

Impact Report Young Parents Programme



Registered Charity Number 1127578

**MAKE SOME
NOISE**



FUN PIONEERING
EMPOWERING
INCLUSIVE

Impact Report

Stoke Young Parents Programme

Introduction

The Stoke Young Parents Programme, delivered by Make Some Noise (MSN), provides targeted, relationship-based support to young parents aged up to 24 living in **Stoke-on-Trent**.

These young parents often face complex and overlapping **challenges**, including **low confidence, financial hardship, limited education, unstable housing**, and **strained relationships** with family and statutory services.

These barriers can significantly affect both their own wellbeing and their ability to provide a stable, nurturing environment for their children.

The programme has been designed to respond to these needs **holistically**.

Through weekly group sessions that combine music-making, play, discussion, and shared social time, participants are offered an accessible

and engaging space in which to develop parenting skills, build relationships, and improve their overall **wellbeing**.

The creative nature of the sessions reduces stigma and encourages participation, allowing parents to learn through experience and observation in a supportive, non-judgemental environment.

The work is underpinned by three core objectives: to improve **parenting skills** and **relationships**, to **reduce risk-taking** and **harmful behaviours**, and to increase **self-efficacy** and **long-term stability**.

This report outlines the impact achieved across these areas, demonstrating how young parents have moved from positions of vulnerability towards greater confidence, independence, and positive parenting.



Engagement and Participation

Over the course of the reporting period, 47 young parents were actively supported through the programme, exceeding anticipated targets. A defining feature of the project has been the strength of its engagement. Many participants remained involved over extended periods, with some returning with additional children or continuing attendance until their children transitioned into nursery settings. This level of sustained participation is significant and reflects the high degree of trust that has been built between participants and staff.

For many young parents, engagement with services can be inconsistent or short-lived, particularly where there has been previous negative experience. In contrast, the programme has created a space where participants feel safe, valued, and understood. This has enabled deeper, more meaningful support to take place over time and has allowed practitioners to work alongside families as they navigate complex challenges.



Impact on Parenting and Relationships

One of the most significant areas of impact has been the development of positive parenting skills and improved family relationships. Many participants initially presented with low confidence in their parenting abilities, often accompanied by high levels of anxiety or uncertainty. Through regular participation in sessions, parents have developed a better understanding of child development, attachment, and positive behaviour management.

The use of music and play as a delivery method has been particularly effective in supporting this development. These activities create opportunities for parents to interact with their children in a structured yet enjoyable way, modelling positive behaviours and strengthening bonds. Over time, parents have become more confident in engaging with their children, demonstrating increased warmth, consistency, and responsiveness.

Alongside improvements in parenting practice, there have been notable changes in relationship dynamics. Some participants have been supported to build and maintain healthier co-parenting relationships, while others have been empowered to leave unsafe or harmful partnerships. In both cases, parents have demonstrated greater emotional awareness and decision-making capacity, resulting in safer and more stable environments for their children.



Engagement with Support Networks

Another important area of progress has been the shift in how participants engage with external support services. At the outset, many young parents expressed distrust or fear of statutory services, often avoiding contact altogether. Through the support of MSN staff acting as advocates and intermediaries, participants have developed a clearer understanding of how these services operate and the ways in which they can provide support.

This change has been transformative. Parents who were previously reluctant to engage with services are now more confident in seeking help, communicating their needs, and navigating complex systems. As a result, there has been a reduction in dependency and crisis intervention, with participants increasingly able to act independently and proactively.



Level of sustained participation is significant & reflects the high degree of trust

Reducing Risk and Promoting Positive Behaviour Change

The programme has also had a clear impact on reducing risk-taking behaviours and supporting safer lifestyle choices. A number of participants initially presented with issues such as substance misuse, involvement in unhealthy or abusive relationships, or other behaviours that placed them and their children at risk.

Through consistent engagement and trusted relationships, participants have been supported to reflect on these behaviours and understand their consequences. Importantly, this process has not been directive but collaborative, allowing individuals to take ownership of their choices and progress.

Over time, many participants have successfully reduced or ceased harmful behaviours altogether. This has included stopping drug and alcohol use, leaving unsafe environments, and adopting healthier coping mechanisms. These changes have contributed to improved safeguarding outcomes and reduced the need for formal intervention from social care services.



Building Confidence and Independence

A central achievement of the programme has been the development of self-efficacy among participants. Many young parents initially lacked confidence in their ability to manage everyday challenges, often relying heavily on others or avoiding situations they found difficult.

Through ongoing support, participants have developed greater resilience and a stronger sense of self. They have become more confident in making decisions, managing their responsibilities, and advocating for themselves and their children. This increased confidence has translated into tangible outcomes, including independent living, improved financial management, and progression into education or employment.

The development of independence has been particularly evident in relation to housing and finances. Participants who previously relied on supported accommodation or family members have moved into their own homes and taken responsibility for budgeting and household management. While external factors such as the cost-of-living crisis continue to present challenges, there is clear evidence that participants are better equipped to navigate these pressures.



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Peer Support and the Buddy System

A distinctive strength of the programme has been the emergence of strong peer support networks. Over time, more experienced participants have naturally taken on supportive roles within the group, helping newer members to settle and engage with the sessions. This informal “Buddy System” has become a key feature of the programme, enhancing both engagement and retention.

Peer support has been particularly effective in reducing anxiety for new participants, many of whom initially feel nervous or fearful of judgement. Seeing others with similar experiences helps to normalise their situation and builds a sense of belonging. For those acting as buddies or mentors, the experience also strengthens their confidence and reinforces their own progress.

Participant Voice

Feedback from participants provides powerful insight into the impact of the programme. Many describe the group as a safe space where they feel supported and understood, often highlighting the difference it has made to their confidence and wellbeing. The importance of relationships is a recurring theme, with participants valuing both peer connections and the consistent support provided by staff.

Several participants reflected on the role of the programme during periods of crisis, particularly during lockdown, when ongoing contact and reassurance helped them manage feelings of isolation and anxiety. Others highlighted the improvements they have seen in their children, particularly in terms of confidence and social interaction.



Challenges

Despite the significant progress made, the programme continues to operate within a challenging environment. Safeguarding remains a central concern, given the level of vulnerability within the cohort. Managing complex cases while maintaining trust requires careful balance and ongoing professional development for staff.

Partnership working has also presented challenges, particularly in the context of organisational change and resource constraints across the sector. Building and maintaining effective relationships with external agencies can be time-intensive but remains essential for delivering holistic support.

In addition, recruitment of new participants has been more difficult in the post-pandemic context, with fewer referrals and reduced opportunities for outreach. However, the programme has responded to this by increasing the role of peer-led recruitment and engagement.



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Conclusion

The Stoke Young Parents Programme has demonstrated a strong and sustained impact across all areas of delivery.

Participants have progressed from often complex and vulnerable starting points towards greater confidence, independence, and stability.

Improvements in parenting skills, reductions in harmful behaviours, and increased engagement with services have all contributed to better outcomes for both parents and their children.

What distinguishes the programme is its ability to build meaningful relationships and provide support that is both creative and responsive.

By creating a space where young parents feel safe and valued, the programme enables lasting change that extends beyond immediate outcomes.

Ultimately, the programme has supported young parents to move forward with confidence, equipping them with the skills and resilience needed to build positive futures for themselves and their families.



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