



FAMILY MATTERS YORK

**ANNUAL REPORT
2025-26**

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INTRODUCTION

Family Matters York aims to strengthen family relationships. We offer a range of parenting courses alongside a mentoring service and events for couples. Through each of these services we encourage people to invest time in their most precious relationships.

This annual report provides information about what we celebrated, delivered and achieved from April 2025 to March 2026.

Over this period, we once again had the privilege of supporting over 200 families in York, thanks to the generous financial backing of our donors and funders including the National Lottery Community Fund, York Foodbank, Yorkshire Housing, York Community Fund, the Albert Hunt Trust, the Whitwham Family Charitable Foundation, Two Ridings Community Foundation, The Anchor Foundation, the Sylvia & Colin Shepherd Charitable Trust and York Common Good Trust.

25 YEARS OF FAMILY MATTERS YORK!



On Saturday 7 March 2026, we celebrated 25 years of supporting local families with a ceilidh at the Gateway Centre in Acomb.

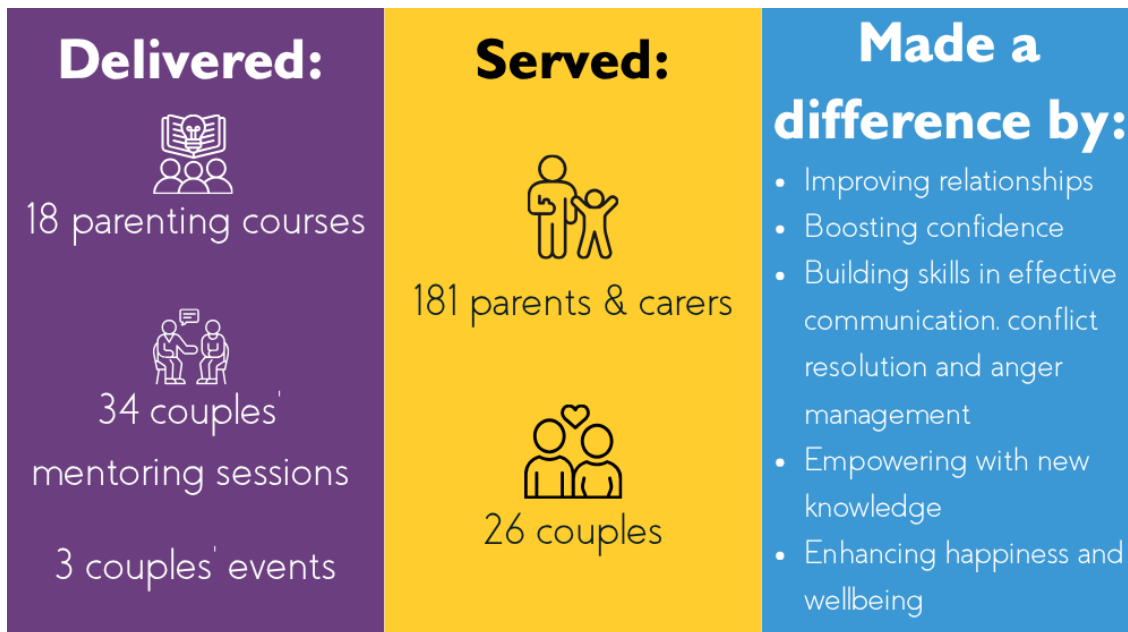
It was a joyous community celebration, bringing together families of all shapes and sizes for dancing, good conversation and plenty of cake! We also raised over £880 to support our ongoing work across York and the surrounding area.



It was wonderful to see so many people who had played a part in building the charity and who care so deeply about nurturing family relationships.

Here's to the next 25 years!

SUMMARY OF SUPPORT DELIVERED IN 2025-26



From April 2025 to March 2026 we offered 18 parenting courses, attended by a total of 181 parents and carers. We have continued to work hard to meet local parents' needs for support. As a result, we have expanded the range of courses offered from nine to ten with a new course offering support for parents of children with ADHD.





FAMILY MATTERS YORK

Relationship Support

This year we have continued to offer *Reconnect*, our couple-to-couple mentoring programme, which is run over five or six sessions and is aimed at committed couples who are experiencing challenges or who feel disconnected. Six couples started this programme with us this year.

In the autumn of 2025, we launched our new *Strong Foundations* mentoring programme, aimed at couples who are looking to get their relationship off to the best start. It is particularly suitable for couples who are engaged to be married, or planning a civil partnership, or are remarrying or repartnering, and are committing to a future together. Up until the end of March 2026, one couple completed this programme and gave very positive feedback:



Strong Foundations



— “

It's a wonderful series of sessions that make you think about your relationship in depth.

— ” —

We have also run three *Time Out for Couples* events in the period April 2025 – March 2026. These one-off events are an alternative, less intensive, option to our peer mentoring programmes and are aimed at any couple wanting to enrich their relationship. Nineteen couples attended the three *Time Out for Couples* events which focused on collaboration, commitment and cherishing each other.

HOW WE'VE WORKED WITH OTHERS

In addition to our established collaborations with local schools, churches and voluntary sector organisations, this year we've developed two fruitful partnerships with York Family Learning and the Good Mental Health Project.

York Family Learning (YFL), part of the City of York Council, provides courses for parents and carers to help them support their child's learning and give them the best start in life. We have supplemented their provision by offering our *Handling Anger in the Family* course and our specialist courses aimed at parents of children with ADHD or autism. With venue, childcare and tutor support from YFL, we have benefited by reaching and supporting new families.



YORK
Learning
Family Learning

The Good Mental Health Project (GMHP) – an initiative from York CVS – actively promotes positive mental health by raising awareness, reducing stigma and helping people feel confident to look after their own wellbeing. This year the GMHP has helped us shine a light on the importance of wellbeing in family relationships by running a session on parental wellbeing as part of our *A Mind of Their Own* parent support course, and a wellbeing workshop for couples. Both were very well received by attendees and we are working with GMHP to ensure these initiatives become a permanent part of our service offer.

— “ —

[The GMHP] wellbeing session was extremely informative and helpful – we always look after ourselves last! (Parent)

— ” —

The Good Mental Health Project

THE DIFFERENCES WE’VE MADE

Each year we are thrilled to share the many ways we have made an impact on families. Sometimes these impacts are incremental, such as parents feeling more confident setting boundaries, or couples being more intentional about showing affection. However, our impact can also be transformational, with parents shifting mindset to pause and think rather than react, or couples avoiding total relationship breakdown.

We have used feedback from six couples who completed *Reconnect* and 97 parents who attended courses and completed surveys and/or interviews, to show our impact in the following areas:

- the overall quality or strength of relationships;
- confidence;
- understanding a child’s/partner’s needs;
- communication;
- ability to handle conflict;
- understanding and managing anger;
- wellbeing.

Improving and strengthening relationships

Parent-child relationship



71% of parents who had felt there was room for improvement (when starting the FMY course) perceived that their relationship with their child had strengthened by the end of the course.

Family life

88% of parents said that their family life had changed for the better since attending an FMY course.

More understanding of ADHD gives me better capacity to cope with the day to day challenges, meaning less stress, less meltdowns and stronger relationships with my children.
(Parent)

Couple relationship



100% of people who attended Reconnect and completed the evaluation identified an improvement in at least one aspect of their relationship by the end of the programme.

I feel it has given us the chance to reflect on our behaviours and what could be improved... [It has given] us perspective that our challenges are more common than I thought and can be resolved in a positive way. (Couple)

Improving confidence

Confidence



94% of parents who initially had low confidence in their parenting felt it had been boosted by attending an FMY course.



It made me feel more confident as a parent. (Parent)

I just feel a bit more sure that I'm actually doing a goodish job, plus I now have a few more tools in my pocket. (Parent)

Understanding and meeting needs

Understanding needs - Couples



11 out of 12 of those completing the Reconnect programme felt that their partner was now better at making them feel loved compared to when they started the programme.



Understanding needs - Parents

71% of parents who took part in the 'Teen Years', 'Primary Years' or 'Dads' courses rated their understanding of their child's emotional or changing needs more highly once they had completed the course.

I feel more confident in playing the part of 'Dad' and see that identifying their needs is a part of being what they need me to be.
(Parent)

It has helped us to identify our own emotional needs and highlight each other. It has also identified that we both have different love languages and how to respond to these. (Couple)

Increasing skills – effective communication

Effective communication between partners

75% of people
felt that
communication
with their partner
had improved

— “ —
Communication [has improved the most] - in many ways and across many activities, the use of language and how to listen to [my partner] by engaging is the most improved.
(Couple)

I definitely feel that we are better at conflict communication and that my partner has given me more space to express myself which has given us opportunities for better discussion.
(Couple)

Increasing skills – resolving conflict

— “ —
The Reconnect sessions have helped us to understand each other better and to resolve conflict more efficiently.
(Couple)

[The work in Reconnect on] unhelpful responses to conflict helped me to see that we both have equally unhelpful responses and [we need to] think about how we navigate this together. (Couple)

Resolving conflict between partners

75% of people
reported improved
skills in resolving
conflict with their
partner

— ” —

Understanding and managing anger

Parents who attended 'Handling Anger in the Family' courses.

79% felt their understanding of their **own** anger had improved

96% said their understanding of their **child's** anger had improved

63% of parents were managing their **own** anger better by the end of the course

88% felt they were more able to help their **child** manage their anger by the end of the course

[The parenting course] has improved how I deal with conflict and anger. (Parent)

We have used 'I' statements and catch each other when we are starting to escalate and tag team to get time out so the other can support. (Parent)

I now know how to manage my anger and have found out about some very important techniques, how to step back. (Parent)

I now understand why I get angry so I can control it better. (Parent)

Improving wellbeing

Two-thirds of parents who completed the ADHD course...



...believed their ability to meet their child's emotional needs had improved by the end of the course.



Three-quarters of parents who completed the Teen Years course...



...had a better idea of how to handle teen emotions and wellbeing by the end of the course.



71% of parents who completed the A Mind of Their Own course...



...felt more able to help their child manage strong emotions by the end of the course.

— “ —

I have managed to support my daughter with her emotions which has also had a positive effect on my emotions. (Parent)

I feel more confident in how to manage big emotions and help support anxiety. (Parent)

Being more aware of how we're modelling as parents on all aspects of life, including dealing with stressful situations, has been useful as we're aware of how much the kids pick up on our emotions. (Parent)

This course has provided us as a family with more resources/ideas for our emotional toolbox! Lots of helpful tips/life experience. Also helped us feel less alone in the parenting journey. (Parent)

The course has improved my understanding of emotions and thought processes, and ways of supporting my son, and listening to him too. (Parent)

We're thinking much more about talking together, discussing feelings and thinking about emotions and mental health. (Parent)

— ” —

Case studies

Case studies provide real-life examples of why families need support for their relationships and differences we can make. As shown in the cases below, the impact we make is often in prompting people to stop and think and to establish new habits that nurture their relationships.

Parent case study

With her husband often working away, and no nearby family support, T carries the weight of family responsibilities and parenting. Her daughter is entering the pre-teen years, and the changes and challenges this is bringing meant T was feeling ‘lost as a mum’. She felt guilty about not spending enough time with her daughter and wanting to take more time out for herself. The isolation and mental load were exhausting at times. Although there was no stand-out problem to fix, she ‘really wanted to be a better mum’.

T attended our Handling Anger in the Family and Parenting in the Primary Years courses after seeing a flyer at her daughter’s school. She valued the courses for providing time for herself – “it was like weekly therapy” – and to meet with fellow parents. This ‘safe space’ to hear from others helped her realise she is not alone with parenting struggles and encouraged her to see things from different perspectives.

Continued on the next page.

Parent case study continued:

The way T parents has changed in small but significant ways. She now pauses to think about the best way to respond to her daughter and to see it from her point of view. She realises she can't be 'perfect' and resolve all problems straight away and, as a result, feels more calm at home. Having been encouraged by the courses to look after her personal wellbeing, she is now taking more time for herself. "Both of the courses were amazing because they showed your weakness, but they also showed how to how to manage it and how to be better while remembering that you're a human being." She has recommended FMY courses to other parents: "because it's life changing and we all need some kind of guidance."

Couple case study

D and E chose to start the Reconnect programme because they were concerned about the quality of their relationship and wanted to stop things getting worse. There was tension, conflict and a lack of emotional and physical connection. At that time, they felt their biggest problems centred on not feeling loved, not being listened to, and not handling conflict well. Key, however, was that both were committed to each other and hopeful their relationship could improve.

At the end of six Reconnect sessions with their Support Couple, both D and E felt their relationship had improved, particularly around understanding each others' needs for affection and identifying unhelpful responses to conflict. The trajectory of their relationship had changed, though there was still work to do: "I feel like using the tools we have been given [things] will improve, but I haven't yet had enough situations to really improve my ability even though I understand much better how to do this."

Overall, Reconnect left them more positive about their relationship and future together: "It has given me hope that we can change things and that there is still a huge amount of love between us. It has given me reassurance that it is quite normal for relationships to flux but that there are tools we can use to navigate challenges."

Crucial in this turnaround was benefitting from the mentorship of another couple who have seen challenges themselves: "It has helped to see another 'real life' couple who have been through similar experiences and learn from their guidance. Also it helped to give us perspective that our challenges are more common than I thought and can be resolved within a positive way."

THE QUALITY OF OUR SERVICE PROVISION

We ask all service users to give feedback about the quality of the support received. The results across the board – from our parenting courses, couples mentoring and our *Time Out for Couples* events – were outstanding!

100%

...of parents felt the course facilitators had been welcoming, friendly and knowledgeable.

100%

...of parents found the course content had been helpful.

98%

...of parents agreed or strongly agreed that the course content had met their needs.

100%

...of parents said they would recommend FMY parenting courses to others or had already done so.

97%

...of couples who were asked rated their experience of FMY as excellent or good!

100%

...of TOFC couples felt they had been offered helpful practical tips to try at home.

94%

...of TOFC couples agreed the event had been relevant to their relationship.

97%

...of TOFC couples felt the event had provided encouragement for their relationship.

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED AND THE CHANGES WE'RE MAKING

This year has seen some significant developments, with the launch of our new mentoring programme for couples – *Strong Foundations* – and our collaborations with York Family Learning and The Good Mental Health Project.

In addition, we've been working behind the scenes to maximise the accessibility and inclusivity of our services. We've worked with a specialist neurodiversity coach, Anita Hempenius, to make sure our couples' support encompasses a broader range of perspectives and needs. Her training to staff and volunteers was insightful and engaging and will help us to help more neurodiverse people in

the future. We've also added new short-course versions of some of our most popular parenting support courses and piloted them on a Saturday morning following feedback about parent availability. We continue to review what we deliver and how to make sure our support meets local families' needs.

OUR YEAR AS A CIVIC CHARITY

For the 12 months from May 2025, we were delighted to have been chosen by the Lord Mayor, Martin Rowley BEM, and the Sheriff of York, Paul Doughty, to be one of three civic charities.

We took part in a number of fundraising events, often ably supported by the Town Crier Ben Fry, ranging from a medieval tradition in the annual Sheriff's Assize of Ale to racing electronic pigs!! And lots more in between! We have had a lot of fun, made new connections, and have undoubtedly raised our profile around the city as well as raised much-needed funds for our work. Thank you to Martin Rowley, Paul Doughty and Stuart Jarman for their help to make it a memorable and successful year!



WHAT WE'VE SPENT THIS YEAR

Below is a summary of our income and expenditure in 2025-26.

Income		Expenditure	
Grants	£45,000	Staff costs	£46,750
Regular gifts	£5,585	Training & recruitment	£310
One-off donations – individuals	£762	Staff and volunteer expenses	£153
One-off donations – major donors	£5,408	Project costs	£1,655
Fundraising	£2,061	Overheads	£3,486
Funded course	£390	Professional fees	£970
Other	£293	Other	869
Total	£59,499	Total	£54,193

In 2026-27, we are once again working hard to raise funds from a diverse range of sources. We rely on grants and donations and hope you will be able to continue supporting us in any way you can.

More information about how you can get involved with FMY, including becoming a financial supporter, is available on our website: fmy.org.uk/get-involved/

THE YEAR AHEAD

Earlier this year we were successful in a bid for funding from the Organisational Development Fund, run by Two Ridings Community Foundation. The funding will support a new project to improve our visibility among, and engagement with, local families and potential financial backers. We are excited to be working with a marketing and communications professional who will establish a sustainable strategy and tools to guide and assist the team. The aim is that this project will instigate a step change in our approach to marketing and communications, with positive impacts on service uptake and financial resilience.

AND FINALLY...



We are enormously thankful to all who have supported us this year.

Thank you to our volunteers! We have a dedicated team of volunteers who work directly with parents/carers or couples, without whom we could not provide support to so many families. Their skills and time have been significant in supporting people to make positive changes. We have also benefitted enormously from volunteers who have supported us administratively, with IT skills, or with our social media presence.

Thank you to our financial supporters! Without your generosity we would simply be unable to keep going. Thank you for enabling us to keep making a difference to York families.

Thank you to all who support us in countless other ways, such as providing venues, signposting families, and generally encouraging us!

If you do not currently support us financially, but would like to give a one-off or regular donation, please get in touch, or donate through our website:

<https://fmy.org.uk/donate/> or scan



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www.fmy.org.uk