



# Impact Report 2022/23



## Our Mission:

Connecting through charitable targeted and universal support, seamless collaboration with local services and a family-centred approach we aim to educate, create opportunity and share skills that empower families to raise resilient, self-assured children with better health and social outcomes.



Over the past 12 months The Parenting Network (TPN) has expanded its services, going from 6 to 8 core programmes. 2023/24 will see the launch of Get Set Go, a school readiness programme and Embrace, a support group for young people affected by ACE's - both programmes developed in response to the needs to our communities.

Portsmouth Bump & Baby launched in 2023, developing out of our former provision of Baby Massage. TPN is now the main provider in Portsmouth of free antenatal, baby massage and starting solids workshops.

Dadzclub has also grown extensively, launching across 3 new Family Hubs in Southampton and 2 new sites on the IOW.

To see more about our work, we would encourage you to watch our new film which demonstrates our core work and values: [vimeo.com/855950566](https://vimeo.com/855950566)

## Regular groups:

**179**

sessions  
delivered

**405**

unique  
families

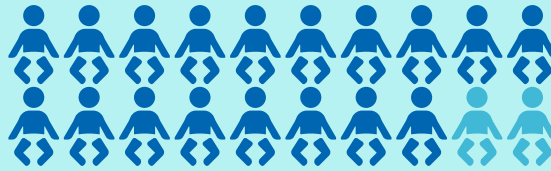
**4852**

engagements

## Portsmouth Baby Bank:

**722**

referrals



**1385** children  
supported

## Special events:

**8**

community  
events

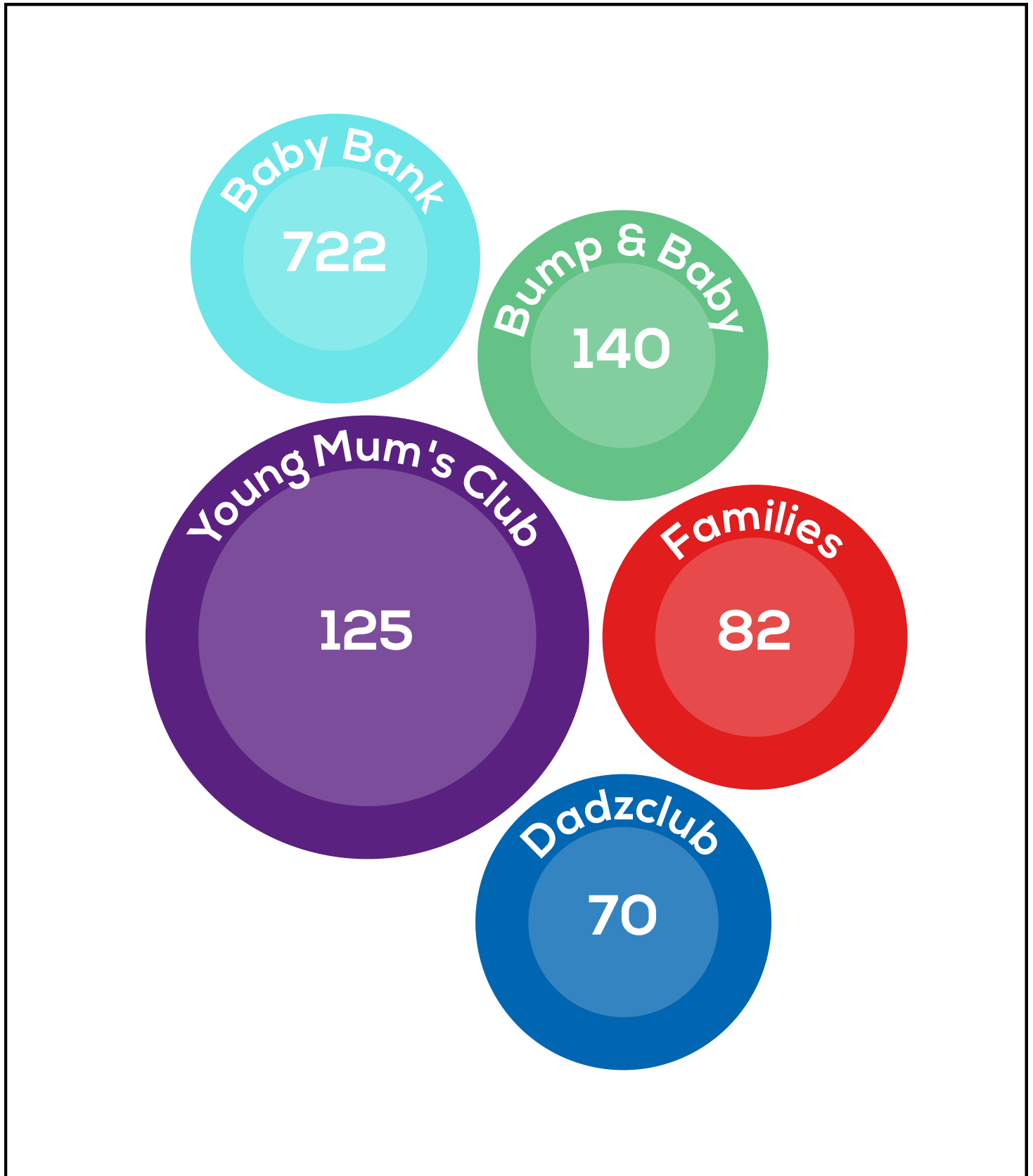
**1500+**

families



# Data by group - a snapshot

No. of unique families and engagements



The size of each group circle reflects the number of engagements per project.  
The numbers demonstrate how many unique families have been supported.



## Message from the CEO

I am delighted to share with you the remarkable journey of growth and impact that The Parenting Network has embarked upon in 2023. As we reflect on the past months, it is clear that this year has been one of tremendous expansion, community engagement, and an ever-increasing demand for our services.

In the heart of Somerstown, we facilitated a bustling Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme, offering families fun-filled activities and the simple pleasure of enjoying a hot meal together. It was a reminder that when families come together, wonderful things happen.

We also ventured into the world of festivals, making our debut appearance at the Victorious Festival. Here, we played a crucial role in ensuring the safety of children by helping them create safety bracelets. It was a joyous celebration, and our involvement demonstrated our commitment to the well-being of the youngest members of our community.

This year marked a significant milestone as we proudly launched Dadzclub in both Southampton and the Isle of Wight. This expansion of our reach is a testament to our dedication to inclusivity and support for all parents.

However, it is important to acknowledge that with our growth has come an ever-increasing demand for support. Our groups have been busier than ever, reflecting the pressing need for the services we provide. Referrals to our Baby Bank have been on the rise month on month, and I'm proud to share that we have now fulfilled over one thousand referrals. This is a testament to the vital role we play in our community, providing essential support to those who need it most.

In response to this increased demand and our commitment to effective volunteer management, we have recently created a new role within The Parenting Network, the Programme Support Coordinator. This dedicated individual is responsible for managing our volunteer opportunities, ensuring that we can continue to provide essential services and support to families in need.

We are also pleased to have launched "Portsmouth Bump and Baby," a program that provides free baby massage, antenatal, and starting solid classes to local families. This initiative demonstrates our commitment to providing comprehensive support for parents and caregivers in our community.

Furthermore, we have been working much more closely with Homestart Portsmouth and The Breastfeeding Network to deliver a more holistic and joined-up network of support across the city. This collaborative effort strengthens our ability to address the diverse needs of families and ensure they receive the comprehensive care they deserve.

# The Parenting NETWORK

As we look ahead with excitement, I am thrilled to announce our plans for the future. We will be expanding our existing programmes to offer even more groups within the Portsmouth Family Hubs, providing vital support to families in our city. Additionally, we are introducing a groundbreaking initiative, "Get Set Go," a school readiness programme designed to prepare children for their educational journey.

With every passing year, The Parenting Network continues to evolve and grow, all thanks to your unwavering support and the dedication of our incredible team. Together, we are making a meaningful impact on the lives of families in Portsmouth, fostering connections, creating opportunities for growth and development, and improving our volunteer coordination to better serve our community.

As we move forward in 2023, we remain steadfast in our commitment to the community we serve. We are excited about the future and the potential it holds for us to make an even greater difference in the lives of families in Portsmouth.

Thank you for your continued support, and let's embrace the journey ahead with open hearts and the knowledge that we are truly making a difference.

Warm regards,

Matt Foster  
CEO, The Parenting Network



# Highlights of 2022/23

## Dadzclub Expansion

This year we have been delighted to see the expansion of Dadzclub across three localities, with sites now running in Portsmouth, Southampton and Isle of Wight. All of the Dadzclub programmes are now run as commissioned services through the local authorities.

Dadzclub now delivers weekly groups in the following Family Hubs:

Buckland, Portsmouth; Blackberry, Southampton; Clovelly, Southampton; Pickles Coppice, Southampton; Cowes, Isle of Wight; Ryde, Isle of Wight.

## International Men's Day 2022

In November 2022, we were delighted to deliver Portsmouth's International Men's Day event at The Guildhall. The event supported the themes of International Men's Day: Making a positive difference to the wellbeing and lives of men and boys; Promoting a positive conversation about men, manhood and masculinity & Raising awareness and/or funds for charities supporting men and boys' wellbeing.

Our Appreciation Awards were a highlight of the evening, celebrating people within our community who have overcome adversity and have made some truly remarkable achievements.

Following the success of the evening, we are pleased to make this an annual event, with International Men's Day 2023 due to be even bigger and better!



*The Parenting Network's International Men's Day event is an excellent opportunity to recognise and celebrate men and boys from diverse backgrounds from across our city who have made outstanding contributions to the local community. Through promoting role models and positive conversations about men and masculinity, this International Men's Day event demonstrates that diversity is one of Portsmouth's strengths.*

*- Stephen Morgan, MP Portsmouth South*

# Highlights of 2022/23

TPN are proud to offer year-round provision, meaning we are always available for families when they need us the most.

We had an extremely busy summer, delivering our regular groups, facilitating the Portsmouth Baby Bank, as well as the HAF programme and a large number of community events.

We were delighted to take part in the Connors Toy Library community picnic; Family Hubs launch events in Paulsgrove & Somerstown; The Big Charity Bash; Victorious Festival & The Summer of Love family day with Homestart.



**TPN** are proud to run our services all year round.

Over the 6 weeks of summer holidays, we delivered...

**86**

Baby Bank bundles

**16**

Bump & Baby Workshops

**8**

Dadzclub groups

**7**

Families groups

**4**

HAF sessions

**12**

Young Mums' Clubs

...and took part in **5** community events!

This totals over **1100** families supported!

## Fun Fact

On Saturday 19th August, the whole TPN team joined forces to deliver five events in one day!



# Highlights of 2022/23

## Victorious Festival, August 2023

Our first year of delivering activities in the Kids Arena was a huge success!

TPN wanted to create an activity that would add value to families visiting the festival, while also reflecting the values of the organisation. Our 'Safety bracelets' provided a fun, creative activity for families to do together, but with parents phone numbers on each bracelet, had an added safety element to protect and safeguard children. Parents were really appreciative of this extra level of care, and it also became a valuable moment to have further discussions with children about safety at large public events.



We look forward to developing our partnership with Victorious Festival over the coming year to support more families in 2024!



Over **800** families took part with TPN over the Victorious weekend.

That's an estimated **1200** children engaged in fun but also, safety awareness raising activities.





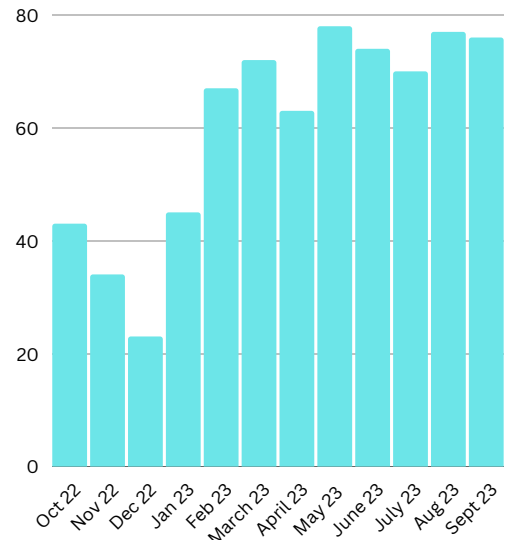
**Total number of Baby Bank referrals for 2022/23: 722**

*Total number of Baby Bank referrals for 2021/22: 276*

The Portsmouth Baby Bank exists to provide basic essentials to families most in need in our city. The Baby Bank can ensure that no child goes without milk (formula), clothing, nappies and toiletries. We also provide equipment to ensure babies and young children are living in a safe environment which is age appropriate for their needs.

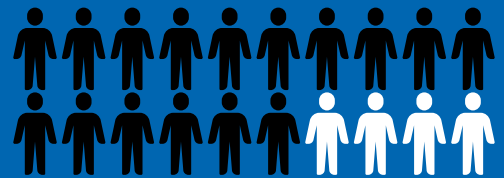
Over the past year our number of referrals has increased dramatically, demonstrating the need locally, particularly in response to the cost of living crisis.

We know that providing support and intervention at an early stage leads to the most effective outcomes. These interventions work to reduce poverty in some of the most deprived areas of the city (our most local schools have 59% children eligible for free school meals). For the parents the Baby Bank exists to reduce the stress and poor mental health that goes with struggling to raise a family in challenging circumstances.

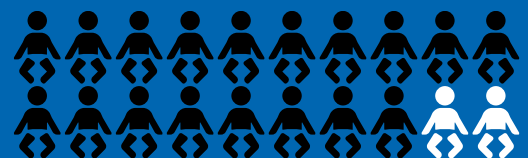


**In a recent survey, August 2023, referring professionals stated that the Baby Bank supported the following outcomes for their clients:**

<b>82%</b> Reduced Stress	<b>76%</b> Improved Infant care	<b>59%</b> Immediate crisis support
<b>65%</b> Improved quality of life	<b>59%</b> Improved physical or mental health	



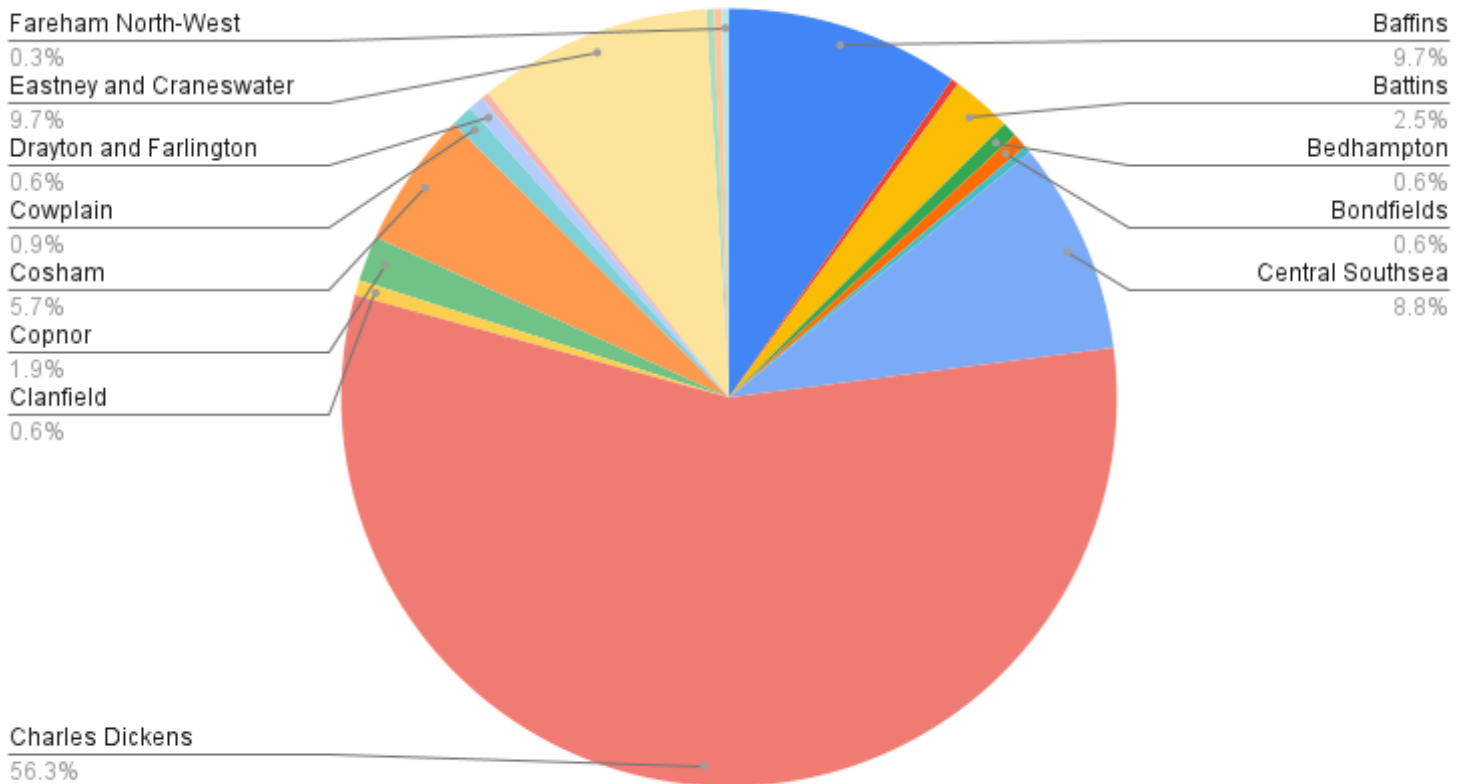
**1173 adults supported**



**1385 children supported**



### Baby Bank Referrals by Ward



**56.3% of all Baby Bank referrals this year have been from families in the Charles Dickens Ward, the ward with the highest rate of deprivation in Portsmouth, where records show 42.9% of people are income deprived.**

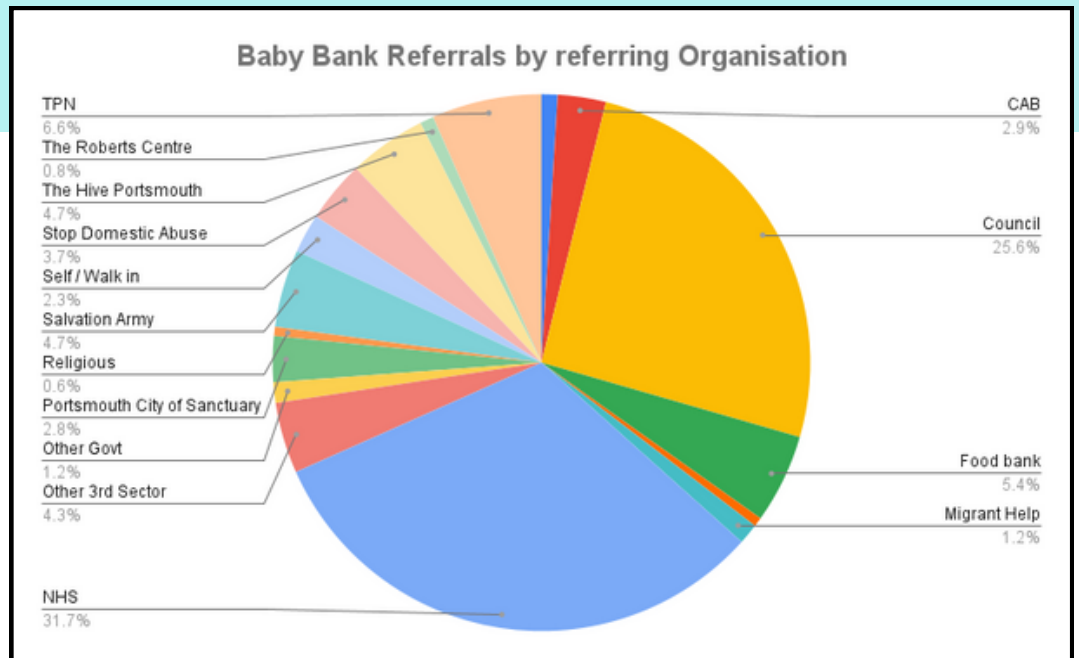
*Lots of the young families I visit are really struggling financially at the moment with the soaring cost of living and feel upset and embarrassed that they are finding it hard to provide for their children. The Baby Bank offers beautiful good quality second hand and new items without explanation or judgement - requests are quickly dealt with and the staff running the service are kind and helpful - Thank you!*

*Family Nurse, Southern Health NHS, 2023*



The Portsmouth Baby Bank provide an outstanding service in the city. With the Portsmouth Baby Bank vulnerable families are given the opportunity to make sure their babies and children have access to basic products, clothing or toys. For many families it is very difficult to afford this, which can impact on their stress levels and mental health.

Domestic Abuse  
Family Worker, 2023



We have a wide range of partner organisations referring to the Baby Bank, with NHS Solent and Portsmouth City Council (Social & Housing) statutory services making up a large proportion of these referrals.



**100%**  
of referring organisations state the Baby Bank provides an 'Excellent' service



Portsmouth Bump & Baby has gone from strength to strength over the past 12 months. The project has grown from just fortnightly baby massage sessions, to weekly massage short courses, starting solids workshops and birth preparation workshops. All the sessions have been fully booked, and are generally well attended, with some families accessing multiple groups. The feedback from families attending has been incredibly positive, particularly with regards to having groups that are in person, and free to access. We are starting to see the impact the continuity we provide is having, with families returning for baby massage having attended a birth workshop, or moving on to Families group when their baby has outgrown baby massage.

- Sarah Lewis, Project Coordinator (Bump & Baby)

*I'm not always in a position to pay for something like this, as I am on universal credit only. I think it's important I have access to this information like everyone else despite my financial situation.*  
-Parent 2023

**Do you feel confident in weaning your child?**

- 11%** Before attending starting solids
- 93%** After attending starting solids



**100%**  
of attendees said they felt more confident about birth having attended the workshop.

**80%**  
of attendees said the baby massage sessions were useful for post natal support.



*The course was brilliant and with it being free, made it accessible. My instructor was extremely informative and friendly. I received lots of good advice and money saving tips. I feel much calmer about weaning my child.*

**55** sessions delivered  
**140** unique families supported  
**411** adult engagements  
**318** child engagements

*The baby & bump prenatal class was so amazing! Not only is it FREE and open to everyone regardless of means or family circumstances but it is also a face to face offering! Sarah is so knowledgeable and takes the time to stop and answer any questions anyone has as she goes! She was prepared with snacks and printed resources allowing us to relax and listen to take it in and feel more confident going home.*





Dadzclub has gone through an extensive expansion over the past year, is now proud to be a commissioned service in Portsmouth, Southampton & IOW.

### **Weekly groups**

Dadzclub offers weekly stay and play groups to encourage family bonding and provide peer support opportunities.

### **Online Support Network**

The closed Dadzclub social media group provides a platform for Dads to talk and share experiences outside of group. We often see this platform used for Dads to reach out for support and guidance from peers and it has become an important tool for social connection. The group currently has 988 members.

### **DadzChat**

Dadzclub has continued to deliver monthly workshops in partnership with Talking Change, to support Dad's mental health. The sessions are informal and encourage Dad's to come together over a cup of tea, to discuss issues and challenges. Through this we are providing direct access to mental health support without barriers, and reducing the stigma of reaching out for help.



47 sessions delivered  
69 unique families supported  
337 adult engagements  
434 child engagements

**92%**

of Dads say  
**Dadzclub supports  
their family bonding**

Having the opportunity to attend Saturday morning sessions with other dads is great for me as both a coordinator and a dad, because I get to connect with other men who are pursuing the goal of improving their relationships with their kids, as well as connect with other like-minded people too. Having only opened on the Isle of Wight in an official capacity for a month, we've already met new people who are expressing their excitement about the idea of the dad-specific sessions and can't wait for more dads to join.

Personally, as Senior Coordinator for Dadzclub, I am really excited about helping motivated and proactive men the opportunity to grow within themselves, and that goes for both coordinators and attendees alike. Being involved in developing training opportunities for coordinators can only help the Dadzclub team become a more impactful force in the community, with the payoff already being seen with feedback from dads who are thanking us for listening and providing the sessions.

It's clear to me how much this dad-specific service is not only needed to support the dads around us but also has the potential to be a truly empowering service to be able to help dads improve in more ways than just being "better dads"

Tom Colwill, Senior Coordinator Dadzclub.



**85%**

**state Dadzclub has supported their socialisation and reduced isolation**

**54%**

**state Dadzclub has improved their confidence**





## Feedback from our Dads...

*Dadzclub has 100% improved me as a father, both me and my son look forward to Dadzclub in equal measure.*

*Dadzclub plays an important role within the city to help Dads socialise with other Dads and their children. Being a father can sometimes be isolating and the group helps to make this easier.*

*Having now been along to a meeting in the evening for myself and another one in the day with my son, I have found them very welcoming. As a single Dad I have struggled to find groups like this with my son as they tend to be focused on Mums midweek. My son will be 3 in August and it had taken me this long to find something like this as not much exists for new Dads.*

*Dadzclub is an amazing, diverse space for father figures to meet and share experiences, or just shoot the breeze over a coffee. Matt will always go above and beyond to make Dadzclub sessions as inclusive as possible for a large range of children.*

*Dadzclub gave me the confidence to take care of our son on my own. Knowing I was going somewhere with other dad's took the pressure off myself. Dadzclub is open and friendly and promotes dad's talking to one another. I've been to groups with all women and no one talked to me at all. I felt quite intimidated.*



**100%**

would recommend Families

**86%**

of Parents surveyed state attending Families makes them feel less isolated or alone

**82** unique families supported  
**42** sessions delivered  
**430** adult engagements  
**416** child engagements

The Families programme has become a constant in our families' routines, Every Saturday the children look forward to coming along, seeing what the craft is for the week and enjoying spending time with their peers.

We have seen friendships grow and blossom over the last year, from the adults to the children who attend. When we get to greet new faces our regulars are so warm and welcoming helping them and their children feel at home with us.

We have families who are going through difficult times and they have spoken to us about how they feel like Families is a much needed "safe place" for them.

Zoe Williams - Families Project Coordinator





*It's great to have something free and fun to do on a weekend. Great for little man to have lots of outdoor space to run around and a lot of different toys to play with. The staff are so friendly and welcoming. I recommend it to everyone.*

*One of best play and stay groups for kids and parents. I would highly recommend it to any one with children.*



**100%**

said it is important that the group remains free to attend.

**100%**

said the healthy snack is an important aspect of the group for their family

**43%**

of parents surveyed said they are facing changes of low income.



Mischief Makers has continued over the past year putting on a series of special interactive cultural events for families.

At Christmas, two Mischief Makers workshops provided families with free 'Santa's Snowglobe' experiences led by Black Hat Theatre. These sessions were extremely popular and we saw a lot of crossover with our other groups, particularly attracting attendees from our Young Mums' Club groups.

We were then delighted to partner with HAF (Holiday Activities with food) to lead a series of Easter and Summer family workshops. Over Easter, we invited three local street artists to come in and work with families to complete large communal artworks. Over the summer, our extended Families workshops with community picnics were incredibly popular. Families really appreciated having lunch built into these sessions and we have recognised that our Families group has diversified and attracted new families as a result of the HAF sessions.

**100%** of families attending our Easter holiday sessions said it was fun & enjoyable!



**9** sessions delivered  
**163** adult engagements  
**233** child engagements





Young Mums' Club is growing from strength to strength this year. We have seen a significant and sustained rise in our numbers accessing groups which is wonderful! It means we are now having to cap our bookings and run waiting lists for groups, so we are eager and excited to look at how we can expand our offering to ensure all the families that want to engage with our services can.

This time last year our Monday group was averaging 4-5 mums on a good week but now runs with at least 10, which is wonderful. We continue to engage with lots of mums from the local hostels, which is really important work to support them in being the best parents they can be.

Tamsin from Talking Change continues to be an ongoing presence in our groups every few months, which is sending a powerful message of normalising the perinatal mental health pathway and accessing of their support services. It is also really valuable to have the expertise of Sarah Lewis (TPN) in our umbrella, being able to offer our mums targeted antenatal support and accessing her baby massage and weaning workshops.

- Kelly Livingstone, Project Coordinator YMC



say that YMC has helped them feel less isolated.



say that YMC has helped them feel more confident in their parenting.



say that YMC has supported their mental health.

**95%**

love the free healthy snacks for their children

**100%**  
would recommend Young Mums' Club





### Case Study

Project Coordinator, Kelly, received an email referral from a Family Nurse requesting to make contact with a mum to discuss YMC and encourage attendance, due to some acknowledged anxiety around attending groups. Kelly established text communication and then spoke on the phone with this mum, which resulted in her successfully attending group the following day. At this particular group the Lead Perinatal Therapist from Talking Change was also present to provide additional mental health support. After an initial chat with Kelly, the mum had a 1-to-1 session with the therapist and fed back that she felt a bit better about accessing support from them too. She has continued to attend YMC since.

**87** sessions delivered  
**125** unique families supported  
**1084** adult engagements  
**1349** child engagements

### Of the challenges currently faced by our group members, they reported:

- 63% low income
- 58% poor mental health
- 53% low confidence
- 47% low self esteem
- 37% lack of support/family network
- 26% stigma around being a young mum
- 16% homelessness/unstable living situation





*I've been coming since my daughter was 4 weeks old, at first I was pretty apprehensive, I wasn't sure if it was something I'd like, but I went anyway and I love it. I've met so many girls my age with babies and it's nice to be able to relate and ask anything that's bothering me. The groups have really brought me out my shell, the staff are friendly and helpful and nothing is ever too much for them. I always leave with a smile on my face and have definitely met some friends for life.*



*Young Mums' Club is a wonderful way to meet other mums and children. It definitely gets us out the house and it's twice a week which is fantastic. Kelly and Sarah are so lovely and passionate about the club, you feel so welcomed there.*

*I went to one of the ladies seeking advice on my low mental health and they directed me to support that I could get and continued to checkup on me and support me whilst they knew I was struggling.*



## The Team 2022/23

**Matt Foster**, Founder & CEO

**April Gilbert**, Chief Operating Officer & Designated  
Safeguarding Lead

**Ian Reedy**, Finance Manager

**Vicky Chapter**, Fundraising Manager

**Rachel Hance**, Programme Coordinator  
Baby Bank

**Zoe Williams**, Programme Support Coordinator

**Tom Colwill**, Senior Coordinator Dadzclub

**Sarah Lewis**, Programme Coordinator Bump & Baby

**Kelly Livingstone**, Programme Coordinator - YMC

**Lucy Page**, Programme Coordinator Get, Set, Go

**Terri Canning**, Programme Coordinator Families

**Rob Illife**, Programme Coordinator Dadzclub

**Ian Simpson**, Programme Worker Dadzclub

**Pete Harris**, Programme Worker Dadzclub

**Nicola Drummond**, Project Worker - YMC

**Kate Pavitt**, Saturday Support Worker

**Danny Fox**, Project Worker - Dadzclub



*Our project team delivering a special  
end of summer event at our YMC  
group.*



*The TPN Management team delivering an offsite  
event in August 2023.*

### **Fun Fact**

The TPN team has gone  
from 7 to 17 staff  
members in the last  
year!



# The Parenting NETWORK

## What Next?

It's been an incredible year of growth and development for TPN, but it's just the beginning for us. We have been working diligently to refine our processes, streamline all of our provisions and put governance in place to make sure that we operate safely and effectively. We have invested heavily in our team development and support; strengthening our infrastructure for growth.

As we move into 2024 we already have many exciting developments in place for expansion and sustainability. We will continue to listen and respond to our community so that we can meet their needs.

We feel privileged to serve our community and we are committed to pushing harder than ever to expand support in a time when people need it more than ever.

- April Gilbert, COO

Over the next year we will be continuing our work, with the focus on the following:

- Making our transition from CIC to CIO to enable us to deliver more work which meets the needs of our community, with the structures in place to support our charitable aims
- Exploring new partnerships with statutory and third sector services, including exciting new work with Homestart Portsmouth & The Breastfeeding Network.
- Development & expansion of the Portsmouth Baby Bank.
- The development of our volunteer programme, to support our work and provide skills and training opportunities
- The commencement of new programmes of activities, in particular Get, Set, Go! and Embrace.



## New Projects

We are delighted to be adding two new projects to our core programme in 2023/24.

### Get Set Go

School readiness is the crucial gauge of a child's preparedness to excel in school, encompassing cognitive, social, and emotional readiness. Our Get Set Go! programme draws on the extensive insights and expertise of the PEEP Learning Together Programme. It comprises five weekly session blocks and ad-hoc groups, designed to empower families in nurturing their children, ensuring they thrive and excel in their school preparations.

Portsmouth currently faces a pressing challenge, as it lags below the national average in terms of school readiness. Moreover, it holds the lowest percentage of children achieving a good level of development in the entire South East region.

### Embrace

Embrace is an innovative project rooted in personal experiences of managing the effects of childhood trauma and dysfunction. In collaboration with PARCS, we are committed to offering weekly peer support groups for individuals aged 16-25 who are keen to understand how their early experiences may have influenced them and wish to discover strategies to overcome any associated challenges. Our platform provides a non-judgmental and non-diagnostic space to delve into well-being and foster connections.



**If you would like to contact us about our work, we'd love to hear from you!**

[www.theparentingnetwork.co.uk](http://www.theparentingnetwork.co.uk)

[info@theparentingnetwork.co.uk](mailto:info@theparentingnetwork.co.uk)

02393 870198

# The Parenting NETWORK

## With thanks to our funders & supporters:

The National Lottery Community Fund

The Blagrove Trust

NHS Hampshire & Isle of Wight ICB

Isle of Wight Council

Southampton City Council

The Henry Smith Charity

The Trusthouse Charitable Foundation

Active Communities

Comic Relief Community Fund &

Groundwork UK

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Community Foundation

The Woodward Trust

