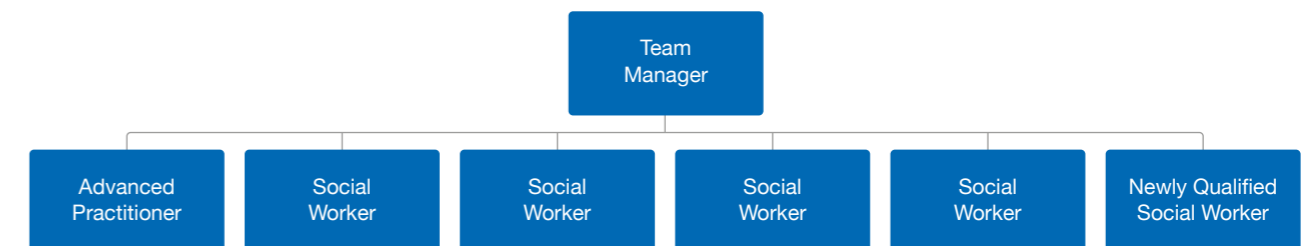
- Small teams
- Visible and accessible leadership
- Team-based advanced practitioners
- Service level practice development leads
- Embedded a range of specialist services e.g Flourish, edge of care/reunification and social workers in schools teams.

## Children's Social Care



## Social Work Team Structure

The majority of our social work teams operate with the below structure with a Team Manager leading six practitioners including an Advanced Practitioner who holds a smaller, complex workload and a Newly Qualified Social Worker undertaking the ASYE programme.





## What about career development?

We are committed to creating an environment in which practitioners and outstanding practice can and does flourish. To achieve this, Lambeth provides practitioners with a comprehensive learning and development offer, as well as a range of career progression opportunities.

For us, progression is not just about ‘moving up’ and into management but also about continuous professional development to improve and develop better practice skills for effective work with children and families.

We have worked with our partners, Collective Space, to develop a training offer centered on the values and principles of the Children at the Heart of Practice framework. All staff can undertake our 2-day introduction and 15-day accredited programme in Systemic Social Work with Children and Families, supported by Professor David Shemmings.

Following completion of the foundation year practitioners will have further opportunities to deepen their knowledge and extend their application of skill through smaller practice-based modules which focus on some of the key challenges and dilemmas inherent in the work.

Our management and leadership training programmes ensure that systemic practice is fostered at every level in the organisation. Managers undertake our 5-day Children at the Heart of Practice management training and supervision programme.



This aims to familiarise managers with key systemic concepts which their practitioners will be using with children and families so that managers have necessary understanding and confidence for creating the right practice context for their team. It also equips managers with appropriate tools and frameworks to given them necessary self-assurance to respond to the challenges of their roles.

We have made changes to our progression pathways in response to feedback from social workers and to make them more attractive and accessible. We have simplified progression through social worker grades by linking this to accredited training and created 23 team-based advanced practitioners to enable social workers to stay in practice.

Role	Salary	How to progress
Newly Qualified Social Worker	Up to £35k	
Social Worker P01	Up to £37k	Progress to P01 automatically after ASYE
Social Worker P02	Up to £39k	Progress to P02 automatically through annual increment progression
Social Worker P03	Up to £42k	Progress to P03 upon completion of relevant training and 2+ years post ASYE experience
Advanced Practitioner	Up to £48k	Application as vacancies arise (23 posts)
Team Manager	Up to £54k	Application as vacancies arise (30 posts)





visit: [www.inspirelambethsocialwork.com](http://www.inspirelambethsocialwork.com)

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