

Romsey Mill – an introduction

Romsey Mill has been developing innovative work with hard-to-reach young people since 1980, helping to transform the lives of thousands of individuals and families in Cambridgeshire. Working for Romsey Mill as a staff member or a volunteer offers both opportunity and challenge.

Romsey Mill's vision

Romsey Mill's vision is of a **transformed society** in which all young people, children and families fully belong, positively contribute and thrive.

Romsey Mill creates opportunities with young people, children and families in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire to overcome disadvantage, promote inclusion, and develop personal, social and spiritual well-being.

We believe that the best way to fulfil this vision is to equip people to make positive choices at **points of transition** in their lives. Transition points are more likely to have a negative impact on families from areas with higher levels of multiple deprivation and child poverty, and on those with additional barriers such as a poor skills base, being a young parent, or having a disability. We therefore work in areas with the highest levels of multiple deprivation and child poverty.

Programme areas

We have five main programme areas through which we put our vision into action:

Children's Centre and Playgroup provides information, advice, guidance to support new parents, and a thriving playgroup for pre-school children. The programme addresses isolation, promotes effective parenting and encourages child development.

Transitions Programme supports young people likely to struggle in the move from primary to secondary school. The programme works with those who display difficult behaviour, have turbulent domestic lives, are the victims or perpetrators of bullying, or lack social skills and self-esteem.

Social Inclusion Programme works with peer groups of 14-25-year-olds to create young person-led projects. These are young people who are at risk of social exclusion, involved in offending behaviour and might become, or are, NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). Projects develop social, personal and work-related skills.

Young Parents Programme is the lead response for teenage parents in Cambridgeshire, providing intensive personal support to over one hundred mothers and expectant teenagers each year. The programme equips them to break out of the cycle of exclusion, in which many are trapped, by developing their skills base and by addressing their parenting and social needs.

Our **Aspire Programme** creates a safe social space with young people with a 'high-end functioning' autistic spectrum condition. The programme promotes mental well-being and the development of social skills.

History and constitution

Romsey Mill was **founded in 1980** by five churches in east Cambridge in response to their recognition of the needs of local young people. Its work is based on Christian faith, and provides

support for people of any faith background and none. Romsey Mill continues to work in partnership with local churches.

Romsey Mill is now recognised by statutory and voluntary partners as a provider of excellent and responsive services.

Romsey Mill had a key role in setting up the **Centre for Youth Ministry in Cambridge**, which trains Christian youth workers; placement opportunities for CYM students are available each year at Romsey Mill.

The Romsey Mill Trust was registered as an **independent charity** in 1998 (Charity no: 1069905) having previously operated as part of an Ely Diocese charitable trust. It is also registered as a **company limited by guarantee** (no: 3556721). We purchased the site in 2006 and undertook building redevelopments in 1993, 2002 and 2007.

Structure and organisation today

Romsey Mill is a leading provider of services to young people and families in Cambridgeshire. It is known for engaging hard-to-reach groups, for innovative approaches, for nurturing relationships and for promoting participation.

The building is heavily used by Romsey Mill programmes and by community members, from multicultural playgroups to businesses.

There is a staff team of 49 and each year 160 volunteers support our work.

The Chief Executive Officer leads the organisation and is supported by four senior management posts to oversee programmes, the development of the Children's Centre activities and governance.

Romsey Mill had a turnover in 2009-10 of about £750,000. The charity holds reserves in line with Charity Commission recommendations. Its asset base includes the site and building. Romsey Mill has a charity shop, run by volunteers, which contributes about £18,000 each year to our income. Support from individuals, churches, colleges and businesses contributes a similar amount. Other income is derived from trust funding and from statutory sources (local and central government).

The core functions of the organisation (including the areas of centre management, financial management, business planning and strategic fundraising) are established.

Romsey Mill contributes to the development of statutory policy and strategy, and receives trust funding to develop programmes.

Future

In common with other third sector organisations, Romsey Mill faces the uncertainties of spending and funding cuts. We work hard to keep the organisation financially secure so that we can continue to support vulnerable children, young people and adults to reach their potential.