



The Parent-to-Parent Programme at the Winch: Evidence of Impact

Summary Report | 2025

Evaluation conducted with the Anna Freud Centre

In partnership with:



About This Report

This report presents evidence from a participant-led evaluation of the Winch's Parent-to-Parent programme – a peer-supported parenting course designed for families facing significant disadvantage in North Camden. It is produced with the Anna Freud Centre, whose Community Lead co-designed the evaluation alongside the Winch's Family Support Programme Lead and the parents who ran the survey interviews themselves.

The programme is built on a simple and well-evidenced insight: the early years of a child's life are shaped powerfully by the confidence and wellbeing of their parent. When parents feel supported, less isolated, and more capable, their children feel it. This report shows that happening.



The Family Support Programme

The Winch has been a community anchor in North Camden since 1972. Its Family Support Programme reaches families during the years when support matters most – before formal school, during the period when attachment, emotional regulation, and early language are being formed. The programme combines two elements that only work because they are kept together: a sustained community outreach model that builds trust with families over time, and the structured ten-week Parent-to-Parent course delivered three times a year.

The families it serves include those facing the greatest barriers to accessing help: those in homeless hostels and temporary accommodation, refugees and asylum seekers, parents navigating significant trauma. We know from our engagement with the council these families are amongst those most likely not to have access to services and need support most urgently in the early years.

Community Outreach

Families first encounter the programme through an informal visit – to a hostel, a library, a drop-in space. The approach is unhurried and deeply respectful. No notes are taken in front of families. No promises are made that cannot be kept. Parents are never pushed to share more than they feel ready to. Trust accumulates through small, consistent acts of care – and it is that trust that makes everything else possible.

“

The approach is about being human with people, and them being human back. Mothers and parents need a friend. There is no hierarchy about these matters.

”

The Parent-to-Parent Course

The ten-week course is based on the Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities (EPEC) model, developed at King's College London – one of the most rigorously evaluated community parenting programmes in the UK. It is delivered by a trained parent facilitator with support from the Winch's Family Support Programme Lead, with ongoing clinical supervision from the Anna Freud Centre. Funding for the course comes through Camden Council's Adult Community Learning Service.

Sessions build active listening, emotional regulation, peer support, and practical parenting skills. A creche runs throughout – without it, many parents simply could not attend. The course does not end at week ten: an Alumni Group continues to meet, sustaining the connections formed and extending the reach of the learning.

Who We Reach

33 parents took part in the 2025 evaluation survey. The survey was designed and conducted by parents in the programme – a methodology that reflects the programme's core principle that those who have lived the experience are best placed to understand and communicate it.

Profile	Detail
Average age of participants	36 years
Average number of children	1.56 per family
Gender	Nearly all women
Ethnicity (where recorded, n=47)	~50% White, ~20% Asian, ~20% Black, ~10% mixed
Primary route of access	Homeless family accommodation at England's Lane, Camden

The programme's explicit purpose is to serve families least likely to access conventional parenting support. Low dropout rates across 16 course deliveries over seven years reflect the degree of trust the programme has built with some of Camden's most disadvantaged families.

What the Survey Found

The evaluation asked parents about their experience before, during, and after the course. The findings below are quantitative and qualitative – but they point consistently in one direction: when parents feel supported and less alone, the effects are felt directly by their children.

Why Parents Came

Reason	%
Recommended by friend or Winch Programme Lead	70%
Wanted to be a better parent	20%
Needed support / felt isolated	10%

Approximate % of reasons given (Q1, n=33)

70% of parents came through a trusted personal recommendation – from another parent, or from the Winch's outreach worker. This is not a programme that reaches families through leaflets or referral pathways. It reaches them through relationships. That is both its constraint and its greatest strength.

Impact on Parental Confidence

Every single parent who completed the survey – 100% – reported feeling more confident in their capacity to care for their child after the course. Half described themselves as 'more confident'; half as 'a lot more confident'. No parents reported no change.

This matters for a straightforward reason: parental confidence in the early years is one of the strongest predictors of a child's social, emotional, and cognitive development. It shapes the quality of attachment, the stability of daily routines, and the home environment in which a child's brain is developing.

“

Confidence grew because I knew that I was not alone. More confident that problems can be resolved. I forgive myself when not the parent I would like to be.

”

Impact on Children

Observed change in child	%
Child more relaxed and calmer	48%
Child wants to be with them more	12%
Little difference reported for child	6%

% of parents (Q6, n=33)

The effects on children followed directly from changes in parents. Nearly half of parents described their child as noticeably more relaxed and calmer. Parents did not report this as coincidence – they described it as cause and effect: when I changed, my child changed. This is exactly the mechanism that early years research would predict. A more regulated parent produces a more regulated child.

“

Happy Mum makes a happier family. Because my mental health improved, my children's mental health improved too. My child benefitted from having a calmer parenting experience.

”

What Parents Found Helpful

Theme	What parents said
Not feeling alone	Hearing others' stories, shared experiences, sense of community
Parenting skills	Descriptive praising, boundary-setting, communication tools, self-care
Quality of facilitation	Empathic approach, warmth, demonstration of course principles in practice
Becoming calmer	Greater patience, emotional regulation, reduced guilt

Parent Voices

The survey was designed and run by parents. Their words carry a directness that no summary can replicate.

“

The course is a lifesaver. I couldn't believe it was free.

”

“

It changed my life. I now don't feel guilty about looking after myself and my children get the best of me.

”

“

Being in the presence of other people was more supportive than reading a book about parenting.

”

“

A lovely course – an eye opener, a must-have for every parent.

”

“

Some parents are very desperate and isolated before they come. The course often helps alleviate these feelings profoundly.

”

Case for Continued Support

Seven years of delivery. 674 parents supported. 755 children reached. Our evaluation shows 100% of participants report greater confidence in their parenting, and nearly half report a measurable change in their child's behaviour and wellbeing. The evidence is clear.

The outreach and the course are one programme, not two

The trust built through community outreach is what makes the course work. Investment in the course alone, without the outreach that precedes it, would undermine the programme's reach into the families that need it most.

Peer-led delivery is the model, not a workaround

This programme works because it places genuine trust in parents' capacity to support each other. The facilitator is a trained parent – not a professional arriving from outside. That is not a limitation as the programme grows: it is the source of its credibility with the families it serves.

Sustained connection is part of the outcome

Parents consistently identified the Alumni Group as vital to sustaining change. The social connections formed during the course have lasting effects on isolation, confidence, and parenting practice long after the ten weeks are over.

The model is replicable

The programme is evidence-based, independently evaluated, and delivered in partnership with the Anna Freud Centre. It is replicable at other community locations across Camden. With further support, it can reach significantly more families during the years when early support has the greatest and longest-lasting effect.

Delivered in partnership with:



For further information please contact:

Page Victor | Family Support Programme Lead | page@thewinch.org

Alice Robson | Head of Communities | alice@thewinch.org

The Winch | 21 Winchester Road, London NW3 3NR | thewinch.org