

East End Extension

St Mary The Virgin Primrose Hill Church

Mary's Operational Statement

SEPTEMBER 2022



We reduce violence. We save lives.



1 Introduction

This document has been prepared by Mary's (St. Mary's Centre Community Trust, Charity Number 1122054) in support of an application for full planning permission for the redevelopment at St Mary The Virgin Primrose Hill Church, Elsworthy Road, NW33DJ ('St. Mary's Centre') within Camden Council.

The purpose of this document is to set out the context for serious youth violence in Camden and provide a background to the service that Mary's provides in response. It sets out our vision for St. Mary's Centre and how we will work with our users within it, the policies and procedures we will follow and how we are funded, regulated and commissioned to carry out this work. It also includes testimonial from staff and young people who use our service stating what the redevelopment means to them.

1.1. An introduction to Mary's and the work we do in Camden

Mary's has been reducing violence and saving lives in Camden for 17 years. The members of the church at St. Mary The Virgin Primrose Hill were innovative, welcoming and brave and decided to form a youthwork service that served those who had fallen through the net and were being shunned from much of society.

Others saw these young people as dangerous, past help, or too complicated. Mary's did not. Through many years and many challenges the church stood by the young people and 24 hour a day, 7 day a week provision to those caught up in serious youth violence.

Mary's mission is to allow young people who have experienced trauma or violence to achieve their greatness. This is a long road and not easy.

Young people come to the service lacking means, stability, safety and certainty. They are dealing with threats to their wellbeing on a daily basis. Mary's takes safety as a starting point and does not shy away from gang interventions, mediations and weapon amnesties to achieve a safer context. We add to this secure attachment, with trauma informed counselling and mentoring for the young person. We stay with a young person when others don't. We don't place a time frame on when they belong with us. As a result, the most at risk and most endangered young people trust us to save their lives, take their weapons, and bring us in to solving their problems.

Our values have been seen in action in Camden for many years where we are at the centre of work on serious youth violence. Mary's is a founding panel member of Camden's Serious Youth Violence Taskforce chaired by Sir Kier Starmer and

continues to be part of the delivery of youth violence and exploitation prevention work.

Mary's is a specialist centre, being the only youth violence prevention service in Camden funded by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and partnering with the London Violence Reduction Unit. As such Mary's is a beacon for practice and evidence on prevention of serious youth violence. Mary's has the Centre For Youth Impact evidence certification and is members of professional bodies including the National Youth Agency who we partner with for program delivery, and London Youth.

Mary's highly effective service delivers¹:

- Facilitating 91 knife amnesties in the borough
- Disposal of 681 weapons in the borough with knife bin provision²
- 7 County lines interventions helping back young people living in our area
- 5 firearm implications (non facilitated disposals in knife bin)
- 29 prison visits to youth offenders
- 298 high risk individuals in our Core Program

The service directly addresses the Serious Youth Violence situation within Camden. In 2020/21 offenses with knives totalled 314 in Camden. Neighbouring boroughs have figures of 415 offenses with knives in Brent and 424 in Islington. This is an average of 22 recorded knife crimes per week in the locality³.

The age range that Mary's engages with is key within knife offenses. 19% of knife or offensive weapon disposals by police were for young people aged 10-17.

1.1. The community work of St. Mary The Virgin Primrose Hill in Camden

In addition to the church's support for Mary's charity the church provides services to the local community and the vulnerable which operate from the premises. These include a Cold Weather Shelter housing 30 individuals who are homeless, a tearoom drop in for parents, elderly befriending and a huge number of public events.

It is a building that is open 9-3 daily, now volunteering to be a Warm Bank where people can come to stay warm during the winter. Myriad other groups operate

¹ data from the year 2021/22

² Word4Weapons collections results report October 2021

³ Allen, G. and Harding, M. Knife Crime in England and Wales, House of Commons Library, 2021

using the space so their vital community work is supported – such as meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous. All of this work combined with the work of Mary's means the building space is highly valued and under pressure.

Community support, volunteers, goodwill and effort have built these programs. There is an interplay between the sense of place, the church spiritual life, and what is provided due to St. Mary's multifaceted demonstration of care.

St. Mary's is felt and known to be a safe place for a wide range of people. People want to come to somewhere they are welcome, which is a true community place. The redeveloped extension, by having more space and space suitable for the charity allows the whole program of work operating in St. Mary the Virgin to continue to be sustainable and thrive. It is part of a valuable symbiotic whole.

2. Mary's accommodation

2.1 Vision for the extension

"A lively, functional space so Mary's can be a powerful beacon for expert work in preventing Serious Youth Violence. A home for Mary's work of stability, support and care for young people. Giving fit-for-purpose space for St. Mary the Virgin to continue to be a safe place for people, a sustainable and thriving heart of the community."

The new extension will provide:

- An entrance that is suitable for vulnerable young people to access;
- A dedicated counselling room for mentoring and counselling;
- Groupwork space;
- Storage; and
- Office space/welcome room.

2.2 Entrance

The entrance will directly access the services that Mary's provides. The new extension has a separate door to the church doors with direct access to the office and rooms. This means that a young person coming to the service would have clarity and visibility from the street of an entrance that signals the location. The charity can provide better services as it will be able to operate on a schedule which is not restricting meeting times, fundraising or service patterns to when the church spaces enable access through the doors and spaces used for other services. The new entrance removes a significant limitation to the service.

2.1 Office/welcome room

The office is located to the left of the entrance way, and its format and layout are intentionally not presented as institutional. This is to reduce anxiety of those arriving and signal that the service is focused on a person's needs. The doors are glass overlooking the entryway for visibility on those coming into the service and promote safety. Within the office the layout is both desks for the required paperwork and computer work, but has an informal seating section when you first enter the room. This is to be very welcoming and for a space used for initially receiving referred individuals, close to exits and without invoking any feelings for our users of feeling trapped or forced. The doors do have locks, passes and seating which faces the exit so that a young person knows that the environment reduces the risk of their being threatened or attacked.

The welcome space will be used for informal interactions between young people and caseworkers.

The office has been designed so individuals can walk through the space from the church sacristy, as this is a route used for church services. The office/welcome space will provide additional space for preparation for services due to improved storage and changing space.

2.2 Counselling room

A counselling space with up to four individuals has been designed with natural light and view of the protected tree. This is a restorative and safe space in which individual mentoring or small group interventions will be held. Counselling will also be held in this room. The room is also designed with a fold down bed and storage of items that are needed for those leaving young offending institutions. This bed space will allow someone to rest, as well as use the other facilities to shower and eat and be given critical support items such as toiletries for their new housing.

The counselling room fold down bed will also be used as the warden's bed for the nights of the Cold Weather Shelter, which is safe and lockable space.

2.2 Groupwork room

The groupwork room is multifunctional and will be used for:

- Groups that Mary's provides for from pupil referral units and schools;
- Dispute mediations for larger groups;
- Health and fitness provision for our Core Program;

- Cooking classes and providing food for sessions using the kitchen along one wall;
- Film viewing and other activities;
- Training provision by Mary's for other youthwork providers;
- Team meetings and other administrative meetings
- Fundraising events and meetings

WC and Shower

A disabled WC and shower are provided on the ground floor. These will service the extension rooms and be accessible for use by those using the adjoining Community Hall. These facilities are used by young people who have not been able to access a shower, as well as for those working in the building who come by active transport. The shower facilities will also be used by those attending the Cold Weather Shelter.

Storage

Under stair and two full height storage cupboards are available for the storage of chairs, music and sports items, shelter mattresses and the charity's promotional materials.

3. How Mary's operates its facility

Mary's is a referral service. Young people within the age range of 14-25 are referred to the service from:

- Youth Offending Teams
- Secondary Schools
- Pupil Referral Units
- Statutory services
- Detached referrals (from street detached work)

The service is not a general access provision. Work is divided between the scheduled and the reactive.

Scheduled services are those Mary's provides to support those already within our Core Program and key groups and services locally including:

- Counselling sessions
- Group sessions from Pupil Referral Units (travelling to us)
- Mentoring sessions
- Programs for those at risk of exclusion from school
- Provision within Inclusion Units within secondary schools as behaviour lead
- Support for young people into work or to gain qualifications

Reactive services are those we cannot predict but have a way of working and a provision when they arise:

- Gang mediations
- Interventions to deescalate groups and tensions
- Intervention at incidents
- Weapons removals
- 24 hour a day/7 day a week reactive phone support from caseworkers for a young person on our Core Program.

The outcomes that Mary's works for are improvements in:

- Aggression
- Self esteem
- Wellbeing
- Self-rated functioning
- Attachments
- Education and employment

A Theory of Change supporting these outcomes, and validated tools for evidence collection are used. The service holds and collects outcome data for those on its Core Program and attendance data on our wider services. Specific data sets are then held, such as for the 205 young people who undertook a six week mental health program last year, with bespoke outcomes.

Mary's interventions with young people are therapeutic and person-centred. 93% of our young people have experienced Adverse Childhood Events⁴ and therefore a trauma informed psychodynamic approach has been developed and is now at the centre of what Mary's provides. The lack of time-bound provision and out of hours provision are part of work focused on building trust and enabling healthy attachments.

3.1 Volume of young people and services provided

The building will increase the number of group session supports we can provide to Pupil Referral Units and secondary schools. These will be day time and within school hours and be groups of between 6 and 10 individuals.

The number of counselling and mentoring sessions will not increase, but will be conducted in appropriate and secure surroundings. The number of individuals

⁴ Analysis of a cohort of 195 former individuals on the Core Program aged 18-30 by J. Allen, 2020.

supported into education, qualifications and training would remain similar to current levels.

Operationally we have planned for an increase in three staff, who would be dominantly sessional staff paid for running specific sessions, to support group sessions.

Training, fundraising, meeting and stakeholder events will be increased.

The below table summarises the volume impact to indicate any impacts on footfall, travel and other considerations of the redeveloped space:

Element	Change in volume of services
Core Program support – wrap around 24/7 support for highly at risk referred young people	No change, continuing to operate at circa 300 high risk young people on our intensive program each year.
Group work – provision on behalf of schools or groups that require mediation or intervention	Increase from 7 group sessions per week to 12 per week (group sessions are of 6-10 individuals).
Training – providing youth work training to other organisations (paid or voluntary)	Increase from only informal provision to one session per month. Impact on finances
Office space – improvement from two desks to flexible working space for all youthworkers	Improvement to the quality of administrative work, and number of people who can work collaboratively
Non-youthwork users	No increase to homeless shelter provision or church use but better facilities for these

The main operating times of the work will be unchanged:

Monday – Saturday 9am to 11pm

Sunday 9am to 7pm (dominantly church use of space on this day)

3.2 How Mary's is governed

Mary's has a traditional charity structure and is a registered charity with the Charity Commission with Trustees that lead oversight, strategy and responsibility for the Charity. Mary's Trustees are drawn entirely from the local community in Camden, including nominees from the Church and those with experience of the service we provide. It is a community-led and black and minority ethnic led organisation. Mary's employees are likewise from and highly knowledgeable of the local community with many employees having attended local schools, grown up in the area, or as former users of the service.

4. The redevelopment of St. Mary's Centre – what does it mean to Mary's team and young people?

"A young person is thinking that someone made a place for them. They are seen. Its saying they do belong in society."

Sara

"The current arrangements feel like a juggling act at a circus. We cancel sessions because of clashes, move things because of events, and can't host funders easily. The building means better facilities and outcomes."

MJ

"It's emotional. We are saying people deserve a space. They'll come in and think someone can help me here."

Christivie

"The building would mean a place to further build the foundations of work, expand what we're doing and put the charity onto a higher plane."

Jonathan