



First for Mums and Dads

First for Mums and Dads is an established project delivered by YMCA North Staffordshire Family Work to support women and men who have had one or more children permanently removed from their care.

The project has been successfully delivered since 2014 and has recently receiving further funding from Stoke on Trent Local Authority to ensure work can continue for a further 12 months.

The project will work with **27** women and men over this time; Supporting them in an individual and holistic way to avoid further care proceedings from happening and to break the cycle of repeated pregnancies and removals. **First for Mums and Dads** supports families who are currently engaged in child protection proceedings as well as families where care proceedings have concluded.

During care proceedings many different services are often involved with a family offering a variety of support. However, once the decision has been made to remove a child parents are often left with little or no support at a time when they are most vulnerable and experiencing the cycle of grief, loss and bereavement. This is a crucial point at which the project can really help, engaging individuals or couples in an intensive package of support to help create a more positive outlook.

First for Mums and Dads aims to support both men and women to address:

- The issues which have led to care proceedings taking place
- Tackle previous traumas and complex barriers faced in everyday life

The project hopes to encourage individuals to reflect on their previous actions and behaviour and to develop new skills and coping mechanisms which may one day allow them to keep a child in their care and open a pathway to other life opportunities such as employment, volunteering or education.

The project has, over the last two years, worked with a number of women whose life experiences have contributed to this 'cycle'. These factors are:

- Learning disability
- Substance misuse
- Mental health
- Unhealthy relationships and domestic violence

All of those engaged in the project so far have experienced some form of "trauma" during their lives with the vast majority spending periods of time in the care system themselves.

Each package of care is tailored to the individual to address the issues which are relevant to them at that period in their life. The project works intensely over a lengthy period of time, (one to two years) with the intention of developing a positive and honest working relationship whilst tackling the following issues;

- **Health, Sexual Health and Contraception Support**
 - All women are encouraged to consider long-acting reversible contraceptives to give them a 'break' from pregnancy and allow them enough time to make long term changes in their own lives. Men are also encouraged to take responsibility for contraception and sexual health
 - Support to understand 'healthy relationships' and what is acceptable and unacceptable both in sexual relationships and friendships
 - Self-esteem and confidence courses provided by the "1000 lives" organization

- Health support including GP and dental registration, mental health, sexual health etc.
- **Advocacy**
 - Support to attend meetings, appointments and access appropriate services to suit their individual needs
 - Support during child protection proceedings; working collaboratively alongside Social Services
- **Parenting and Home Management**
 - Parenting support and guidance where appropriate including group work and practical demonstrations
 - Individual and home management support including basic life skills, cleaning, routine, bills, cooking etc.
 - Housing related support and accommodation if appropriate through the YMCA
- **Education and Employment**
 - Sparking interest and passion in other areas such as hobbies, volunteering, training, education, employment etc.
 - Budgeting support and education around finances and debt

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SUPPORT & ADVICE

ACCOMMODATION

FAMILY WORK

HEALTH & WELLBEING

TRAINING & EDUCATION