



**Elfrida Rathbone Camden**  
three decades at the heart of our community  
**Annual Review 2014**



**Elfrida Rathbone Camden** works to achieve independence, empowerment and personal development for disabled people, children and young people, parents and families.

## OUR GOALS:

- For the lives of parents and families to be improved by access to the support they feel they need.
- To promote self-esteem, confidence and independence for disabled people.
- For children and young people to have the maximum opportunities to achieve their potential.



## Message from Sade Alade, Chair of Trustees

In 1916 Elfrida Rathbone began teaching disabled children at a special kindergarten in Kings Cross. I think she would be as proud as I am of the achievements made by the organisation in what continues to be challenging times in terms of accessing external funding.

To celebrate ERC's 30 year anniversary, young people from the Leighton Project and Young People for Inclusion created a film depicting our history and commitment to ensuring disabled young people are able to access a good education. In December the Leighton Project students also had a fantastic art exhibition at The London Transport Museum.

One of our big achievements is that we are lead agency for Camden Futures, which supports vulnerable



families where the eldest child is aged between 5-10 years. Funded by The Big Lottery, we work with Camden Citizens Advice Bureau, Coram and Haverstock Healthcare to ensure families receive a holistic range of services designed to most effectively meet their needs.

We have also been one of the most successful agencies in our consortium for rolling out the government's CAN Parent Voucher scheme. Other organisations involved include Barnardos, NCT and the Family Matters Institute.

## Our Trustees

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## Overview from ERC's Director, Alexis Keir

Despite public sector funding cuts Elfrida Rathbone Camden (ERC) has maintained a diverse range of funding sources and services in which partnership and collaboration have played an important role.

We have continued to work in partnership with the London Borough of Camden, and made a successful transition to negotiating directly with local authorities for elements of Leighton Education funding. Big Lottery and the Education Funding Agency remain major funders and key priorities are ensuring income covers core costs for the organisation, and maintaining our level of applications for new grant and trust funding.

In recent years ERC's services for young people with disabilities have significantly expanded and diversified. While the education project continued to provide a term time only service, other projects

working across the year have also been established.

During 2012-13 ERC undertook a review of our services for young disabled people to explore ways in which we could maximise co-working and integration. We have changed our management structure, and Jenny Pounce and Leah Dixon, who led ERC's Leighton Education and Community projects, left ERC in July 2013. Their achievements with and for ERC service users are greatly appreciated and valued. Our new Learning and Participation Manager, Rachel Perrin, comes with a strong background in adult learning and community inclusion for disabled people.

In 2013, we moved offices within our building at 7 Dowdney Close, moving the education classroom to the ground floor, while all staff now work in a large, open plan office. This has greatly improved access to learning and activities for young people with a range of disabilities. ERC is grateful to the Clothworkers' Foundation for their financial support in the development of the ERC Learning Centre through their grant of £30,000.



'YPFI is fantastic and interactive, with lots of new members coming in'- Anna A.

Young People For Inclusion (YPFI) is a group of young disabled people, working together to improve their lives and make their voices heard. YPFI has been operating for four years, and is funded through a five year grant from Big Lottery.

In the last year, 168 young disabled people attended an activity, event or workshop arranged by YPFI members. ERC has also employed four young disabled people in sessional roles to help YPFI deliver its PACT (Physical Access, Communication and Training) programme in the community and disability awareness

training sessions. YPFI members have worked alongside the Reactive Forum to deliver disability awareness training to Camden youth workers. YPFI also delivered fun and popular activities at the Wild Bunch club (organised by the Elfrida Society in Islington) to encourage young disabled people to feel more confident and speak up.



**Annabel Crowley**  
Project Coordinator

Rob Danson, the former YPFI Coordinator, left ERC in September 2013 for pastures new and Annabel Crowley joined ERC as the new YPFI Coordinator in November 2013.

Skill up for Work (SUW) and Skills for Volunteering (SUV)



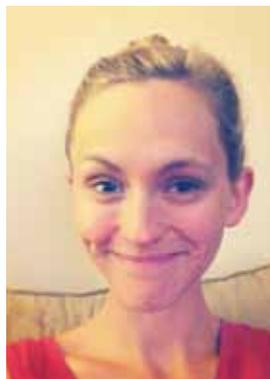
SUW participants making muffins and brownies

SUW, which finished in March 2013, offered work skills development for people with a learning difficulty aged 16 and over living in Camden, including support in writing CVs and applications, interview role play, work experience and work place visits.

The 11 participants reported increased skills and understanding of work options, and increased confidence in the workplace. Seven people obtained work placements, and 4 were supported into onward provision.

In its first year SUV worked with 12 service users, with 11 going on to a

volunteering placement. An awards ceremony in March 2013 recognised their achievements.



**Jo Dowbekin**  
Volunteering and Outreach Worker

Links to local resources and organisations were key in securing volunteering placements:

*“The support the SUV worker provided was really important in supporting him to settle in and helping us to understand his needs to make for a successful placement all around.*

*Because of this support and the success of the placement STCA would definitely use this service again.”*

**Sarah Elie** – Somerstown Community Association

## Leighton Education Project

The Leighton Education Project continues to offer a 2 year life skills programme to young adults with learning disabilities.

Students at Leighton work towards independence through a range of courses which stretch and challenge their life and social skills to enable them to get on in life including money management, learning to cook, independent travel and keeping safe.

Work and volunteering skills are developed through our work with partner agencies to enable students to progress. This year young people have developed work skills at John Lewis Oxford Street, Boma Garden Centre, Mailout, London Canal Museum and fundraised for Oxfam.

Creativity is important at Leighton. As well as making short films students commemorated 150 years of London Transport by participating in a London Wide Arts Project and held two exhibitions of their work supported by ActionSpace.

This year has seen some changes, and Leighton Education, YPFI and SUV are now part of ERC's 'Learning and Participation

Programme' managed by Rachel Perrin. Combining projects into one department has enabled good practice, resources and knowledge to be shared easily between projects.

We have also relocated our classrooms to the ground floor of Dowdney Close to give us a new learning space with classrooms, kitchen and student area all in one space. This was supported by the Clothworkers' Foundation who contributed a grant of £30,000 to develop the ERC Learning Centre.

Students requested lockers, tutorials and quiet space to support their learning and holistic needs. Not only has our new learning space been able to provide this but rooms are more accessible enabling us to cater for a range of young disabled people.



## Working Through It by Chris Cooper

I am often a shy person and I can get quite anxious. I have a learning disability, and I have autism. Part of my autism makes it hard to speak to others I don't know and I am wary of people because I don't trust them. I also find it hard to make decisions because I'm afraid of making a bad choice. I over analyse everything, which makes me feel stressed.

I went to a mainstream school ... I didn't make many friends, and I often felt isolated and helpless. I used to just stand in the same spot in the playground, avoiding people.

During my school years I would say 95% of the time I felt unhappy.

Then I went to the Leighton Project. That's when my life started to turn around for the better. That's because it was a school set up to help people with learning difficulties. The teachers there understood me. They made me feel a part of everything. The students there were friendlier than when I was at school. The Leighton Project



gave me confidence, which enabled me to take advantage of new opportunities.

I enrolled in the Harington Scheme, which trains people with learning difficulties, and I attend WAC Wonder Web, where I help produce a radio show and contribute to their website, plus I go to Artbox where I can be creative, and finally I'm a member of Exposure, where, well, I'm writing this article!

I am lucky to have these opportunities, and it only took a bit of self-belief to take advantage of them. I'm thinking about my future now and I'm excited about it. What's out there that will challenge me!?

I feel happy and fortunate. I'm in a much better place than I was years ago. If you're feeling like I used to then don't get trapped in a state of doing nothing about your situation. Take advantage of the opportunities available to you. Come to Exposure for a start!

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## Family Support

### Camden Futures

The Camden Futures (CF) partnership, comprising ERC, Camden CAB, Coram and Haverstock Healthcare, created a new source of support for families with multiple and complex problems.

ERC provides family workers and the coordinator for the multi-disciplinary team and, as lead agency, worked intensively with the partners to finalise the business plan with the Big Lottery.

Camden Futures was highlighted by the Lottery for its referral record and innovative practice such as its network of local agencies. Francesca Cappelli (CF Coordinator) and Alexis Keir (ERC Director), attended a high-profile Policy Roundtable to share learning derived from setting up the service.

In CF's first year 77 families showed a variety of benefits from their interaction with CF including:

- improved physical, emotional or mental health
- improved school attendance and educational attainment
- a better understanding of how to improve family finances and housing and improved links with community resources.

This was achieved through close partnership working by the team of parent support advisors, family workers, creative therapists and financial inclusion workers.

The CAB financial inclusion worker supported 45 families to resolve

issues with the potential to cause homelessness; manage £142,350 of priority and non-priority debts; and improve benefit entitlements. So

far in year 2 £275,972 of debt has been managed.

Year 2 has also seen an increase in referrals, with 108 families entering the service so far. Team bases have also increased and families can now access workers within 5 GP practices, 5 schools and the new CAB offices in the Albany Centre on the Regents Park estate.



The CF team have established good links with other Improving Futures projects in the south east. A lively network has resulted in two team days to facilitate sharing of experience, knowledge and ideas. The team has also been invited by LBC's Complex Families initiative to participate in the Anna Freud Centre's AMBIT (Adolescent Mentalisation Bases Integrative Treatment) training.

### CF Wider Referral Network

There was extensive liaison with a range of statutory and voluntary sector organisations to ensure that the new service "hit the ground running" and engaged with families as soon as workers were in place.

The Wider Referral Network was established at the beginning of the Camden Futures project to encourage engagement in the project by local agencies.

Meetings are held quarterly and to date there have been seven of these. They have been very well attended by a variety of voluntary and statutory agencies, who are keen to network and share information (and eat cake!).

Guest speakers have also given the meetings an added focus and we have heard from organisations such as Coram Children's Legal Centre, the MASH team, Camden Safety Net and Apples and Pears Children's Weight Management Service.



## Advocacy

### CAN Parent Trial

ERC is part of a consortium led by City Lit delivering parenting classes for parents of under 5s in Camden as part of the national CAN Parent Trial (Camden, High Peaks and Middlesbrough). ERC's figure of 43 parents attending baby massage classes in the year to March 2013 is close to 30% of Camden's total uptake from 14 separate providers.

### Young Carers

The Young Carers Advocacy Project is a partnership working with Family Action Islington and CASA Islington. The project offers support to young people 18 years old and under living in Camden or Islington who are acting as carers to someone with a disability.

In year one of this project ERC supported 13 families, helping parents understand and support young carers' educational and social care needs. Parents and young carers were also helped to take part in and contribute their views and feedback to professionals' meetings.

### Social Care Advocacy

Camden Learning Disability Service continue to commission ERC to provide individual social care advocacy to adults with a learning disability on a case by case basis. Individual advocacy needs have included adults becoming involved with the criminal justice system, parenting and custody issues and preparation for independent living.

### SEN Advocacy

The Recently Arrived Families (RAF) Project supported access to



education for children with special educational needs and disabilities in migrant and refugee families.

Although funding for RAF ended in March 2013, ERC has set up a community drop-in advocacy service called Our Space, to support parents of disabled children. We are very grateful to the grant from Camden LINK which enabled this service.

## Young Carers Case Study

The Young Carers Advocacy Project has supported a 17 year old boy and his 13 year old sister, who found themselves facing challenges that most of us do not expect to confront until adulthood.

Raised by their grandfather since they were toddlers, at the age of 75 he was in poor health and struggling to support the children adequately, meaning they were forced into caring roles.

The family home was in poor repair. The grandfather had no access to home care support and faced serious mobility problems.

Looking for help, the family turned to ERC's Young Carers Advocacy

service which was able to help them flag up and explain where and how they needed support.

Advocacy workers liaised with the Social Care Department and Occupational Therapy to access home care and mobility support for the grandfather, and with the landlord to organise home repairs.

The project is also working to identify social opportunities for the grandfather, to support his independence and improve his health and mobility. Project workers are also in the process of helping the family apply for a grant to decorate and improve the home.

In addition, project workers are supporting the children and helping them to explore education options for their future.

The link with the Young Carers' Project has made a significant difference for this family. The project has provided them with essential support so they can enjoy life as a family together. Most importantly, the project has helped these two young people to enjoy their childhood without having to take on what would normally be adult responsibilities.

# Financial Summary 2012/2013

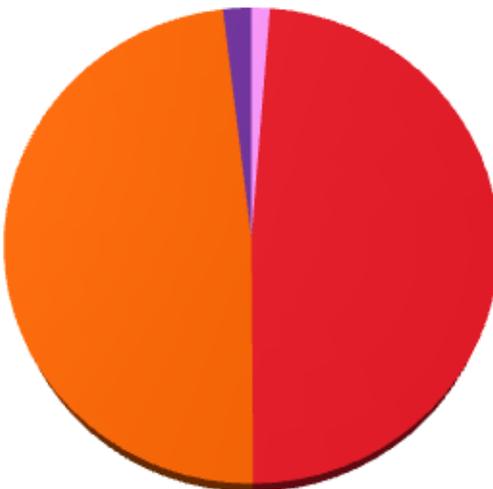
## Income



### Where our money comes from (£)

Big Lottery	385,753
Education	251,828
London Borough of Camden	143,441
Trust and Grants	102,037
Room Hire	19,467
Building reimbursements	29,754
Sundries	15,958
<b>Total</b>	<b>£923,718</b>

## Expenditure



### Where the money goes (£)

Family Services & Advocacy	415,622
Leighton Projects	411,591
Generating Funds	10,515
Goverance	16,277
<b>Total</b>	<b>£854,005</b>

*For detailed financial information please see our Audited Accounts 2012/2013. Accounts available from Chris McAuley 020 7424 1621 [chris@elfridacamden.org.uk](mailto:chris@elfridacamden.org.uk) or download from our website [www.elfridacamden.org.uk](http://www.elfridacamden.org.uk)*

Thank you

Elfrida Rathbone Camden would like to extend thanks to all of the following organisations and individuals for their support.

**Our funders (2012 - 2013)**

Big Lottery Fund  
City Lit  
Education Funding Agency  
Family Action  
Greg Keen  
John Lewis  
London Borough of Camden  
Office for Civil Society  
St. James's Church Picadilly  
Swiss Cottage School  
The Fitzdale Trust  
Trust for London  
Young People's Learning Agency

**Our Volunteers**

Alan Geffin  
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Apoorab Sharma  
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Helen Putera  
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Theo McCarthy-Budzynski  
Zuhra Ali

**Students and Interns who have supported our work**

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Chantelle Parks  
Courtney Savage  
Dominique McCallum  
Emily Kelty  
Lilleth Brewer  
Lydia Snapper  
Matterley Gainer  
Nicole Rochelle  
Rachel Frick  
Shanie Campbell

**Corporate Supporters**

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**Photographers featured in this review include:**

*Alessandra Bester  
Marian Mlyarnczyk  
and other ERC staff*





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