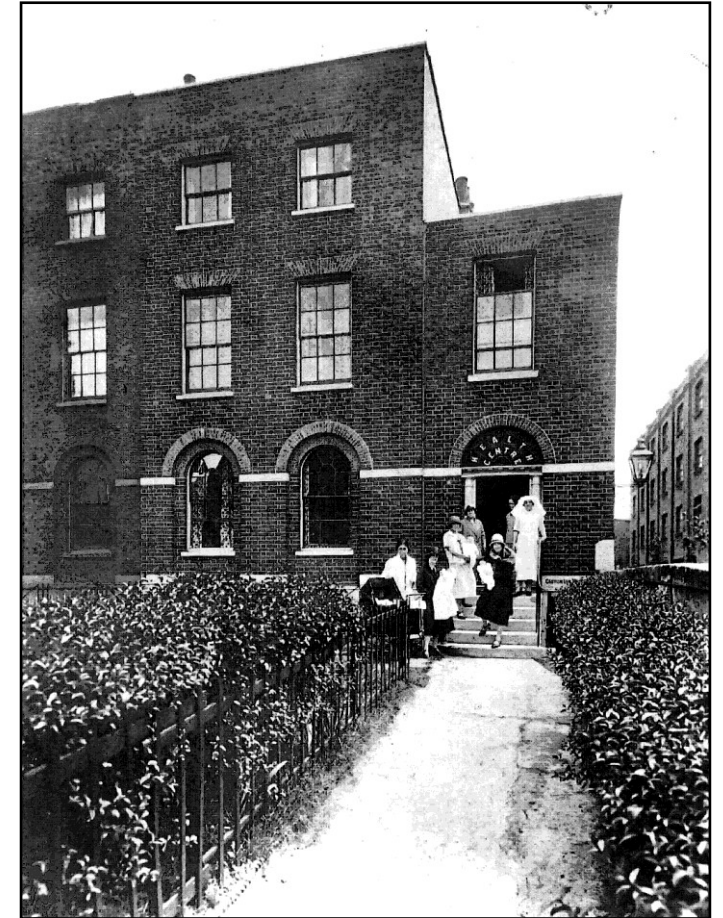


# The First Pioneer Health Centre 1926 - 1929

## Why Peckham?

The first Pioneer Health Centre started in a small house on Queen's Road, Peckham in 1926.

Peckham was chosen because it was a fairly prosperous area inhabited mostly by artisan families and with a good number of shopkeepers, clerics, small business owners and a few labourers. There was very little poverty and employment was high. It was presumed, therefore, that the levels of health would be high.



Families from the local area could use the centre as a family club but in order to use it they had to agree to have a 'health overhaul'. This allowed the doctors to study the health of the families. The 'centre' included a consulting room, a nursery and a small club room where mothers could meet in the afternoons and in the evenings parents could spend time together too. The building was open every day from 2-10pm and members could make appointments for their overhaul to suit themselves.

**It came as a surprise to Drs Williamson and Pearse when their studies revealed that despite being relatively well off and having a number of health resources available to them like a swimming bath and sports clubs in the borough, there was a lack of “vitality” within the families themselves, even those who had no disease or disorder. Peckham was a crowded area and although people had next door neighbours they were often without friends and isolated. There was evidence that people were not living to their full capacity and there was a great deal of lethargy.**

**Produced by Southwark Local History Library and Archive 2016.**