

## PEN PICTURE: Fife Gingerbread: Fife Teen Parent Project The Power of Positive Relationships

**The Fife Teen Parent Project (FTPP) works with vulnerable and hard to reach families. Key to meeting the needs of the young families is the development of a professional trusting and non-judgemental relationship, that supports and nurtures choices and challenges inequalities.**

The approach used by support workers is a strength-based approach, workers understand the vulnerability of this particular group in our communities, the likelihood of them being affected by the social determinates that lead to poor health and social outcomes. The workers are empathetic and listen to parents' wishes and fears, they work together to create a bespoke plan of action that meets each family's needs and highlights the positives.

Once the relationship is established and support around finances, housing and basic resources are in place, the families will move into parenting groups, such as Mellow Parenting, and social, parent and child groups to build peer support and friendships. Evidence tells us that babies born into teen-parent families without a positive support network, are vulnerable and highly at risk of achieving poor outcomes and that the young parents need help to understand their own needs and those of their child or children. Issues arise because of a combined mix of childhood trauma, poorly learned parenting skills, and the competing brain of a teenager and the needs of being a parent.

As the parents confidence and ability to parent their child grows, the focus shifts to explore the parents' aspirations for their future and their needs for learning and development. Young parents frequently tell us of the discrimination they experience in their daily lives. They do not wish to be reliant on benefits, but want to support their family and become a contributor in their community. When they are ready, young parents have the opportunity to come together and form an advisory group for the project, the Teen Parent

*"Coming along to groups, I don't feel so alone"*

- New Mum

*"I know that meeting with my support worker is a safe to open up and talk about anything"*

- Young parent fleeing domestic abuse

*"Time without your child doing activities just for you make you appreciate them more"*

- Parent participating in a Mellow Mum's Programme



Forum, this gives them a platform and a voice, so they can join in conversations and consultations with policy makers. This further develops self-esteem and identity, supporting parents into basic education, college and eventually into work.

*“Coming along to the Fife Teen Parent Project group is the best thing I’ve ever done”*

- Parent at toddler group



- Young parents and babies get together and attend parenting groups

More about Fife Gingerbread: <https://www.fifegingerbread.org.uk/>