

Flourish Service for Women in Lambeth



Supporting women who've had children removed to thrive and flourish

Flourish is a new service located within Lambeth Children's Social Care. It offers an eighteen-month voluntary intervention programme for women aged 17 years and over, who reside in the Borough. Women should not have any children in their care currently, but will have experienced one or more child/ren being removed, through either a public or private Court order.

Who are we and who we will work with:



Sally Triptree
Flourish Team Manager



Jody Playfoot
Flourish Practitioner



Ali Marley
Flourish Practitioner

We are a team of practitioners using therapeutic and outreach interventions to engage with women on a one-to-one basis to explore and find ways to address the complex feelings associated with the unique experience of having a child removed and the impact upon women's lives.

Flourish aims to reduce the number of children being removed into care by working with women who have had children removed to improve their wellbeing, resilience, and stability.

Flourish will offer women an 18-month, individually tailored, intensive package of support, delivered by a dedicated Practitioner, which is intended to address a broad range of emotional, psychological and practical needs.

In addition to providing support, Flourish will work in collaboration with partner agencies, such as health, domestic violence, substance misuse, probation and housing at both operational and strategic levels, to improve the wider service response to women.

Flourish will not work with women towards regaining their child or children; and this will need to be fully explained to a mother before a referral can be considered.

Our Promise to Women

These Flourish Service ethical statements will be the foundation of the relationships we will build with women who enter the 18-month voluntary intervention programme



This service is about YOU - the whole you and led by you. We will not do things for you but with you; and we will be alongside you no matter what it takes.



We hope that you will take time during our work together to focus on you. By this we mean taking a pause in parenting or becoming pregnant. We will promote your whole health and well-being, including your sexual health.



All of our work together with you is based on your agreement - we call this consent. We will always be checking we have your consent when we need to write anything down or talk with others about our work together. If we get worried about you, your children or the safety of others, we might have to share information without your agreement. However, we would always try to let you know when we are having these thoughts and form a plan together about how to keep everyone safe.



We believe healthy relationships could help you achieve your hopes and dreams. We recognise we may not be able to achieve everything you hope for, but we will always be honest about this. We feel it is important to spend time getting to know each other and support the important relationships in your life.



We believe there is more than one truth - we want to hear your story as well as others, including your children. We can support you to try to make sense of these different truths and how to talk about it should you want to.



We will check-in with you by meeting up (via video), calls or texts. If you tell us you don't want to work with us anymore, we will talk to you about the reasons for your decision so we understand it, but the final choice will always be yours. We will be by your side during your work with Flourish. If this service is not the right for you at any time, including if you become pregnant, that's OK, we can then think together about who else can help you.

If this sounds good to you, we look forward to working with you.

Flourish acknowledges that the relationship that develops between the woman and the Practitioner is key to change; and one which is identified as being unique and constant, where women are valued and respected for who they are and not defined by perceptions and court processes.

Flourish seeks to work with women in a way which addresses everybody in their lives – fathers of their children, partners, family members and friends, as well as professionals, such as social services, housing, independent sector organisations, the NHS and the criminal justice system.

Partnership working and acknowledging the unique diversity needs within the community of Lambeth is essential within our work.

How to refer women to be considered for the Flourish programme:

Flourish do not take direct referrals from women, but if a woman feels this programme could support them to make positive changes in their life, they will need to talk to their key worker* about making a referral.

Key workers will make direct contact with the Flourish Team Manager for an initial discussion; and if appropriate, the key worker will be asked to complete a referral form, which will be reviewed by the Team. If the referral is accepted, the key worker will be invited to attend a case consultation with the Team to agree next steps. All referrals made to Flourish will be considered in line with the published criteria; and a decision will be made within 5 working days.

Once the referral has been accepted, a Flourish Practitioner will contact the woman and an appointment will be made as part of the Establishing Contact Phase, which is phase one of the 18-month programme.

**Key Workers are people who work in social services, housing, independent sector organisations, the NHS and the criminal justice system.*

How we work:

Flourish Practitioners will offer individual relationships to women that will be both nurturing and challenging, that will create the environment that will enable the breaking of destructive cycles, through accessing individually tailored support.

Through this intense, relationship-based programme, a broad range of emotional, psychological, practical, and behavioural needs can be addressed by engagement in a five-phase approach to sustaining individually agreed life changes.

The Flourish Service will work collaboratively with women and can offer a combination of professional, practical and emotional support. which could include a combination of the following:

- **Practical support.** could include, accessing support from housing or seeking benefits advice
- **Professional support.** could include, court ordered intervention work, therapeutic interventions, coordinating meetings, mediating between professionals and wider identified support networks
- **Emotional and well-being support.** could include, accessing health services and or substance misuse services to address individual need

What does the Flourish eighteen-month intervention programme look like?

The eighteen-month programme is offered in five phases, with reviews every 3 months. At each review, women will be given the opportunity to consider their next steps, supported by their Flourish Practitioner; and be given the opportunity to make informed decisions and choices at every phase of the programme.



Phase 1 *Establishing Contact*

Following acceptance of the referral, a Flourish Practitioner will make contact to discuss the Flourish Intervention Programme and the commitment required from women.

Phase 2 *Relationship Building*

A programme of assessment will commence, in which the needs of women are considered, with timely actions agreed within an individual plan of support and contract for working together.

Evidence shows that a programme like Flourish is most effective when the woman has no children in her care and she is in a position, sometimes for the first time, to focus on herself and her own needs. We therefore ask for women to decide during this phase about whether Flourish is the right programme for them; and to consider whether they are prepared to take the next step and agree to a pause in pregnancy.

If women agree, we will support them to access specialist contraceptive advice through their local health provider. This will ensure that women are in control; and can make an informed choice around contraception of their choice, so they are able to choose the most appropriate form to suit their needs. If women are unable to make this decision and are keen to become pregnant again, Flourish will support them over a four-week period to identify more appropriate services that can support them with any further pregnancy planning and health and well-being needs.

Phase 3 *Engagement*

During this intensive engagement phase, women will be supported by their Flourish Practitioner to focus on confidence, self-worth and resilience building or by learning new skills, behavioural responses and coping mechanisms, all of which can help them address past traumas and ongoing, day-to-day challenges more effectively.

Phase 4 *Endings*

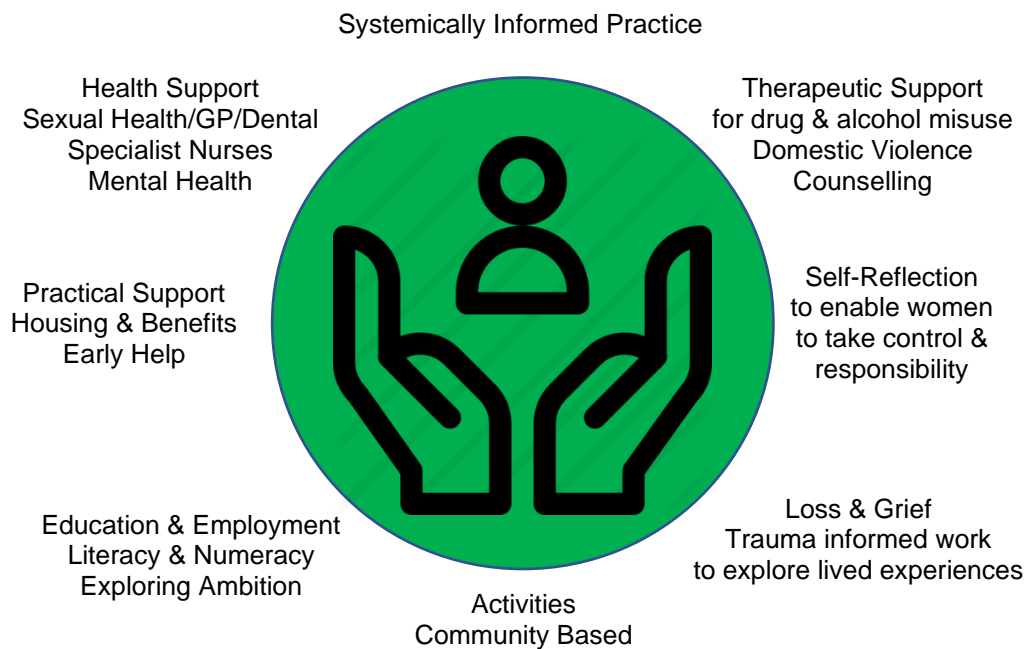
During this phase women will be supported to engage in new goals related to moving on, such as employment, training, education, or volunteering; and to make the best use of community resources in Lambeth.

Phase 5 *Follow Up*

At the end of the 18-month programme, we will continue to offer support to women who have transitioned out of the Flourish Programme; and the level of support will be agreed individually with each woman.

This phase will continue to focus on helping women to increase their independence; and could include further signposting to support women to continue to fulfil their potential and aspirations and access community-based resources in Lambeth.

Supportive Interventions that may be offered to women as part of the Flourish Service



Supportive interventions and approaches that could be used as part of the Flourish Service:

- Therapeutic and evidence-based systemic interventions, trauma informed practice, motivational interviewing, grief and loss and life history work.
- One-to-one interventions within the community of Lambeth, using flexible and innovative methods to engage and develop positive relationships
- Activity-based interventions founded upon 'Strengthening Families and Strengthening Communities Programme' and using principles of the 'Freedom Programme'.
- All plans are individually tailored to specifically meet the needs of each woman; and will include timely interventions that are focused on addressing specific needs to achieve lasting change.

- 🌳 **Focussed Time** to build relationships and support mothers to explore their lived experiences
- 🌳 **Loss and Grief** acknowledged and explored with mothers
- 🌳 **Opportunities** for different conversations with mothers and professionals
- 🌳 **Understanding** so mothers can learn to take responsibility and make informed life choices
- 🌳 **Resilience building** to achieve and maintain lifelong change for mothers and their children
- 🌳 **Individual needs-led support**
- 🌳 **Systemic practice**
- 🌳 **Hope**

Other important information:

Keeping the child/children in mind throughout the programme:

At every stage, Flourish Practitioners encourage the women to keep their child or children in mind. This does not only mean the child or children that have been removed, but her own childhood too. The women who work with Flourish are encouraged, at their own pace, to talk about growing up; their strengths, and their experiences that may remain unresolved and make life more challenging for them at this point in their lives.

Flourish can support women to develop empathy and insight into the impact their behaviour may have had on their child or children; and the subsequent removal of that child or children. There is strong evidence that suggests maintaining a relationship between parents and children who have been removed, can have a positive influence on the stability of that placement. Flourish can work with women to encourage contact where appropriate, whether spending time together or through exchanging letters. The children of the women who work with Flourish often live with extended family, or other primary carers and continue to see their birth mothers. Flourish Practitioners can support women to contain and manage feelings, so contact sessions can be enjoyable, meaningful and memorable for children. Seeing their birth mother recover from, or at least manage difficulties, can reduce stress in children. This also models recovery and reparation when life has taken a difficult turn, which helps build resilience in both the child and mother.

- Flourish strongly encourages women to express their feelings and take responsibility for their actions. This equips them with better skills to talk to their children, as they grow older and helps them to understand their story.
- The women who work with Flourish will be encouraged and supported to take a proactive role in giving their children 'permission' to settle and attach to the people looking after them, which can relieve the child's stress and guilt.
- Flourish offers women a different way of being and a chance to thrive, making informed choices, positive decisions and developing hopefulness.

Flourish recognises Lambeth is one of the most diverse boroughs in the country and therefore equalities is at the heart of our approach. We are strongly committed to working openly and collaboratively with mothers to ensure that the Flourish service delivery complies with Lambeth's policies on diversity, equal opportunities and health and safety.

For more information about the Flourish service or to discuss a referral, please contact:

Sally Tripptree – Flourish Team Manager

**Lambeth Children's Social Care
6 Brixton Hill
London SW2 1EG**

Telephone: 020 7926 0623

Email: stripptree@lambeth.gov.uk

