

Full Report

Community engagement in a diverse inner-city area



Table of Contents

- 1 Lambeth Early Action Partnership**
- 2 Working with and being led by families**
 - 2.1 Parent and carer volunteers
 - 2.2 Example in practice: Befriending
 - 2.3 Example in practice: Meeting the need for digital support
- 3 Parent and carer participation**
 - 3.1 Example in practice: People in the Lead – involving parents as experts
 - 3.2 What are the challenges in delivering People in the Lead sessions?
 - 3.3 Working with practitioners
 - 3.4 Costs and benefits
- 4 Developing connections and building trust**
 - 4.1 Example in practice: Strengthening connections in the community
 - 4.2 LEAP's Digital Connector Tool
- 5 Developing and delivering LEAP's Community Engagement Programme**
 - 5.1 Ensuring LEAP's Community Engagement Programme is structured and informed
 - 5.2 Example in practice: LEAP's Community Engagement Programme
 - 5.3 Building positive relationships with parents in early years
 - 5.4 Trust improves feedback
- 6 LEAP's marketing and online presence**
 - 6.1 LEAP's marketing communications programme
 - 6.2 Example in practice: Online booking platform
- 7 Collaborative partnership working with local organisations**
 - 7.1 Partnership at the heart of LEAP's model of working
 - 7.2 Example in practice: LEAP and Stockwell Partnership
 - 7.3 Example in practice: LEAP's CoCreate partnership initiative
 - 7.4 More about partnerships
- 8 Glossary**
- 9 Appendices**
 - 9.1 Facilitator Planning Template
 - 9.2 Facilitator Learning Template
 - 9.3 Further considerations if replicating the People in the Lead model
 - 9.4 CoCreate partner organisations
 - 9.5 How Community Engagement is working towards the LEAP Theory of Change
 - 9.6 The Digital Connector Tool
- 10 References**

1.0 Lambeth Early Action Partnership



Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP) has delivered a complex programme of community engagement in a densely populated, diverse inner-London community where economic disadvantage impacts the lives of many families, and 68% of children live in very deprived neighbourhoods¹.

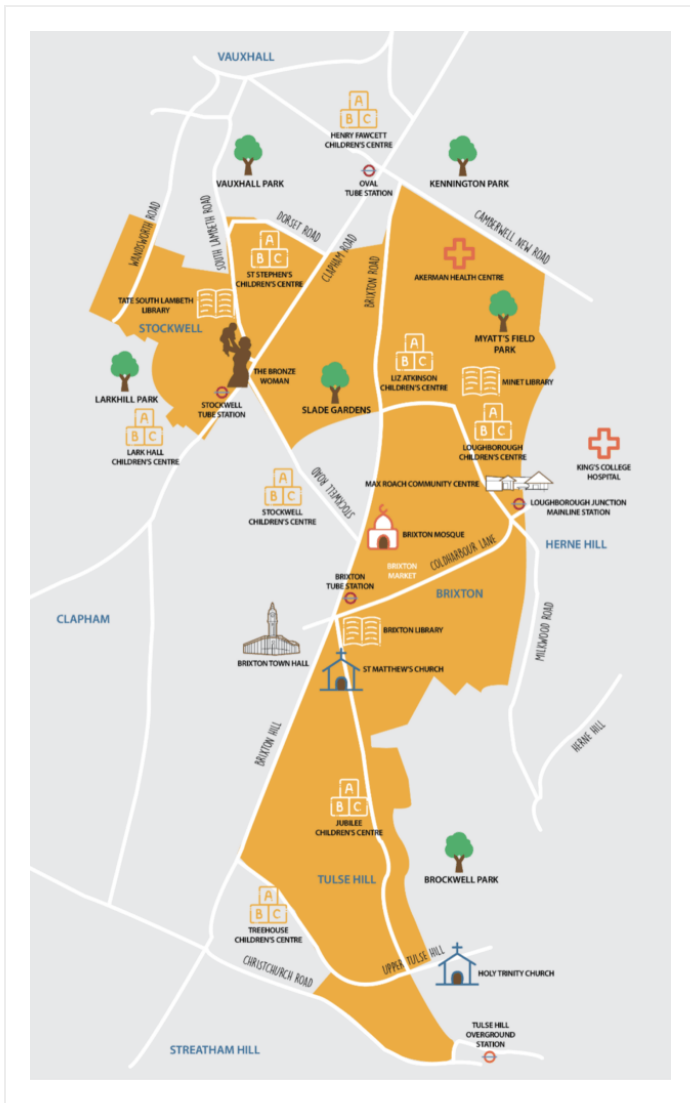
In 2021 there were approximately 64,800 people living the LEAP area, of whom around 2,641 were aged under 4-years-old². This area is densely populated, and comprises a diverse, culturally rich community. English is not the first language of almost 1 in 5 residents in the LEAP area (19% of the population)³.

In the areas where LEAP works, young children experience greater inequalities than children in the rest of borough. The LEAP area stretches from Stockwell to Myatt's Field, through North Brixton to Tulse Hill, covering about 20% of the borough.

LEAP began work in 2015 to

- Improve early childhood development outcomes for all children living in the LEAP area.
- Reduce local inequalities by supporting those at greater risk of poor outcomes.

LEAP is a 10-year, test-and-learn programme funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and supported by the National Children's Bureau charity (NCB).



43% of LEAP neighbourhoods are classified as 'most deprived'.









68% of children live in 'very deprived' neighbourhoods.



We hosted 1824 events reaching 6662 participants including 3058 families and 3437 children.

31% of all children living in the areas of Lambeth where LEAP operate were reached by LEAP community engagement activities in 2021.

Key facts about the population living in the LEAP area:

-  41% of residents were not born in the UK⁴
-  90% of 5-year-olds are not identified as white British⁵
-  40% of 5-year-olds have English as an additional language⁵
-  43% of LEAP neighbourhoods are classified as most deprived⁶
-  70% of residents do not identify as white British⁴
-  19% of residents have English as an additional language⁴
-  47% of residents live in social rented housing⁴
-  68% of children live in very deprived neighbourhoods⁷

In 2021/22, 581 babies were born to women and birthing people living in the LEAP area⁸.

LEAP monitors a range of childhood outcome indicators in the local population. Many of these indicators demonstrate unequal outcomes for children. By providing services for children and families in the LEAP area, LEAP aims to reduce the inequalities gap and see improved outcomes for all children.

From 2017 to 2023 LEAP's Community Engagement programme delivered:

1,824 events reaching **3,058 families** and **3,437 children**

- **29 early years forums** (designated spaces for parent engagement)
- **1,483 keeping-in-touch sessions**
(small-scale activities in community settings for families with young children)
- **299 one-off events** (including 10 themed festivals)

This resulted in...

- **36,000 attendances** (this includes individuals attending multiple events) and
- **5.41 times** was the average number of times an individual engaged with us (by area of residence).

More key stats about our Community Engagement programme

LEAP's Community Engagement programme **reached 31% of all children** living in the LEAP area in 2021.

One in five families, whose initial contact with Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP) is through community engagement activities⁹, then **go on to use other LEAP services**.

Families, whose first contact with the LEAP programme is through community engagement activities, and then go on to use another LEAP service...

- engage with more LEAP services on average compared with families that first enter LEAP's programme through other routes
- tend to engage with more sessions per service
- attend an average of 21.89 sessions per targeted service, nearly double the number of service sessions than families whose initial contact with LEAP is another route

2.0 Working with and being led by families



2.1 Parent and carer volunteers

Our parent volunteers are known as Parent Champions. They use their local knowledge to support other parents and carers, introducing them to children's centres, LEAP services and broader early year offers. They help connect local families.

LEAP is committed to supporting the personal development of all our volunteers. We supervise and train our Parents Champions, providing them with the resources they need.

Parent Champions have inspired us to trial more distinct Champion cohorts, including:



- **Digital Champions** support local parents to access online early years services and activities.
- **Befrienders** support more vulnerable parents and carers to access early years support.
- **Parent Representatives** advocate for LEAP and a diverse range of parents. They work with LEAP networks and other parents to objectively gather and amplify parent feedback at LEAP's board and broader stakeholder meetings.

From Q4, 2016, to Q4, 2023, LEAP has run 62 training sessions and courses, supporting a total of 373 Parent Champions.

Lambeth is a very diverse borough serving an array of communities. One in ten households in Lambeth have no household member who has English as their main spoken language¹⁰. The most common main spoken languages other than English are Portuguese, Spanish, Polish, French, and Italian. Nearly 150 languages are spoken by Lambeth school children¹¹.

Through tailored marketing, strong partnership working and positive word-of-mouth experiences, the LEAP Parent Champion programme and Befriending service has had a diverse and representative volunteer base. Many of our volunteers can speak other languages.

2.2 Example in practice: Befriending

Kimberlin Dunkley, Parent Champions Co-ordinator, explains how volunteers support parents in need of trusted friends.

The Befriending service was a small programme of work initially trialled by LEAP in late 2019. We developed the service with the help of parent volunteers, who, like LEAP, saw the need to support new and expectant parents to access early years services.

In addition to the common challenges facing new and expectant parents and carers, many other factors can prevent parents from engaging with early years services: language and cultural barriers, socio-economic issues (such as overcrowded housing), unemployment, and having no recourse to public funds.



Barriers to engagement

A limited understanding of early years support can give rise to the assumption that children's centres and other early years provision are an extension of social services, or other official bodies such as the Home Office. Some parents are wary of providing information about themselves and their children, resulting in a reluctance to engage.

A Befriender (a designated peer supporter) can encourage and reassure parents to ask honest questions, reducing their fears. The building of trust through this distinct arm of volunteering-work can help remove the barriers which prevent engagement with services.

Fear of being judged by others can also take its toll. Being a non-English speaker can adversely affect parents trying to assimilate into group settings. The role of the Befriender is vital in being a trusted friend, helping the parent feel supported in the initial phase of attending groups. Over time the parent becomes more familiar and confident to make these interactions on their own and will start making their own connections with other parents

Building a network of support

As a borough, Lambeth uses holistic and person-centred approaches (like social prescribing) to support engagement and take-up through the primary care network. The LEAP Befriending service has explored and mirrored this approach.

The peer-to-peer approach had the aim of giving parents comfort in knowing that they are not alone and that there is support available. It was hoped this would lead to an increase in early years engagement and service uptake. The hypothesis was that parents would (because of their befriending relations) slowly build their network of support through more frequent interactions with other groups of parents.

Pooled from the central parent volunteering programme, volunteers received bespoke Befriending training. The Befriending training course is designed to give volunteers the necessary knowledge and skills needed to form trusted and sustainable relationships with their peers. Volunteers are given the space and opportunity to practice active listening, understand their limitations and role in safeguarding, and most importantly reflect on how their own experiences can work to support others.

Appropriate training and matching

Befrienders are trained over a three-week period, during which volunteers also develop an understanding of the LEAP's programme aims and services offered. Volunteers are provided with the resources to enable confident signposting of local support services.

Once Befrienders are trained, they are then matched with parents based on similar traits and experiences. For example, having children of the same age, heritage, and background. There are regular check-ins to review progress.

The duration of Befriending relationships varies, with some relationships lasting longer than others. Initial befriending support is offered over a 6-month period but is not limited to this time. Longer relationships can be needed if parents are initially apprehensive about using the Befriending service or there are issues such as domestic violence or problems with housing.

In some cases, as a result of careful monitoring, the Befriending relationship may undergo a pause until a resolution of these more pressing personal issues.

I've improved because I could explain how I'm feeling. Now I feel less stress for example. Sometimes I would go out and I meet with (befriender) in the children's centre in another activity, and I don't feel alone.

Parent 1 had a 5-month Befriender relationship.

To be honest, a lot of LEAP stuff that was going on I wasn't aware of until I met my Befriender.

Parent 2 had a 10-month Befriender relationship.

I really liked the attention you have given to me, thank you.

Parent 3 had a 6-month Befriender relationship.

Partnership working vital to service

The LEAP volunteering team could not operate this Befriending service alone. Partnership working has been vital in trialling this delivery.

The Befriending service relies heavily on strong relationships built with partners such as Better Start workers in children's centres who can identify families who may benefit, and initiate referrals into the service. They also provide further support by checking in regularly with the parent referred.

By working closely with local partners, the Befriending Coordinator can gain a comprehensive understanding of the needs of the parent, so that clear action plans can be made to provide targeted support.

Over the duration of the service, partnership working has included a range of LEAP colleagues, children's centres, and other partner services such as The Gaia Centre. Gaia offers confidential, non-judgmental, and independent support services for those living in Lambeth who are experiencing gender-based violence.

With the children's centre it was very helpful for me. Sometimes I needed to talk with somebody. My Befriender, she is very kind and all the times she talk to me and really, really helpful.

A parent supported by LEAP's Befriending service

My experience was very good. As I said before, I'm very grateful for being able to use the befriending service in the first place. Very apprehensive at the beginning but I think it's an amazing thing that LEAP is doing. It's helped a lot of women.

A parent supported by LEAP's Befriending service

I think especially mothers need a friend, colleague, or a partner to talk with and sometimes other people know more than you or have more information than you and in my case for example all the time I was very closed and very alone.

A parent supported by LEAP's Befriending service

Rising to a big challenge

Referrals into the service were not consistent. Ongoing promotion of the service was required. Although regular reminders to health partners such as GP practices and health visitors increased the referrals received, this was an area that required constant work.

The Befriending programme ensured good referral pathways were established within LEAP and to wider Lambeth services. However the Befriending service itself could not provide support for parents with more complex needs.

We also learned about improving communication with parents who might benefit from the Befriending service. It quickly became apparent that there was a need for promotional flyers to be translated.

Most of our referrals (78%) were parents who had English as a Second Language (ESOL) needs, with the majority being Spanish speakers.

Finally, this was a small-scale programme. The capacity to coordinate, as well as the ability to scale-up the level of support, was restricted.

With each Befriender-parent relationship there was a responsibility and requirement for patience and time.

Key learning points

This small-scale, parent-led, and complimentary programme of delivery aimed to develop and support some of the most vulnerable parents in our community.

Over a 16-month period, 27 parent volunteers were trained as Befrienders. Volunteers went on to support a total of 23 parents between November 2021 and March 2023. A notable pattern in these matches was that 78% of referrals received were people who had English as a second language.

- Ensure training includes relevant scenarios and challenges that may affect local parents and carers.
- Carefully consider suitability of volunteers matched with parents. Recruit trustworthy individuals who have a passion for helping others, and can adapt to change because not all relationships follow a linear path.
- Communicate effectively about a service, particularly in the home languages of families that are being targeted.
- Be open and involve parent-volunteers in the co-production of new approaches. This is valued.
- Build strong relationships with community and health partners who can support referrals or champion your work.
- Partnerships matter. There needs to be an open channel of communication between those delivering the programme and those referring into the programme.

2.3 Example in practice: Meeting the need for digital support

Kim Stanway, Parent Champion Coordinator, explains how LEAP's Digi-Champs programme was developed.

Trialled in April 2022, the Digital Champion or Digi-Champs project was parent focused and community led. It was designed and developed in collaboration with parents. This work aimed to provide free friendly peer-to-peer support to families, in need of accessing safe and reliable early years information in Lambeth.

Parents and carers with young children wanted the practicality and ease of digital support during routine visits to children's centre settings. Parents told us that they wanted support in relation to navigating the online environment.



Supporting parents to access key services

Support was particularly needed with applying for nurseries, saving money, accessing local health services, and signing up for early years activities. This feedback was consistent with the 2022 *State of the Borough* report published by Lambeth council. The report found that residents reported lower levels of confidence in relation to accessing and using public services, as well as evaluating what online content is safe and reliable.

Good collaboration with parent volunteers, local parents and key local stakeholders was essential as we developed this digital support offer. A pool of parents from the central parent volunteering programme were identified and provided with additional training to help ensure that local families could access safe and reliable information about online early years services and increase their digital skills and confidence.

Making the sessions easy to attend

Digi-Champs training sessions (2x two hours) covered the role and limitations of a Digital Champion; practical knowledge of how to deliver Digital Champion sessions; how to best support other parents; and where to find additional local or national support and resources. To ensure the programme was inclusive for our parent volunteers, a free creche was provided for all training sessions. Volunteering sessions were kept within school hours and in school term-time only.

Children's centre spaces were the settings preferred by parents to deliver this work. Therefore, it was important to involve children's centre staff in this initiative from the outset. Monthly drop-in Digi-Champs sessions were embedded into Stay and Play activity sessions delivered from three children's centres. A referral pathway was also agreed, and sessions were advertised in their printed and online termly timetables.

Adapting to changing needs

The changing landscape. Over the timeline of the project, the needs of local parents were further compounded by increases to the cost-of-living. Parent requests reflected a sign of the changing times, and the project was adapted to suit. The dominant parent requests included finding support in relation to broadband social tariffs, home energy assessments, discounted utility bills, NHS Healthy Start cards and library memberships.



LEAP Digi-Champs at work

We're helping parents to overcome fears, gain confidence and feel connected. Some parents come feeling helpless but after gaining new information, they have hope. I helped a mum to access a discount on her water bill, she came back to see me at the next session and her joy was visible – it had really helped her. I've learnt that being there for someone who needs help goes a long way.

Abosede, LEAP Digital Champion

Digital impact in numbers

Increasing the take-up of the free, early-learning for two-year olds offer was also a key priority for Lambeth's Family Information Service. The Digi-Champ model provided opportunity to support this, and volunteers were trained to fully understand the entitlement and how to help parents apply for it online.

Over the course of the project, Digital Champions helped parents to access early years information and support online, helping to bridge the gap between families and services. In total 10 parent volunteers trained up as LEAP Digi Champs. Between them, they contributed to over 44 hours of volunteering time and provided 159 separate counts of digital support to parents across 17 sessions.

With the support of Digi Champs, parents have:

- Secured two-year-old Early Learning places at a local nursery.
This benefits children's social, physical, and mental development and helps them to prepare for school.
- Received free laptops and desktops for their home.
This helps improve digital literacy and opens further opportunities for education and employment.
- Registered for NHS Healthy Start cards.
This gives parents access to over £220 of free fruit, vegetables, and milk a year.

Volunteers have benefitted from this work too...

- 80% of Digital Champions strongly agreed that volunteering 'has given me knowledge about Early Years' (the remaining 20% agreed).
- 85% of Digital Champions who provided evaluation data strongly agreed that volunteering 'has increased my confidence' (the remaining 15% agreed)
- 60% of Digital Champions strongly agreed that volunteering 'has given me skills I can use in a job or placement' (the remaining 40% agreed)

Volunteers also worked well as a team. They communicated with each other via a dedicated WhatsApp group, sharing successes and asking for help from each other if they were unable to attend a session.

It provides a sense of community – it's helped me feel connected to others and makes me want to get more involved in my community. I've made new friends and through talking to new people I have certainly developed my social skills, self-esteem, and confidence. Doing something I feel is so worthwhile and valuable gives me a sense of accomplishment.

Aminat, LEAP Digital Champion

Key learning points

1. Make support more visible – don't section it off

At the start of the programme, Digi Champs were in a quiet corner of children's centre sessions to ensure parents had privacy. Over time they recognised that parents could be reluctant to ask for support, and so the support became more visible within child centre settings.

2. Signpost to specialist digital support when needed

LEAP Digi Champs offered the most value through friendly parent-to-parent signposting. Where parents required more enhanced support around ICT and basic digital skills, Digital Champions signposted to local specialist digital support organisations.

3. QR codes were a hit over individual flyers

Over the course of this project, we observed that fewer parents wanted to pick up individual printed flyers and instead used their phone to interact with, log and record information. The Digital Champions agreed that a sheet with a list of QR codes to relevant websites would be ideal for parents to take away and scan when needed.

4. Get feedback during the session instead of at the end

A short monitoring form that volunteers can complete while offering support (rather than asking parents to complete it at the end), is likely to be most effective.

5. Consider allocating a member of staff to coordinate the programme

The parent-to-parent model is a very effective delivery model, but the programme requires ongoing co-ordination to manage volunteers; liaise with children centres; keep on top of programme monitoring; as well as plan and restock session resources. It is therefore difficult for the programme to be entirely volunteer-led long term, and similar initiatives may require the lead input of a member of staff throughout the programme.

6. Few physical resources are needed for delivery

Tablets with quick internet speed, flyers, lanyards for volunteers and monitoring forms.

7. Volunteers do not need to be tech experts to volunteer

The most valuable skills needed are to be kind and encouraging, reliable, enthusiastic about the benefits of the internet and a willingness to learn.

3.0 Parent and carer participation



3.1 Example in practice: People in the Lead – involving parents as experts

Tanya Spence, People in the Lead Manager, explains how LEAP developed effective parent participation.

LEAP believes that parent participation in decisions and design of local offers is crucial for engagement. People in the Lead (PiL) offers participation spaces for parents of early years children (0-4). We support parents and carers to share their opinions, experiences, and ideas. These in turn support and inform decisions, processes, and design of services or activities for our partners and practitioners.

We started running PiL sessions because the Covid-19 pandemic presented new and distinct challenges in relation to parent and carer engagement. It had never been more important to maintain dialogue with parents and carers.



Bringing practitioners and parents together

LEAP already had a strong parent-volunteer programme, but we needed a light-touch participation space that facilitated short-term commitments from parents. PiL was born.

LEAP typically runs two PiL sessions per quarter, with sessions taking place about one week apart. Several weeks before the sessions are due to take place, LEAP promotes the opportunity for practitioners to facilitate a session and invites parents and carers to participate in a session. Promotion is through our *What's on* webpage with Eventbrite platform, and through our partners, networks, and parent volunteering team.

The LEAP team works in advance with practitioners to plan PiL sessions. We offer advice about developing practical time-bound sessions to work in the available space – ensuring that language is clear and checking that the practitioner is not overly ambitious about what the session can cover.

Flexibility and accessibility

We contact interested parents in advance to identify their creche and food dietary requirements. We often overbook to allow for any last-minute non-attendances. We set up the PiL sessions to work within the likely family routines (baby nap times and school pick-ups)

of the parents and carers attending. A typical PiL session runs from 10am to 3pm and covers two parent and carer cohorts, who either attend an AM (10:00 – 12:00) or PM (1:00 – 3:00) discussion. There are ideally no more than 12 parents and carers in attendance.

When LEAP initially trialled PiL, our intention was limited to informing the internal working of LEAP decisions, processes, and design. As LEAP is a multi-agency partnership programme, there quickly became an appetite for a wider sphere of practitioners to engage with parents through this approach.

Well-constructed People in the Lead sessions offer many benefits and opportunities.

The People in the Lead model empowers, values, and supports parents and carers

- Enabling those with children of a similar age to socialise and connect.
- Building people's confidence to participate within a group by encouraging feedback and recognising experience.
- Offering respite through a free creche, and valuing people's time.
- Recognising parents and carers as experts by maintaining professional interactions and providing updates following their involvement.

I enjoyed sharing experience and giving feedback which will help other service users. The practitioner was willing to answer all questions and listened actively. Plus, a creche so I do not have to worry about my child.

Parent feedback

It was a positive experience for my daughter and I. My daughter was able to develop her social and independence skills in the crèche. I was able to develop discussion skills and feel empowered both within the context of giving my opinion but also personally.

Parent feedback

Knowing that my opinions matter to more people other than my family and friends.

Parent feedback

How the PiL model could benefit practitioners

It informs decision-making, development, and delivery by:

- **Developing knowledge and understanding** on anything from design preferences to user journeys.
- **Identifying gaps** and missed opportunities.
- **Validating or finalising decisions** by using parents' feedback to steer or sign-off a process or plan.

These sessions provided an invaluable opportunity to gain insight from parents – it was interesting that there were many shared views amongst parents about the appeal of food at LEAP events and suggestions of how we can improve on this. It was also a unique opportunity to reflect on the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis in real time.

Carla Stanke, Public Health Specialist, LEAP

We have used the feedback to revisit the areas raised and hopefully make positive improvements the Family Information Directory.

Sonya Kassman, Lambeth Family Information Service

Discussions also highlighted the importance of public health messaging to be as visually appealing and engaging as content from industry and Instagram mum influencers. This has also impacted the design of the proposal and will feed into other research we are carrying out at UCL looking at children's sugar intake and the labelling of baby foods.

Dr Rana Conway, University College London

The session was a worthwhile experience for helping us develop and shape our potential interventions. The parents involved were insightful and shared their own personal experiences with services, as well as constructively criticised the intervention options. It was very useful hearing different perspectives and identifying ways to overcome challenges/gaps the parents identified in the interventions.

Sophie Kedzior and Julia Forman, Oracle project, Kings College London

3.2 What are the challenges in delivering People in the Lead sessions?

Consider all costings

When we plan participation work, which involves parents and carers with young children, we factor in costings for creche/childcare provision to enable parents to fully participate.

The number, ages, and needs (including special educational needs and disabilities) of children will directly coincide with an increase in expenses. We also consider additional costings for incentivising session attendance. This includes costings for use of space, food, and other resources.

We make a conscious effort to value the time given by parents and carers. We make parents aware of their responsibilities in declaring any monetary incentives (<https://www.gov.uk/expenses-and-benefits-vouchers/what-to-report-and-pay>). Our incentives may be minimal (vouchers, lunches, etc) but they still result in additional participation costs.

Organisations and groups interested in delivering participation work are encouraged to think about how and when they reward attendees for their time (including digital versus physical).

Suitable session spaces must accommodate a creche. We therefore usually require two large spaces. A children's centre or community space is often an ideal venue to deliver a PiL session. The Resource Centre (<https://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/organising-a-crche/>), provides a useful outline of the necessary requirements and considerations for a creche facilitation.

You also need to consider **organisation and time** requirements.

3.3 Working with practitioners

Practitioners complete a brief session planning template in advance. It ensures that there is a clear delivery aim; supports sessions being pitched at the right level; and helps practitioners to meet their delivery aim within the allotted time. See appendices for planning template (<https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/reports/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area-full-report/#9.1>).

As standard, a member of the LEAP team will oversee the wider hosting of a PiL session and will be responsible for introducing practitioners who are facilitating specific segments during the AM or PM half of the session. We provide information on the session aim and introduce the facilitator in an agenda that we share with parents and carers in advance.

We require practitioners to complete a learning template following the delivery of their session. The template ([see appendices \(https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/reports/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area-full-report/#9.2\)](https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/reports/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area-full-report/#9.2)) supports reflective thinking and enables practitioners to fully consider delivery outputs and next steps.

The feedback loop

We encourage practitioners to take time and reflect before completing their learning template. Once collected, we format feedback within a *You Said and We Listened* template. It helps parents and carers understand the impact they have made by participating in the PiL sessions.

3.4 Costs and benefits

From August 2021 – October 2023:

- LEAP delivered 11 PiL sessions
- 68 parents and carers participated
- 152 people attended sessions
- 33 practitioners facilitated sessions
- £360 has been the average running cost per session (creche and voucher incentives costings only)

An effective blueprint for working with families

PiL sessions have accommodated a wide range of professionals looking to further inform, validate or steer their work. From internal LEAP programme staff and University researchers to Local Authority leads.

But more importantly, this participation model has shown itself to be an effective blueprint for working with local families and embedding their voice in decision-making.

If your organisation is thinking of running similar People in the Lead sessions, there is further advice and practical suggestions [in the appendices \(https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/reports/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area-full-report/#3.1\)](https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/reports/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area-full-report/#3.1).

4.0 Developing connections and building trust



4.1 Example in practice: Strengthening connections in the community

Introducing the Community Connector

Workers often struggled to keep up to date with new developments in LEAP's broad range of over 20 services or with changes in wider local provision. This left little time to form the all-important connections with families that play a key role in building trust.

We introduced the Community Connector role to bridge this gap. Based in LEAP's Community Engagement team, the connector role worked closely with staff delivering LEAP's broad portfolio of services. This role was a central point for LEAP, building trusted relationships with families and community partners; providing families with up-to-date information and easy access support based on individual need.

The Community Connector worked to:

- Establish positive community partnership relations.
- Identify shared opportunities for referral and signposting.
- Support families to navigate the LEAP offer.
- Signpost to appropriate wider local-level provision.

Key objectives for the connector role

The key objectives were to engage new families with the broad LEAP offer and to have a visible presence in the community. There were regular visits to LEAP engagement activities, service sessions, local children's centres and other externally run activities. The connector also worked with a range of colleagues to identify opportunities for families to participate in LEAP services and activity sessions. We centred these opportunities around critical timepoints such as becoming a new parent, or by age/development stage of children.

The connector shared information on community engagement activities and services, as well as local-level events, through a regular e-newsletter. By June 2023 this newsletter was reaching over 750 families. Combining personalised communication, with an on-the-ground presence, helped the connector to establish trust with families. The newsletter has an average open rate of 50% and click through rate of 11%. It performs well compared to similar charity newsletters.

It is difficult to achieve a real sense of familiarity through publicity materials alone.

Building rapport in parents' familiar spaces is important.

Information also needs to be given at the right time point.

Various parent quotes from LEAP's parent and carer participation space (People in the Lead), 6 Aug 2021

Embedding the connector role into the LEAP programme benefitted families. It offered individualised support; helped to develop trusted relationships; and increased engagement opportunities through timely promotion.

Levels of engagement with the connector post were formally monitored over a 6-month period:

- 100% (132) of people wanted to understand and talk more about the broader offers and support available at LEAP and in their local area.
- 95% of parents and carers that the connector approached took a next step.
- 89 parents and carers went on to have a one-to-one follow-up.
- 63 signed up to the LEAP families newsletter.

What if you can't have a full-time connector?

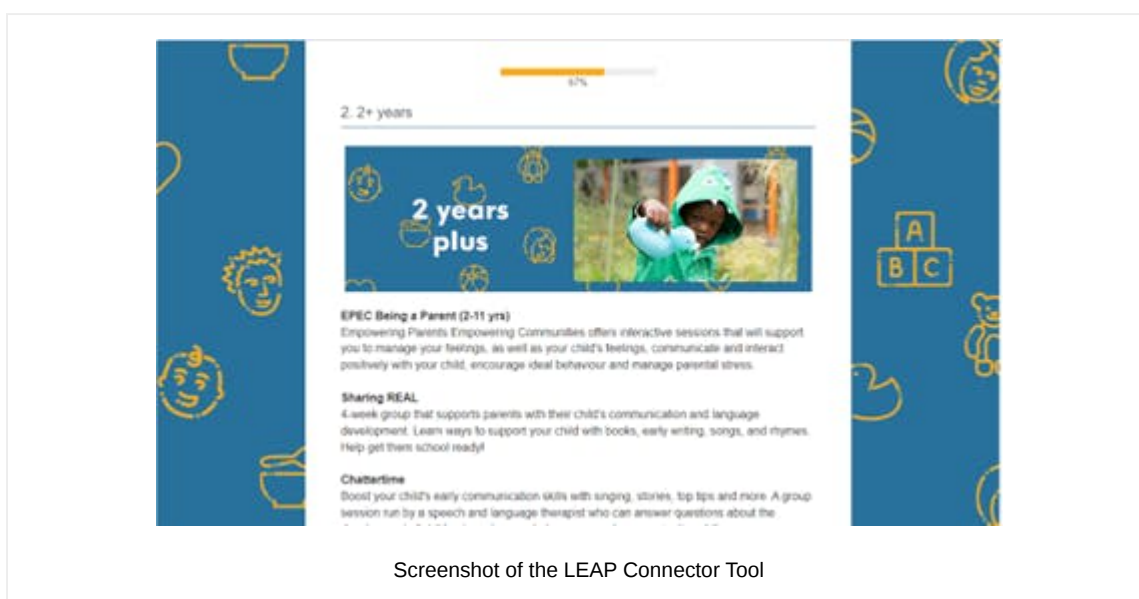
Not every organisation can have a full-time connector or prescriber post, but...

How many of your community posts embed this key aspect of engagement work? And to what degree are you providing the resources to support this work?

The connector role has been an asset to the Sharing REAL programme by organising signposting for the service and discussing upcoming opportunities to network with local families.

Catherine Keal, Communication, Language and Literacy Programme Manager, LEAP

4.2 LEAP's Digital Connector Tool



As with many good community engagement programmes, LEAP values working with and not simply doing to.

This was fully in our minds when we developed the [Digital Connector Tool](https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/reports/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area-full-report/#9.6) (<https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/reports/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area-full-report/#9.6>) for a tablet device. The Community Connector uses [this flow-question tool](https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/reports/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area-full-report/#9.6) (<https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/reports/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area-full-report/#9.6>) in their interactions with families during community events and activities.

This digital tool enabled LEAP and families to share useful information in a timely and engaging manner. It also enabled LEAP to offer bespoke support based on the family's location and age of child. This was an important aspect of the tool, as some LEAP services were only accessible to families living in certain postcode areas. We trialled the tool first to ensure that it asked relevant questions and could collect meaningful data.

We developed this Connector tool to be visually engaging and to be used in person with a parent/carer. Flow questions and skip logic supported the next step options and guided the conversation. Embedded pictures of sessions and videos also helped to communicate some of LEAP's more complex or sensitive services.

Reaching families and being relevant

LEAP operates across distinct areas of Lambeth. A few of the services we have offered have not been accessible to those who live outside of these areas. By narrowing the age of the child/children and postcode we were also able to sensitively promote applicable services and activities.

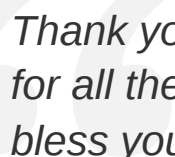
This tool ensured families were most in the know about services and activities which were the best fit for their children and locally accessible. It also helped us account for and understand the connectors role, activity, and communications.

Giving us a better understanding of our impact

The connector tool was used to support and monitor the engagement of 131 families over a 6-month period. It became a vital part of the Community Connector's work. Data from the tool was regularly exported into a report, providing useful insights, including whether families had heard of LEAP before. It allowed us to track new engagement with LEAP and better understand the extent to which uptake of LEAP services had directly resulted from Community Connector interaction.

Despite how parent/carer-friendly we had designed the tool to be – it was not always possible to use it for every session or activity.

We think operating in such an open, transparent, and accessible way has really supported the connections made with families.



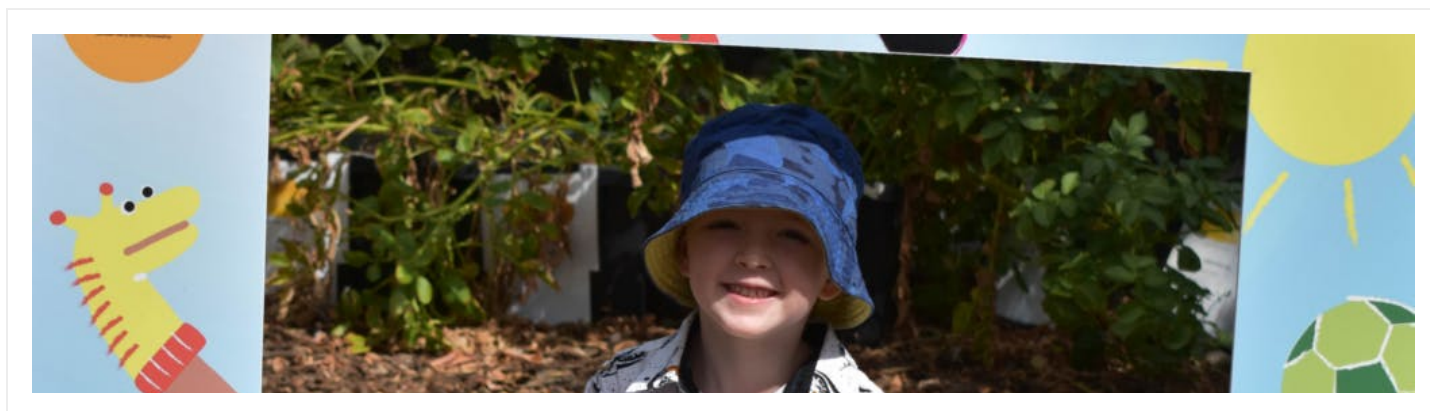
Thank you, was great speaking with you, and thank you for all the information, you have been so helpful, God bless you.

Parent feedback

Key learning points

- Investing time in building relationships between a familiar face of your organisation and families builds trust.
- Parents appreciated LEAP's tailored advice and bespoke support for families by age of children and location.
- Having a tool which enables evidence-based decisions is useful to help families understand and choose the right support.

5.0 Developing and delivering LEAP's Community Engagement Programme



5.1 Ensuring LEAP's Community Engagement Programme is structured and informed

The main aim of LEAP's Community Engagement Programme is to connect families to the wide range of LEAP services as well as to each other. Our community engagement activities meet parent needs, and are timely, informed and clearly communicated.

Operating in four distinct and marginalised areas of Lambeth, the LEAP programme serves to ensure that children aged 0-4 have the very best start in life. With a concentrated approach to ensuring children have good communication and language, diet and nutrition and are supported to develop healthy social relationships and emotional tendencies, community engagement largely operates as the gateway path into many of these services.

5.2 Example in practice: LEAP's Community Engagement Programme

Georgia May Campbell, Community Activities Facilitator, explains how LEAP delivers successful activities and events for families.

The Community Activities Facilitator for LEAP leads the development of high-quality engagement offers. These events and activities aim to connect parents and carers with the broader portfolio of LEAP services, as well as with each other.

Our free activities are primarily for families with children aged 3 and under, including children with additional needs. However, during school holidays, families can also bring older siblings.



Embedded in the community

LEAP's Community Activities Facilitator role is fully immersed in the community, coordinating our efforts, and ensuring we meet the needs of our community – liaising with session facilitators, parents and carers, delivery partners and children's centres.

They review registration, attendance, and feedback data. From early 2017 to November 2023, the Community Engagement team, with community partners and other LEAP services, delivered a total of 299 one-off events, resulting in 9,171 attendances.

Theming events to increase relevance and participation

LEAP uses a festival model to develop, market, and deliver all our sessions and events under one unifying theme. We organise three festivals a year. Each festival includes four large flagship events. We develop a fresh look and feel for each festival, applying it across our [integrated marketing activities \(https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/reports/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area-full-report/#6.1\)](https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/reports/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area-full-report/#6.1).

The themed approach helps us reach specific segments or groups of families in the community. We invite parents and carers to co-produce festival events and to volunteer. This strengthens trust between LEAP and our families.

Adult conversation for me, engaging toys for him, the fire engine and the lovely food was brilliant. And the LEAP staff were really engaging and welcoming. Thank you for organising.

Parent feedback, Warm Hub Event, 2023

LEAP community engagement festivals

Winter with us: A winter festival supporting families during lockdown to reduce social isolation.

Explore and learn: A festival organised with children's centres to engage new LEAP families.

Summer Festival of Family Fun: A festival title chosen by parents. Staged annually over the 6-week school holiday. Including flagship events from circuses to seaside playdays and a sports day.

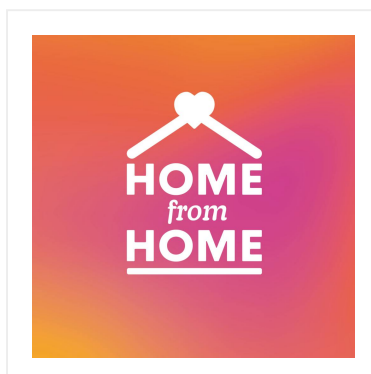
Home From Home: Sensitive and responsive to the rising costs of living in 2022. Flagship events provided hot food. We used warm spaces and delivered with wider local Lambeth services.

Bump Baby & Me: An online-only festival, supporting new and expectant parents during lockdown.

Little Movers and Shakers: An autumn festival, helping children stay active through diverse song and dance.

I am Me: An autumn theme focusing on the beauty of Lambeth's culture and diversity with carnival flagship events.

Once Upon a Story Festival: Supporting the communication and language development of young children. We staged a range of storytelling sessions by children's authors.





For each festival we work strategically with different community partners.

We delivered our Home from Home Festival in 2022 to support families with the cost-of-living crisis over the colder season. We involved partners such as Brixton Advice and Healthy Living Platform. We ran our Summer Festival of Family Fun in 2023 in the school holidays, ensuring that older siblings could also take part. We planned events together with local housing providers and resident groups. This gave us an opportunity to upskill our community partners in organising engaging events for families with small children.

Loved having a warm fun and educational environment for my child to enjoy and develop. I was able to connect with our parents sit eat and have a warm drink with my community.

Parent feedback, 2023

5.3 Building positive relationships with parents in early years

LEAP's Community Activities Facilitator was consistently present at our activities to welcome parents/carers and develop a rapport with families. This helps to improve the likelihood of families coming to more sessions.

Adult conversation for me, engaging toys for him, the fire engine and the lovely food was brilliant. And the LEAP staff were really engaging and welcoming. Thank you for organising.

Parent feedback, LEAP warm hub event 2023

A parent explains the difference the facilitator made to her daughter's enjoyment starting nursery:

Even now that she is starting nursery, because when you get feedback from the practitioners, and they say like, she's very sociable, she loves she loves anything sensory, like music and touch. And I think a lot of that is because of what she was surrounded by it from when she was so young. Yeah, the music, the sensory, the other children.

This parent attended several LEAP sessions

Ensuring quality sessions in safe spaces

We further ensure high-quality provision by setting consistently high standards and expectations of LEAP facilitators and being present to understand how well sessions are working. See appendix 9. (<https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/reports/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area-full-report/#9.6>) (<https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/reports/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area-full-report/#9.5>).

Our sessions are delivered in appropriate spaces which are safe and free from risk, and where delivery is shown to meet the expectations of the families 80% of the time. Our work is driven by LEAP values, data findings, observations, parent voice, and partner feedback. It is informed by local-national insights in relation to need. The Facilitator's presence helps ensure that sessions are always high quality.

For example, our summer festival events got whole families involved in outdoor sports based on the learning and success of our popular Mini Athletics sessions, which had attracted 970 attendances from October 2022 to October 2023. During the 2023 summer festival we engaged new families who now continue to attend other weekly LEAP activity sessions. The quality of provision builds trust and a positive experience for families, which creates better engagement.

Bonding with familiar faces

We aim to create a feeling of belonging and trust by having a familiar face at LEAP community events. Once we establish this trust, local families are more open to participating in other LEAP services and activities, and parents feel more confident to give honest feedback about events attended.

5.4 Trust improves feedback



Parents sharing their ideas at a LEAP Parents In the Lead session in 2021.

Parents are regularly invited to give us feedback in a variety of ways, including anonymous surveys online, in-session voting, ballot boxes and parent participation spaces, such as [LEAP's People in the Lead sessions \(https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/reports/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area-full-report/#3.1\)](https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/reports/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area-full-report/#3.1). Offering a range of different feedback methods allows those who are not as vocal to have equal opportunities to shape and influence our delivery. Parents were the main driver for having multiple feedback options. They helped us see the limitations of relying on on-the-spot feedback. Limitations which included parents who struggled to communicate their needs in English.

LEAP embraces any opportunity to gather honest feedback. It can guide the development, quality and levels of engagement with sessions. For example, for one very popular session, feedback when paired with attendance data showed that we were failing to attract African Caribbean mothers. This review prompted us to trial a new session and to carve out a designated space for these parents, who had shared the ways they would feel more comfortable accessing the offer.

Listening to the community demonstrates how we value those who use our services. Being physically present improves our ability to reach families and deliver what they need. Building relationships with families results in effective feedback which positively shapes our delivery.

I've just got a heart of gratitude.... It's just been a really positive experience. LEAP has definitely made my last year a really positive one.

Parent feedback

The same parent spoke in depth about how she now recommends LEAP to any parent she meets – a reflection of the quality of provision we provide. Another parent said:

Thanks to Lambeth for giving LEAP the opportunity to help families or bring families together on things that they never knew about before..... Coming to see that there is like a community and things out there for your kids, regardless of any age that you have.

Key learning points

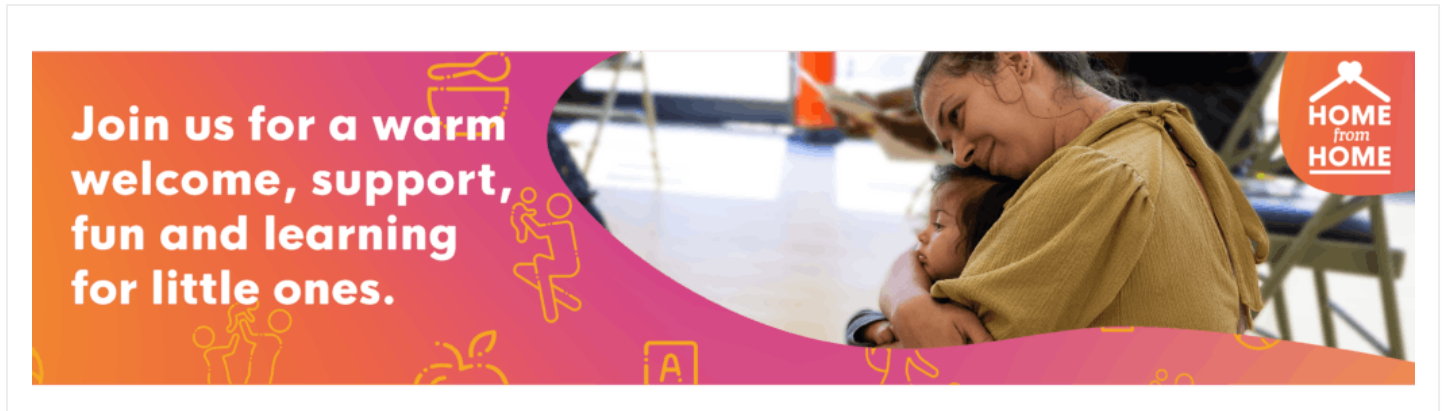
Having a consistent staff presence at all engagement events helps us develop an understanding of families and partner organisations and helps build trust.

Taking on board ideas and reflections from families within the community demonstrates how we value those who use our services. Being physically present on the ground improves our ability to reach families and deliver what they need. Building relationships with families, builds trust which results in effective feedback which then positively shapes our delivery.

The LEAP model of delivery through themed festivals of fun family-friendly events is reflective of community need, enables an integrated approach to marketing, and keeps our service offers and activities fresh.

Our marketing – particularly our online presence – ensures familiarity with the LEAP brand, offers clear information about what is available for families, and enables easy online booking so that families can access LEAP activities and services.

6.0 LEAP's marketing and online presence



6.1 LEAP's marketing communications programme

LEAP's marketing budget is modest. LEAP's online and social media presence therefore plays a significant part in our integrated communications programme to build a reliable brand which families recognise and trust.

How LEAP reaches families through its marketing

- Website content
- News
- Social media
- Targeted paid-for advertising in local media
- A regular e-newsletter
- Promotional leaflets and posters*

*delivered via door drops, children's centres, and LEAP service providers, and by staff and partners leading activity sessions

Consistency and familiarity

We theme marketing activities for community engagement festivals, timing them to work together to raise awareness and encourage attendance.

We maintain a constant presence online, regularly updating our website and social media. Many families use social media, but some families may not be able to easily access information online. So, for each themed festival, we also post leaflets through doors on social housing estates in targeted postcodes, and display posters in local shops.

These combined activities help signpost families to LEAP's *What's on* webpage where people can book activities easily through our embedded Eventbrite form.

Online activity

Our *What's on* web page attracts on average 400 visitors and 1,100 page views each month. Of these views, the highest proportion come from direct referrals and organic search. This will include people who have bookmarked our *What's on* web page to regularly return to see it, and people who have seen our promotional materials and social posts and then searched for LEAP online.

LEAP started using QR codes on our leaflets and posters in 2022 and they contribute the second largest number of visitors to our *What's on page*.

Of visits to our *What's on page* coming via social media, Facebook and Instagram play an equal role. A smaller proportion of visits come via third parties such as Lambeth council's website.

Social media interactions

LEAP services and activities are primarily of interest to local families in Lambeth, rather than to UK-wide audiences. Social media works well for LEAP as an information and engagement tool.

As of November 2023:

- LEAP's Instagram following more than doubled in a year, from 500 to 1,088.
- Our Facebook followers total nearly 900.
- Posts on Instagram about LEAP's community events typically reach around 400 people.
- Similar Facebook posts reach around 300 people.

These audiences, while modest in numbers, are largely made up of people living in the LEAP area, and within age ranges associated with young families.

A personalised e-newsletter sent fortnightly to over 750 families has an open rate of 50% and click through rate of 11%. This also encourages families to book online for free activities.

Activity on Instagram and Facebook enables LEAP to connect with parents, share pictures from sessions, promote upcoming events, and promote partner services. We track which posts are most effective. Those with families and babies featured create the best engagement.

On Instagram we signpost families back to our website through Linktree (a signposting shortcut site) which streamlines and simplifies navigation. We know that parents use our social media channels to keep up to date with upcoming LEAP activities and events.

I mean, I have an Instagram account, but I've never used it.... But having come to LEAP, it made me follow you guys and see other things available in and around the surrounding areas, what to do, like the Healthy Living platform.

So as I was scrolling through I just happened to find ...as I was scrolling through, like you do go Google local activities. And it came up and I thought oh, this is great. And that's how I started using it because I saw what you guys were offering.

Online and in person

We know that informal photographs and short video clips, 'stories' and animations are particularly effective on Instagram and Facebook. However, this does require staff time in creating and curating content, and in following robust procedures to secure the necessary consent and permissions from families for use on social media.

Being present both in person and online for parents provides a range of opportunities for families to find out about and access our activities, events, and services. Engagement with parents and carers positively influences the design of our activities and services.

6.2 Example in practice: Online booking platform

Yolanda Ferguson, Project Assistant, explains how LEAP has embraced digital developments to improve engagement with families.

Using the online booking platform (Eventbrite) has revolutionised the way that families can find out about and book their free places at LEAP community engagement events and activity sessions.

LEAP initially began to use Eventbrite as an online booking tool to engage families during the lifting of lockdown in May 2021. LEAP ran a four-day online festival called Bump, Baby and Me (BBM) which helped new and expectant parents to connect with wider LEAP services and practitioners via a series of hybrid events.



Teething problems with our online booking form

Use of the online booking tool enabled us to collect basic information about families, and to then send out login details for online sessions. Importantly, use of this online platform also enabled us to communicate with parents should face-to-face sessions be cancelled at short notice; if facilitators fell ill, or there was a change in the social distancing rules.

When LEAP initially began using this online booking platform for the BBM festival, people couldn't access the page via the LEAP website. Parents had to view the website for sessions and then call the children's centre to book their place.

We decided to embed the Eventbrite platform into the *What's on* page on the LEAP website. This allowed families to find out about available activities, and book sessions directly 24/7. This change in our way of working also meant that families could easily access sessions from other service providers.

Initially, parents were asked to fill in lots of fields when booking. They explained their frustrations about over how long it took to sign up for a free session.

I could work it out, but may be not accessible to all / could be easier.

Fine-tuning Eventbrite

We reviewed the user journey and reduced the amount of data required at the point of sign-up. We now gather additional data from parents/carers when they attend activity sessions.

The date we collect data for monitoring and evaluation purposes helps us understand whether we are reaching the right families. It feeds into the planning of future community engagement events.

Online bookings

Between May 2021 and November 2023 there were 7,261 online registrations for events and activities. LEAP observed a 128% increase in families registering for events and activities over a 12-month period between September 2021 and September 2022.

Enhanced familiarity in using this online platform, with the added convenience of having mobile access to book sessions may explain this increase. LEAP can also keep track of the numbers signed up for sessions, which informs health and safety plans for events.

LEAP is aware that the plans for families with young children can easily change at the last minute. To encourage attendance (and reduce dropouts) we promote sessions near the date and send reminder emails 24 hours before the event.

Increased visibility

The growth in LEAP's online and social media presence, combined with the ease of our online booking platform, has resulted in increased visibility of LEAP and improved engagement with families.

When we compare quarter 3, 2019, and the same period in 2022, there is a 31% (612: 807) increase in unique participants (one count per person) and an 86% increase in new participants (219: 408).

That's how I discovered LEAP in the first place.

I regularly scroll through the website for things to do with my kids once I've put them to bed.

Parent feedback, People in the Lead Participation space, June 2022

7.0 Collaborative partnership working with local organisations



7.1 Partnership at the heart of LEAP's model of working

LEAP has partnership at the very heart of our working model based on the premise that no one organisation or service can meet the many needs of local families. LEAP works with over 30 local partners, meeting the needs of families through pregnancy and the early years of childhood.

Collaborative working is key across the entire LEAP programme, but it is particularly important in our community engagement work. LEAP's community engagement partnerships come in all shapes and sizes. Being able to flex and adapt in our partnership relationships has been the key to success.

For a step-by-step breakdown of forming effective partnerships, including real-life examples, [see our housebuilding analogy](https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/reports/building-successful-partnerships/). (<https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/reports/building-successful-partnerships/>).

Partnerships in all shapes and sizes

Through these different partnerships there is a continuum that varies from one-off partnerships formed to deliver a specific event, to referral partnerships that provide a mechanism to signpost families between organisations (such as with the local authority wellbeing team); to formal relationships spanning a range of collaborative work underpinned by a written agreement.

As an example, our CoCreate Partnership model provides funding to local voluntary sector organisations to deliver early years programmes across Lambeth. Some of LEAP's partnerships have moved up and down this continuum at different times, for different needs and situations.

Since 2017, the community engagement team have partnered with over 180 different community organisations, groups, and services to provide high quality and informed community sessions and events which support parents and carers to connect with each other and act as a gateway into the support, services, and activities on offer more widely.

7.2 Example in practice: LEAP and Stockwell Partnership

Marta Sordyl, Family Support Worker, explains the value of partnership working in the Stockwell community.

LEAP and Stockwell Partnership worked together for 6 years in the highly diverse Stockwell community in South London. The two organisations worked to understand local needs and help families with young children to thrive.

In the 6-year partnership working period (from 2017 to 2023) an incredible 580 events were delivered, reaching a total of 2,694 participants with 11,000 attendances.



Bringing together the strengths and resources of both organisations enhanced the range and impact of support and services for the local community. After LEAP's involvement ended in the summer of 2023, Stockwell Partnership has continued to deliver and grow support in the local community.

How Stockwell Partnership and LEAP worked together

Stockwell Partnership is a community organisation that supports a highly diverse community – including expectant parents and families with young children. A wide range of partnership projects, services, and events are delivered to improve the quality of life for local people.

Stockwell Partnership is managed by a board of residents, and has been operating since 1999.

Delivering services and projects which support...

- Individuals – through bilingual advice, advocacy, employment training and signposting
- Community action – supporting people to build their skills, connect with others, and act on issues they care about
- Improvement of the local environment and increasing environmental sustainability

Finding the gaps together

Stockwell Partnership and LEAP began working closely together in 2017 to further strengthen work with families with early years children. Together they mapped local needs, identified gaps in provision, and worked in partnership to deliver projects, services, and activities.

At the start of the project, a community consultation was held with residents, minority groups, service providers, and voluntary sector organisations to identify the needs and strengths in the Stockwell area, with a particular focus on Early Years.

Going where families go to

Families were reached and engaged with in the places they already knew and attended, such as local playgrounds, parks, informal playgroups, churches, and children's centres.

Exploring community spaces that had existing activities gave us a better understanding of the existing Early Years offer, and the opportunities to deliver additional services and activities for families in familiar places.

The aim was to connect as many local partners as possible to co-deliver meaningful and sustainable engagement with expectant parents and families with children aged 0-3.

At the core of all activities was our understanding of the local social infrastructure and the value of building relationships with Early Years voluntary and statutory services, as well as local groups.

Offers for families in Stockwell

LEAP and Stockwell Partnership worked together to deliver a wide variety of regular activities for families, as well as special events to mark important cultural celebrations. Many activities were inclusive of the diverse communities within the Stockwell area, and considerate to different faiths and home languages.

Annual events to celebrate EID, Diwali, Christmas, International Women's Day, Refugee week, the LGBTQ+ community and Black History Month are popular.

There are regular opportunities for people from Italian, Portuguese, Latin American, Japanese, and Polish communities to come together. Community picnics and family fun days are organised, as well as regular storytelling events for very young children.

Regular fun activities

For families there are regular weekly activities such as *Little Wanderers* child-led outdoor play and exploration for under 3's; *Storytime stay and play* groups; *Nurturing Mamas* where new mums can bring their babies and participate in wellbeing activities together; drop-in breastfeeding support; and parenting courses.

What sparked most interest in the LEAP offer at the beginning of this partnership was the introduction of regular fun activities in Early Years settings that were already well known by parents.

Popular activities to promote healthy eating were organized at children's centres, like 'Cook, Eat and Meet' and 'Sing, Dance and Eat'. To help improve literacy skills, events were organised with authors of children's books, as well as regular film screenings at Tate South Lambeth Library. Community events were themed around specific cultures or heritage.

Indoor and outdoor

Families in the area wanted more fun, creative activities and they wanted to learn new skills. So indoor and outdoor fun activities were developed. These were often supported by the creative sector or local businesses as a platform to connect families with LEAP's other services and with other local networks. This improved signposting and referrals.

An initiative with Lambeth Friends of the Earth for example, involved designing a series of workshops exploring environmental issues, sustainability, and what everyone in Stockwell could do to be a little greener. Families learned together about eating and cooking more sustainably, recycling, and reusing household items.

Involving families and working together

At the core of this partnership work has been our knowledge that engagement with your community is one of the biggest indicators of long-term health and well-being.

Many Portuguese speakers and East African communities in the Stockwell area face language and cultural barriers that prevent them accessing local support or resources.

Needs, barriers, and strengths often differ from one community to another, so it was important to understand how to address these with cultural sensitivity.

Encouraged to talk about their lives

Residents in the Stockwell communities are actively listened to. They are encouraged to talk about their lives, the issues they face, and the support that would be most helpful and important to them. This information has guided the development of flexible, personalised services that assist families to develop the resilience they need to support themselves, and each other.

A regular parents forum supported by parent volunteers was established to advocate for the needs of local families. One off and regular events were designed for families by families, working with local partners.

With families involved from the start in decisions about planning and developing events and services, the support offer for families has been effective, and has helped reach more people for a longer time.

Involving the local community

Stockwell Partnership has focused on delivering projects from local community venues. This is partly because the organisation does not have its own space to run family activities, and partly because over the years sharing local spaces and assets has proved more creative, productive, and sustainable for the whole community.

Gaining the trust of the community and partners has helped Stockwell Partnership thrive and become the 'go to' organisation for the Stockwell community.

A strong network and partnership with local Adult Learning centre (Morley College) was developed, which includes Early Years services, schools, Residents Associations, and other community groups.

What parents and carers think about the Stockwell Partnership

Meeting and working with others has really challenged and inspired me to want to achieve and progress further creatively. I speak more confidently with people in my community about activities they can be involved in.

I have a better understanding and greater interest. This course has given me more confidence and a sense of community. I learned new skills that are transferable.

I've started looking at where food comes from in the supermarket rather than putting whatever into my basket. I was really surprised by how much British veg I could find.

Learning about buying seasonal produce has made a significant difference. This project has given me a lot of good ideas for changing the atmosphere at home.

Key learning points

- Identifying community assets in partnership with residents, service providers, and community groups through consultations gave a better understanding of the social infrastructure of the neighbourhood, identifying the potential and gaps within Early Years service delivery.
- Creating partnerships with local networks for the co-delivery of LEAP activities allowed access to different community spaces and shared resources.
- Building relationships with community groups, especially those from minority backgrounds, helped reach more families.
- Co-designing activities, especially one-off events, with local parents and community groups enriched the programme's offer and reached families who were not using Early Years settings on a regular basis.
- Creative family fun activities delivered with local networks and creative services proved to be successful in introducing LEAP to residents and partners.
- Engaging with parents in planning one-off community events generated lots of ideas for celebrating local heritage and culture.
- Supporting the community with capacity building by setting up parent-led groups for specific communities increased the reach and support offered by LEAP to families attending activities, especially families from ethnic minorities.
- Building personal relationships, transparency, and a reputation for high-quality service delivery improved trust among partners and local families.
- This trust, combined with partners' knowledge of how to deliver and resource services that appeal to families with young children, is helping to sustain the legacy of LEAP in the Stockwell community.

7.3 Example in practice: LEAP's CoCreate partnership initiative

Davina Belcher, CoCreate Partnerships Manager, explains how bringing small local community organisations together have made a big difference.

Since September 2021, LEAP's Co-Create partnership initiative has supported the development and delivery of early years initiatives by 14 community-based organisations. Between October 2021 and September 2023 CoCreate partners delivered 214 sessions or initiatives, benefiting 556 children and 535 parents and caregivers.

LEAP's CoCreate partnership fund enables LEAP to share early years expertise and provide funding and support to local voluntary and community sector organisations.



These organisations are small-scale and reach communities often isolated from or not reached by statutory early years services. With support and funding from the CoCreate partnership, they provide early years programmes and activities at community level, engaging parents with young children in their local area to promote healthy, happy childhoods.

LEAP is focussed on addressing inequalities in early childhood, and the LEAP CoCreate partnership is one approach to addressing this challenge. By working with a network of community-based organisations, we can ensure that some of the most isolated families are connected to early years services and support.

There is value and an importance of local partnership working when supporting children. We recognise that local families within our community are not a homogenous group, therefore, working with a diverse range of partners ensures inclusivity and diversity of reach.

The additional benefit when adopting this approach is that the range of partnership expertise can be pooled to provide a stronger support network for Lambeth children and families.

Quarterly learning networks have been a key component to fostering the trust in developing relationship with these partners; providing opportunity for the organisations to regularly engage, develop relationships with each other, share experiences, discuss challenges, and offer each other support.

New collaborations have grown organically from these connections which have further embedded the partnerships.

We've come up with a blueprint to help you form effective partnerships. [Discover our top tips \(https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/reports/building-successful-partnerships/\)](https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/reports/building-successful-partnerships/).

Many of the organisations in the CoCreate partnership have been working in silo for many years. Being actively engaged in partnership working has been transformative. Fund recipients have said:

- I've worked in isolation for many years and this network has made me feel more supported and energised than I have for years.
- Meeting like-minded people connection, networking, and working together to clarify everyone's individual possible strengths and weaknesses and how to find solutions.
- We have the opportunity to explore how we can work together to find sustainable solutions and funding.
- Regular opportunities to network were very helpful and a good chance to reflect on the project.
- We have managed to collaborate with other fundees which has been really nice to get their support, their feedback, their ideas.

From September 2021 to July 2023, CoCreate partnered with 14 local and diverse community-based organisations in Lambeth, including:

Whippersnappers, Besty's Inspirational Guidance (BiG), Young Titans, Healthy Living Platform, Art4Space, Watusi Dance, Brixton Wings, Neurodiversity Learning CIC, Eritrean Saho Cultural Association (ESCA), Loughborough Junction Action Group (LJAG), Unity Matters CIC, All Aboard Club, Sunshine International Arts, and the East Africa Association (EAA). [See appendices for more details \(https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/reports/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area-full-report/#9.4\)](https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/reports/community-engagement-in-a-diverse-inner-city-area-full-report/#9.4).

The CoCreate partners were keen to commit further to future partnership working through a framework of a consortium operating model.

The consortium model provides a structure for the organisations to work collaboratively to continue to provide high quality activities, services, and support for families in the early years.

It enables partners to share skills and strengths, develop business and funding opportunities and manage grants and contracts that are won collectively.

The 'First 5 Lambeth' consortium has now been set up. It provides a structure for Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations in Lambeth to work in partnership to provide high quality activities, services, and support for families in the early years.

This partnership has been formalised through a 'Memorandum of Understanding', a steering group has been formed and the organisations are working collaboratively for their shared purpose towards a collectively developed vision, mission, and values.

Key learning points

- **Being led by your limitations:** When starting to think about who to partner with, it is important to think what you're doing but more importantly, what are you not doing. This is where the potential lies and where good partnership working begins. This seems counter-intuitive as we love to celebrate success but this approach will lead to collaborative partnerships that are mutually beneficial, complement your work and develop an enhanced offer for your service users. Great partnerships are strategic, not incidental.
- **Understanding that you can't press fast forward on trust:** Building trust takes time, consistency, and genuine effort. Attempting to rush this process can undermine the authenticity of the relationship. Trust in partnerships is established through shared experiences, open communication, and demonstrated reliability. Acknowledging the gradual pace of trust-building allows organisations to invest in the necessary groundwork, fostering a solid foundation that ensures the partnership withstands challenges and stands resilient over time.
- **Knowing that one size does not fit all:** Each collaboration is unique, shaped by the diverse goals, strengths, and contexts of the involved organisations. Approaching partnerships with this understanding allows for flexibility and adaptability, ensuring that strategies, communication styles, and structures are tailored to meet the specific needs of the collaboration.
- **Making the journey from competition to collaboration:** The nature of the voluntary, community sector landscape is inherently competitive, most evidently for funding opportunities but less obviously there is competition for service users, use of space, tangible resources and even staffing. Therefore, to develop authentic, committed collaborative partnerships within which each partner truly champions the success of the other as much as their own organisation takes a journey.

7.4 More about partnerships

There is not one right way to do partnerships; they come in all shapes and sizes and bearing this in mind, being able to flex and adapt in your partnership relationships is key to success.

Through our different partnerships work there is a continuum that varies from one off to casual to committed working relationships and everything in between.

Some partnerships will move up and down this continuum at different times, for different needs and situations.

Within in this lies the important factor of being able to recognise when a partnership is no longer working, being comfortable with facing this and factoring in mechanisms to work through this and where needed, end partnerships well.

Two different partnership examples

1. Light touch partnerships – developing relationships that lead to referral pathways

We supported one of our community partners, Art4Space, to explore developing partnerships with other local groups. This helped generate referrals from different communities that they had not yet reached for their Creative Arts and Wellbeing course.

2. Casual partnership – regularly working together to bring mutual benefits for delivery

We worked closely with one of our community partners, Healthy Living Platform (HLP) to support them to develop and deliver a Healthy Home-cooking course. They worked in partnership with one of the local children's centres.

Through this mutually beneficial partnership working relationship, HLP was able to facilitate a home-cooking course for the children's centre's families. HLP received referrals from the community they wanted to reach and £1,460 worth of 'in kind' resource from the children's centre including free space, creche provision and volunteers.

The most valuable part (of working with LEAP) has been partnering with other organisations who can be referral partners. They have been well-linked to make sure I get the right people on the course.

Julie, Art4Space Director

One of the reasons this course worked so well was due to the strong partnership between HLP and the children's centre. We needed a children's centre that had a big enough kitchen area to hold the participants and a separate space for the creche. We worked with St Stephen's Children centre as this was the most suitable space that could accommodate us, and we had already developed a good working relationship with them when running another course. The costs of the creche were more expensive than we had anticipated in the initial budget plan, however fortunately the children's centre agreed to split these costs. We worked closely together in terms of recruiting participants and managing the creche. Most of the children were under the age of one, which limited the number of spaces they could offer. We needed to communicate in a timely manner each week regarding expected numbers, attendance and about any other issues. This has shown us that strong partnerships are key to running these types of courses. We learnt that successful partnership working involves establishing expectations and processes at the outset and close communication.

Zoe Marks, Community Food Programme Manager, Healthy Living Platform

8.0 Glossary

9.0 Appendices

9.1 Facilitator Planning Template

Aim	Objectives	Activities	Resources	Times / Notes
What do you hope to achieve by running your session?	What are the steps you will take when running your session, to meet your aim?	What will people be expected to do? How will they be expected to work together?	What materials or equipment will be needed or could support?	How much time will be required? Any useful notes to include?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - explore - better understand - develop or build - refine or improve - test or trial 	<p>For example, if exploring a poster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - explain the aim - share poster X and Y - discuss strengths and weaknesses - capture and agree key points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pairs or group work - brainstorm - Q&A - discussion - games/puzzles - quiz - online activities - video debate - case studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pens - paper (A3 or A4) - tech (tablets, wifi) - coloured sticky notes - printed papers - quiz sheets - blue tac - video - display board - pictures/posters - magazines - Q&A resource - PowerPoint 	<p>consider time for discussion and reflections</p>

9.2 Facilitator Learning Template

Date of facilitated session/s:
Facilitator name:
If facilitated on behalf of a team/service, please reference team/service:
Session aim:
Please use the white spaces to respond to reflective questions (a-d)

a) What was the key learning or consistent messaging from parents feeding back to the session you delivered? Where applicable, please share any direct parent feedback/quotes to illustrate learning points

b) Did the session go the way you had planned? If not, why not?

c) Did you learn anything new or unexpected?

c) Did you learn anything new or unexpected?

d) In what way will/may this parent feedback further shape/impact/improve your work going forwards?

e) Any other comments you would like to share?

9.3 Further considerations if replicating the People in the Lead model

1. A problem shared is a problem halved

There is no doubt that parent voice is important. This is especially true when developing, designing, or reviewing any initiatives or programmes which will impact, benefit, or be used by parents and children. Whilst these sessions may from the outset appear costly, we know that organisations and groups will ultimately benefit by being better informed; reducing the likelihood of mistakes; filtering out assumptions; providing fresh thinking; and avoiding missed opportunities. As one of the practitioners referenced “The session is extremely valuable to our service, saving us time and cost”. As the PiL model has strengthened over time, the LEAP team recognise there could be collaborative opportunities for organisations, departments, and groups to be working together and sharing any incurred costs.

2. Stronger together

When you are invited to feed into an idea or are provided with a space to develop an initiative, and you see your opinions taken on board or your idea come to life, you feel a natural sense of ownership and willingness to further support. Developing good participation practice, sharing power, and ensuring inclusive practice can result in further support and advocacy from parents and carers for programmes and initiatives.

3. Just go with the flow

With any participation work must be open and flexible. For parents and carers with young children this is especially true. Whilst it's important to have provision like creche to support participation, it will/should never be expected to stop a parent or carer from tending to their crying child in the next room. For the hosting organisation or practitioners delivering – it's important to recognise that they are working with parents and despite having a plan, they must be flexible and accepting of changes to their session.

4. Capturing a diverse range of voices

Over the course of this participation work, LEAP have been keen to maintain engagement with parents and carers who may be interested in future PiL sessions or similar opportunities. Whilst maintained engagement has meant that we have developed some strong connections with local parents and carers, this has played a role in the number of parents who have repeatedly attended sessions. This is something to consider if you are looking to create a participation space which routinely sees new or specific parent/carer group cohorts in attendance.

9.4 CoCreate partner organisations

1. Watusi Dance Company

Watusi offers a wide range of dance courses and workshops to adults in the field of Salsa which are taught by a variety of experienced dance teachers with a fun and friendly approach.

2. Healthy Living Platform

The Healthy Living Platform brings people together to help them create healthy and sustainable lifestyles and to achieve the changes that matter.

3. Young Titans

Young Titans uses the legends and heroes of bygone days to create fun-filled parties and workshops for children aged 4 and up.

4. Whippersnappers

Whippersnappers provides a diverse cultural platform from which children and adults of all ages, needs and backgrounds can express and educate themselves through music, theatre, and the arts.

5. Besty's Inspirational Guidance (BiG)

BiG is an organisation focused on inspiring young people to feel more positive about themselves, and to want to succeed and enjoy developing. BiG develops and delivers motivational programmes using educational, interactive, and sporting activities that are focused at raising young people's self-esteem, build resilience and empowers them to acquire the necessary tools to achieve positive outcomes while learning and making progress.

6. Art4Space

Art4Space is a community arts organisation that puts visual arts at the centre of everything they do; connecting and enhancing communities to inspire individuals through creativity.

7. Brixton Wings

Brixton Wings is a voluntary led parent organisation and charity with an emphasis on providing early intervention programmes for children and young people from disadvantaged and under-represented communities. Particular focus is on After-School learning, including group music classes in piano/keyboards, guitar, and band-workshops, with mid-term activities allocated to 'Learn to Row' (L2R) programmes, complemented by a range of physical and mental wellbeing activities.

8. Neurodiversity Learning CIC

Neurodiversity Learning is a social enterprise who provides services for young people with special educational needs, such as Autism. It designs and delivers creative visual art sessions to support young children to increase their social skills and reduce their anxiety levels.

9. Eritrean Saho Cultural Association

Eritrean Saho Cultural Association is a community centre offering a hub for events, activities, and other functions for the local population. ESCA premises have recently had a much-needed, significant renovation by Lambeth Council creating a 'blank canvas' providing the group with a unique opportunity to engage the community to involve them in the design and best use of the space for the young families in the community.

10. Loughborough Junction Action Group

The Loughborough Junction Action Group, or LJAG, is a group of volunteers who live or work in Loughborough Junction in south London. It is their vision to make Loughborough Junction a great place to live and work.

11. Unity Matters CIC

Unity Matters is a small community-led organisation offering opportunities to bring families together, support parenting and provide strategies, ideas, and activities to support everyday life.

12. All Aboard Club

All Aboard Club is run by staff and volunteers with lived experience of autism and ADHD. They provide child-led play sessions for children with Autism and ADHD where can share their special interest in trains with their peers and develop ways to play together.

13. East Africa Association

East Africa Association's vision is to support Somali families, particularly lone parents and those from disadvantaged backgrounds suffering economic poverty, isolation, and mental health issues to connect to wider services on offer and reach their full potential. Through their projects they improve community cohesion and build confidence. With their roots in a football-focused programme for children and young people they have found that embedding sports and fitness at any early stage leads to life-long healthy lifestyle choices.

14. Sunshine International Arts

Sunshine International Arts is an artistic, educational and carnival production company who are committed to inspiring the next generation through the art of carnival and traditional folklore in keeping with their motto of "Think Local". This includes a variety of community outreach projects and workshops ranging from school children to adults' arts, crafts and culture workshops, creative dance, and holistic health workshops.

9.5 How Community Engagement is working towards the LEAP Theory of Change

Area	Interventions	Outcomes	Sustainability	Measurement
Community Activities in Festival delivery (Core and Stockwell Partnership)	Informed, timely and clearly communicated engagement opportunities across LEAP areas	Short term: New and repeat LEAP families engage Long term: New and repeat LEAP families positively rate the engagement offer	Sharing best practice intelligence while nurturing local partnerships and legacy collaborations	– Eventbrite sign-ups (new & repeat engagement by LEAP families) – Demographic data – Festival survey feedback – Social media intelligence
Connecting	Information about LEAP and other applicable	Short term: Families have basic	Families are supported to engage with Start for	– Connector survey data

Area	Interventions	Outcomes	Sustainability	Measurement
	provision provided to families and partners in a strategic and timely manner	information about what they can access, where and when Long term: Families engage with LEAP and other applicable local provision	Life and other applicable provision which will exist beyond LEAP Best practice and learning around the Connector role shared	– Case studies – Communication stats (newsletter)
PIL	Inclusive and accessible spaces for participation work with families	Short term: Families are resourced, supported and empowered to share their voice Long term: The voice of families works to positively influence LEAP and other early years work	Parent voice feed into the wind-down of the LEAP programme and support other legacy projects	– Eventbrite sign-ups – Survey feedback data – Facilitator planning and learning reflection forms
Cocreate	Provide seed funding opportunities to external organisations for initiatives which benefit LEAP families	Short term: Funded organisations collaborate with LEAP to plan and deliver best practice and sustainable initiatives that engage and support the LEAP target group Long term: Funded organisations have enhanced understanding of EY best practice, recognise their role and opportunities for supporting LEAP families and have developed collaborative networks with other organisations/service providers in this space	Identification of legacy partnership working opportunities and spaces across LEAP wards	– Eventbrite sign-ups – User and engagement data – Evaluation reports and case studies – Feedback & survey data – Financial reporting – Consortium partnership – Return on investment – Social value impact – CoCreate video

Collective programme outcomes

Parents connecting to each other, their community and early years services.
 Developing community capacity, connections and positive narratives
 Established model of best practise partnership working across organisations
 Continuation of practice which supports LEAP target group

Community Activities Facilitator

Area	Interventions	Outcomes	Programme outcomes
Delivery of activities and events	Commission and facilitate high quality routine community activities and events across key LEAP areas Run by people who are certified and committed, as well as able to promote the LEAP programme Delivered in safe, appropriate	Short term: LEAP families attend and positively rate sessions and activities delivered Long term: Community delivery is a catalyst for connecting families further with other CE activities and events	Families more actively involved in and engaging with their local community Increased trust and engagement between families/communities and service users More safe and accessible early

Area	Interventions	Outcomes	Programme outcomes
	spaces, free from risk, where delivery meets the expectations of the families 80% of the time Community activities differ from events and refer to those delivered routinely across 3 distinct LEAP areas: including Coldharbour, Tulse Hill and Vassall		years provision and community spaces etc
Targeted Engagement	Informed and targeted communications to market delivery Driven by LEAP values, data findings, observations, parent voice partner feedback, and informed by local-national insights in relation to need	Short term: The development of Inclusive community spaces, networks and communications Long term: Increased attendance from distinct and/or disadvantaged groups	More welcoming, inclusive and approachable services for all children and families, and particularly disadvantaged groups More families, and particularly disadvantaged families have sustained engagement with local early years services (both LEAP and non-LEAP statutory, voluntary and community services)
Partnership working	Cross-working opportunities with wider LEAP and applicable local-level services	Short term: Strategic delivery attendance by LEAP/local-level services to support and benefit families Long term: Increased opportunities to further support LEAP families	A shared vision for children and families across the system and a joint approach for realising this vision More integrated planning and delivery of services and resources for children and families

Community Connector

Area	Interventions	Outcomes	Programme outcomes
Delivery of service and support	Provide information to families about LEAP and other relevant local-level services and activities	Short term: Families have basic information and are supported to access activities and/or support Long term: Parents sign-up with LEAP and/or wider local services and activities	Parents connecting to each other, their community and early years services
LEAP partnerships and Connections	Connect and support practitioners across LEAP by sharing service and activities information; promotion opportunities; referral routes and opportunities for integrated working	Short term: Practitioners and connector are up to date with LEAP and other local opportunities and referrals Long term: Established route between CE and services with increased signposting and integrated working	Increased trust and engagement between families/communities and local services Families connected to child and family services
Strategic engagement	Termly and seasonal planning to strategically increase reach/engagement	Short term: Informed and timely information sharing and engagement opportunities for families	More families and particularly disadvantaged families at the right time, have sustained engagement with local early years services (both LEAP and

Area	Interventions	Outcomes	Programme outcomes
	Through visits to LEAP and external groups	Long term: Increased engagement with New and existing LEAP families	non-LEAP Statutory, voluntary and community services) More families make use of early years provision and community spaces
Stakeholders	Develop referral and signposting relations with and between LEAP services, CoCreate and other local partners	Short term: Applicable information sharing from and to partners Long term: Increased opportunities to provide holistic support for LEAP families	A shared vision for children and families across the system and a joint approach for realising this vision More integrated planning and delivery of services and resources for children and families Increased awareness, understanding and engagement with LEAP's work among local services, workforce and decision makers
Ongoing support	Community Connector as central point of information for LEAP families	Short term: Families routinely receive newsletter or follow up information from Connector with relevant service and activity information Long term: Families are knowledgeable and up to date about what's available to them and empowered to access support and maintain engagement with LEAP through the Connector	Community involvement Outreach and engagement with other stakeholders / target groups

People In the Lead

Interventions	Outcomes	Programme outcomes
Create inclusive and accessible spaces for networking and participation work with families	Short term: Families feel well resourced, knowledgeable and are supported to share their personal experiences, feedback and ideas Long term: Families feel valued and empowered Families further connect with each other Families improve their knowledge and understanding of LEAP and other Early Years provision	Developing community capacity, connections and positive narratives
Develop skills and reach for LEAP services (and other EY professionals) to deliver participation work with families	Short term: Service providers are equipped and supported to facilitate parent participation sessions Long term: Service providers have enhanced knowledge and understanding to support and improve their EY work and delivery	Promoting collective action and system change

Area	Interventions	Outcomes	Programme outcomes
Delivery	Provide seed funding and capacity building support to external organisation and groups	<p>Short term: Funded organisations trial and test initiatives which benefit LEAP families</p> <p>Long term: Funded organisations develop/improve practice which positively supports and impacts LEAP families</p>	<p>More families and particularly disadvantaged families, have sustained engagement with local early years services (both LEAP and non-LEAP Statutory, voluntary and community services)</p> <p>Increased awareness, understanding and engagement with LEAP's work among local services, workforce and decision makers</p> <p>Including a shared vision for children and families across the system and a joint approach for realising this vision</p>
Training and CPD	Tailored evaluation, support & training for funded organisations	<p>Short term: Funded organisations engaged and can recognise the benefits and opportunities from support and training offered and received</p> <p>Long term: Funded organisations have enhanced knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver support for LEAP families and measure impact of delivery</p>	Increased understanding of why early childhood matters amongst families, their support networks, and the wider community
Engagement	<p>Strategic targeting of organisations that embrace the CoCreate values and want to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – develop early years work – are not yet working with the early years – or are working with communities that LEAP does not currently reach 	<p>Short term: Organisations who best align to CoCreate values and provide broader engagement and reach are awarded with seed funding opportunity</p> <p>Long term: Broader reach and engagement offer for families</p>	Increased understanding of why early childhood matters amongst families, their support networks, and the wider community
Stakeholders	The provision of funding and network support to funded organisations to embrace participation work with LEAP services, families and wider community partners	<p>Short term: Funded organisations actively engage and connect with LEAP services, families and wider community partners</p> <p>Long term: Funded organisations are working in partnership with a range of community stakeholders to develop & deliver their initiatives</p> <p>A consortium is launched which formalises and builds on this partnership working</p>	<p>Increased awareness, understanding and engagement with LEAP's work among local services, workforce and decision makers</p> <p>Including a shared vision for children and families across the system and a joint approach for realising this vision</p>
Ongoing support	Organisations supported to develop a consortium to embed and sustain the engagement offer, support and signposting initiated through the CoCreate funding	<p>Short term: Consortium is developed, initial funding is won and varied activities, support and services are available for families to access through a central point</p>	More families and particularly disadvantaged families, have sustained engagement with local early years services (both LEAP and non-LEAP Statutory, voluntary and community services)

Area	Interventions	Outcomes	Programme outcomes
		Long term: Consortium is self-sufficient and providing on-going, high-quality activities, services and support for LEAP families and beyond across Lambeth after LEAP has ended	Increased awareness, understanding and engagement with LEAP's work among local services, workforce and decision makers Including a shared vision for children and families across the system and a joint approach for realising this vision

Collective programme outcomes
Increased number of organisations are providing services that benefit children aged 0-3 Local organisations supported have improved their existing practise in their work with 0-3s Increased local engagement opportunities for families with children aged 0-3 Increased number of local organisations are working co-creatively with their service users/local community Increased number of local organisations are connected and working in partnership with each other Community partners can include but is not limited to children's Centres, VCS, previous CoCreate fundees, statutory groups and the local authority

9.6 The Digital Connector Tool

What is it?

- A conversational aid
- A transparent interface to build and support trusting relationships
- A platform embedding short videos of services and activities

Objectives

- To direct parents/carers to LEAP events and activities (taking a child development approach)
- To account for and understand connector activity and communication
- To collect qualitative caseload data
- To refine and learn more about communicating services – scheduling development with experience, services, and parents
- To train Parent Champions to use this as a platform to share information
- To update services and activities (developmental areas updated on quarterly basis without interfering with data)
- To feed into wider Lambeth narrative and support with LEAP programme wind-down

Download the template

See how we use the tool – [download the pdf \(https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/About-Digital-Connector-Interface-Feb2024.pdf\)](https://story-of-leap.leaplambeth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/About-Digital-Connector-Interface-Feb2024.pdf).

10.0 References

- ① English Indices of Deprivation, 2019 – [Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government](#)
[↑ View](#)
- ② Census 2021 custom dataset, Lambeth Lower Super Output Areas – [Office for National Statistics](#)
[↑ View](#)
- ③ Census 2021 – [Office for National Statistics](#)
[↑ View](#)
- ④ Census 2021 – [Office for National Statistics](#) also referenceable via [LEAP's population dashboard](#)
[↑ Instance 1](#) [↑ Instance 2](#) [↑ Instance 3](#) [↑ Instance 4](#)
- ⑤ Early years foundation stage profile results for Lambeth, 2022/23 – from raw data via Lambeth Council (open data isn't available at small geography)
[↑ Instance 1](#) [↑ Instance 2](#)
- ⑥ Index of multiple deprivation – [English indices of deprivation 2019](#)
[↑ View](#)
- ⑦ Income deprivation affecting children index – [English indices of deprivation 2019](#)
[↑ View](#)
- ⑧ Lambeth registered births dataset, financial year 2021/22 – ([lambeth.gov.uk](#))
[↑ View](#)
- ⑨ Figures relate specifically to families that come from the LEAP area of Lambeth and that are recorded on LEAP's Integrated Data Platform. The total number of families in this group is 4964 of which 894 engaged with community engagement activities up to 31st October 2023.
[↑ View](#)
- ⑩ Census 2021 – [Office for National Statistics](#)
[↑ View](#)
- ⑪ [Heath Profile for Lambeth 2022, page 19](#) – also see [Lambeth education statistics](#)
[↑ View](#)