

welcare

strengthening families since 1894

Dear Friends,

Autumn brings its own magic and a return to familiar routines - it also means that the Welcare newsletter is due!

First, I am pleased to share [Dylan's Story](#) which demonstrates how the place we secured on the 'Wave Project' (a six week surf therapy programme) helped build confidence, overcome anxiety and build self-esteem. This case study (with names changed) also provides a glimpse of the massive armoury in the tool kit of our wonderful staff team of family support workers – their skill working with parents and children, asking the right questions, actively listening, making connections, and using local knowledge and professional skills makes a lasting impact on parents and children and this is just one of the many lives we have transformed, with your help and support.

Welcare continues to provide practical support for families, especially those on the lowest incomes who have been hit hardest by the continuing rise in the cost of food and utilities. This year we worked with [Feed London](#) to provide food boxes filled with fresh healthy seasonal ingredients, recipes and supermarket vouchers to help families through the school summer holidays. To learn more about our achievements, including the value of our practical support to families, please read our [Impact Report 2023-24](#).

On 22 July we said farewell and thanked Chris Elliott for serving as Chair of trustees and strengthening our relationship with Southwark Diocese. I am very pleased that our Treasurer, Chris Taylor, has agreed to take on the role of chair for the next twelve months.

Sue Floyd once again ran the London 10k and raised £510. Before the Covid pandemic we had a small team taking part and over the next twelve months I am determined to recruit new runners to support Sue and raise vital funds for Welcare. We have purchased 10 places for the Saucony London 10k on 13 July 2025 and I need your help to fill these with our friends, relatives and supporters – anyone who supports our mission to give children a secure and confident future. The event takes place in our capital city, it has a fantastic atmosphere, the roads are closed and there is live music to motivate runners and supporters. We ask that each runner pledges a minimum of £250 and hopefully more. To sign up for a place visit our [London 10k](#) page.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the [Service of Thanksgiving](#) which will take place at Bromley Parish Church at 11.30am on Friday 15 November. All are very welcome to attend the service and to enjoy the delicious lunch afterwards. This year our trustee, the Venerable Allie Kerr (Archdeacon of Bromley & Bexley), will give the address, and we will be joined by the Mayor of Bromley, Cllr Dr David Jefferys. Many of you will know that we are one of three mayoral charities for 2024-25 and it would be wonderful for him to meet our supporters after the service.

Finally – please follow and share our latest news, events, stories and especially our appeal for London 10k runners. With your help, we can build a strong and resilient supporter base and increase awareness of our work.

With sincere thanks for your support of our work,



Anna Khan,
Welcare CEO



OUR LATEST NEWS

Families we've helped: Dylan



A referral was made to Welcare by the local Early Help Service for support for Dylan and his mother, Melissa, who has a diagnosis of anxiety and depression. School reported ongoing concerns in relation to Dylan's punctuality and attendance and it had been suggested that this was related to Melissa's mental health impacting her ability to manage the morning routine. In addition to this, school reported that when he did come in late or return from a period of absence, Dylan would appear anxious and withdrawn, thereby raising concerns for his emotional wellbeing. Melissa was also struggling with debt at the time which was impacting on the stress of everyday life.

There were some important areas of practical support to address with the family, including supporting Melissa with her parenting, supporting her to access the appropriate benefits, and purchasing a new bed for Dylan. However, what had the greatest impact for Melissa was the emotional support she received as part of the intervention. It was not known at the time of referral that Melissa had experienced significant adversity and trauma in her own life. At 15, she was made homeless after the relationship with her mother had broken down. Her young adult life was spent in temporary, unstable accommodation. This had a lasting impact on her mental health, disrupted her relationships with caregivers and negatively affected her education and employment prospects. At the beginning of the intervention, Melissa had recently been diagnosed with severe anxiety and depression and was supported with medication whilst she while awaiting access to therapy. Melissa reported being overwhelmed with the day-to-day challenges of parenting and was experiencing bouts of anxiety attacks and not sleeping.

In addition to Melissa's own mental health struggles, Dylan had missed a huge amount of school in year 3 due to persistent health issues. Now in year 4, direct work with Dylan and feedback from school staff indicated that he was displaying anxiety around school and lacked confidence in the classroom and in forming friendships. This was compounded by the fact that Dylan had been exposed to his mother's low mood and anxiety attacks at home.

A priority for the intervention was to support Dylan to build his confidence around school and explore extra-curricular activities for him to develop his self-esteem and social skills.

The initial priority of the intervention was to stabilise the home environment and family routine. At the beginning of our work, Dylan was sharing a room with his mother, after the flat had flooded and damaged his bedroom. Melissa was struggling financially and couldn't afford to replace the bed. Welcare was able to apply for emergency funding to purchase Dylan a new bed. This gave him his own space and independence in the home environment. It also helped settle his sleeping routine, as previously he had been sharing a bed with his mother. Furthermore, it helped Melissa to better manage her own sleeping pattern which was disrupted due to her anxiety.

Now that Dylan had his own space, Welcare was able to work with the family to create a structured weekly timetable at home. Welcare supported Melissa to attend meetings with the school attendance officer. Melissa had previously found these meetings to be an uncomfortable and punitive process having been brought to a court panel when Dylan was in year 3. We were able to advocate for a more child centered and trauma informed approach to the issue of punctuality and attendance. The school was consequently more understanding in their approach, which helped restore Melissa's trust in professionals and reduce her anxiety. On days when Melissa was struggling, she began to feel more confident in her ability to communicate with school which began to respond with more compassion and offer Dylan enhanced support in school.

Welcare also helped Melissa to understand the benefits available to her. With the help of her GP, Melissa was successful in her applications for PIP and Capability to Work benefits. This helped alleviate some of the financial strain and she was able to reduce her debt.

The intervention helped identify that Dylan was missing out on the opportunity to establish his own relationship with his father and primary male role model in his life. In direct work with the family support worker, Dylan expressed that he wanted to spend more time with his father in a one-to-one capacity yet didn't feel able to tell his mother as he did not want to add to her stress. Due to his father's work commitments, he was only able to visit him at home. The feedback shared by Dylan with the family support worker enabled parents to find solutions to this and Dylan then began having more meaningful contact with his father.

The family's support network was concerned about the impact on Dylan's emotional wellbeing and development as a result of missing out on a period of his education and being an only child of a parent with mental health difficulties. Welcare was able to secure a place for Dylan with the 'Wave Project', a six-week surf therapy programme. The aim of this programme is to help children feel more confident about taking on different challenges and to learn to overcome worries and anxieties. Dylan was matched with a mentor to support his wellbeing and build his confidence throughout the programme.

At beginning of attending The Wave Project, Dylan was energetic and excited to learn a new skill, albeit apprehensive. Having come to the end of the programme, Melissa noticed a marked change in the confidence and sense of independence that the course had given him. He now has wider aspirations to try other activities he previously would not have attempted.

The Wave Project coordinator shared, *"It was such a pleasure having Dylan in the group. It was brilliant to see him become so confident in the water after initially sharing his nervousness about getting in. It was also brilliant to see him develop a great friendship with another group member."*

As the intervention progressed, Dylan began to take more pride in his responsibilities at home and independence with his routine. His punctuality and attendance improved at school, as did his relationship with school overall.

In light of the extent of the mental health challenges that Melissa was dealing with, it would have been easy to feel that the opportunity to influence positive change for this family would be limited without a specialist therapeutic intervention from mental health services. This case is a reminder of the difference that we can make in the lives of families by being person centered and creative in our approach, as well as the power of being a listening ear and a supportive voice for our families when in need.

At the time of closure, Melissa reported that she had gone from *"not coping at all"* to feeling *"completely listened to and understood and received appropriate help to address some of my challenges"*.

Melissa also reported, *"The intervention gave me the confidence to think about the changes I needed to make and find ways to apply them. I am more mindful of my son's emotions, of how my mental health impacts on my son and I now know how to check in with him and talk to him about his emotions. I could see the difference in Dylan when I began to feel better, in his motivation to go to school and how he is learning to open up about his feelings."*

*All names have been changed and stock images used

Feed London Partnership



The school summer holidays can be a tricky time for many families, particularly those struggling financially. There are many reasons why a family has financial difficulties including the impact of the cost-of-living crisis, inability to work due to mental or physical health issues or struggling due to the two-child benefit cap. When a family faces financial pressure it impacts all areas of life, including not having access to or enough fresh, healthy and nutritious food, known as food poverty.

Recent figures released by The Department for Work and Pensions (March 2024) revealed that 4.3 million children live in relative poverty after housing costs (30% of all children in the UK). This is 100,000 more than last year, meaning that the need for practical and financial support is greater than ever. With these figures in mind and our knowledge of the needs of the families we work with our staff team constantly seek new and innovative ways to enhance the practical help and support we can provide and teamed with [Feed London](#) to help.

Feed London is a food poverty which charity who provides food boxes in the school holidays with fresh healthy seasonal ingredients, recipe cards and supermarket vouchers. At the end of the summer term Welcare was gifted 20 of these fantastic boxes to distribute to families in need in south London. The boxes were earmarked for delivery on the hottest days of the year but despite the heat and frustrating driving conditions our dedicated staff team worked together to get all the boxes safely delivered to grateful families – a big thank you to all our staff who organised the logistics and helped on the day.

It has been a huge success, and not only have we been able to provide our families with delicious and healthy meals but have given them the ability to create wonderful memories of cooking and eating together over the holidays, all of which would not have been possible without Feed London's help. Thank you so much Feed London for your work and for partnering with us to help our south London families. The feedback has been fantastic to receive.

A parent who received a box: 'Thank you so much for the food box and voucher, we have already been putting bits of the food to good use and our son has been loving it.'

A teacher from a school that we have been working in: 'Just to say that all the recipients were extremely grateful. Thank you for thinking of us.'

If you would like to support the work of Welcare and help us make a difference to the lives of even more children and families, please consider [donating](#).

welcare strengthening families since 1894 August 2024









A Summary of the Year 2023 to 2024

Welcare is a charity working with families and children up to the age of 13 throughout south London and East Surrey. Our mission is to work alongside parents and carers to give children secure and confident childhoods and to enable them to thrive in the future.

Thanks to the financial and prayerful support of your parish and congregation Welcare has been able to continue its mission to provide practical and emotional support to enable children and families to thrive.

Thank you!

★ Welcare's Achievements ★

<p>We worked with 855 families</p> 	<p>861 children attended group work programmes</p> 
<p>49 parents attended parenting courses</p> 	<p>11 fathers completed the Caring Dads group</p> 
<p>128 children attended a group work programme in school</p> 	<p>£48,827 was given as added value</p>  <p><small>e.g. crisis grants, household items, support with energy costs</small></p>
<p>78% of families reported positive changes from working with Welcare</p> 	<p>54 parish churches supported our work in the last financial year</p> 

For more information on our work: welcare.org
Or to watch our supporter video: welcare.org/supportervideos
Or you can follow us on social media:

 /welcareuk  @welcareuk  welcare_uk

Welcare is a working name for Southwark Diocesan Welcare. Registered office: 24 Warwick Road, Redhill, RH1 1BU. A registered charity in England and Wales (1107859) and a company limited by guarantee registered in England & Wales (5275749).

London 10k



Do you want to help local children and families thrive? Why not join **Team Welcare** for the Saucony London 10k on 13th July 2025!

This a fantastic event, the route takes you past London's best landmarks, with live bands, DJs and cheering fans motivating you along the closed-road route that takes you through central London.

We will support you with a T Shirt, help setting up a Just Giving page and celebratory drinks for you near the Embankment at the end of the race!

If you are interested or have any questions, please contact us at fundraising@welcare.org or call us on 0207 820 7910

To see more of our news from 2024 visit www.welcare.org/news-listing

EVENTS

Saturday 14th September 2024 at 11am

[Walk for Welcare, Charlton Park](#)

Charlton Park, 21 Cemetery Lane, London, SE7 8DZ

Friday 7th October 2024 at 6:30pm

[Concert by The Ferrier Operatic Society](#)

St Mary's Church, Sandringham Drive, Welling, DA16 3QU

Friday 15th November 2024 at 11:30am

[Bromley Service of Thanksgiving](#)

St Peter & St Paul Church, Church Road, Bromley, BR2 0EG

Sunday 13th July 2025

[Saucony London 10k](#)

Starting point: 101 Piccadilly, London, W1J 7JT

To enquire about any of our events please get in touch with us at fundraising@welcare.org or 020 7820 7910



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to support the work of Welcare
welcare.org/legacy

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