

2023

Impact Report

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Image: A mum with her Kids Matter certificate

A great year, but much still to do...

The past year has been a good year of fruitful growth for Kids Matter. Our team has grown, we have trained more facilitators, run more groups and invested a lot of time in building diverse partnerships because when we work together, our impact is greater.

We now have three effective parenting programmes that equip mums, dads and carers in different contexts with the tools to build strong families, and since starting out seven years ago, we have reached over 4,000 children. Whilst this is a big milestone, we know that there is so much more to do.

Although inflation is easing, the damage done by the cost of living crisis is significant with millions of families impacted by job loss and debt, and many skipping meals to try and cope with higher prices. With more families pushed into poverty-related stress, the risk of negative impact on children has increased. The Centre for Social Justice's "Two Nations" report on the state of poverty in the UK reveals a widening gap between those who can get by and those stuck at the bottom. Family breakdown is identified as a root cause of various societal issues, affecting the poorest families the hardest. Statistics emphasise the impact on children, with disrupted attachment, developmental delays, poor educational outcomes and increased vulnerability to mental health issues.

The report paints a distressing picture of a society grappling with entrenched poverty, exacerbated by the effects of the pandemic.

It is important to understand the landscape of our society so that we can take seriously the need for urgent action. If parents and carers are well-supported and equipped to manage when things are challenging, they will be more resilient and more able to build strong relationships with their children. This in turn has a positive effect on a child's mental and physical wellbeing, and ability to have financial stability in adulthood.

Our evidence-informed programmes are free, effective, community-driven and meet families where they are at, with the aim of giving every child in need the chance to thrive in life.

With the invaluable support of Family Champions, donors, partners, facilitators, trustees and friends we will continue to come alongside families in 2024 which promises to be busy; with lots of new and exciting things planned, as we seek to reach even more children. Thank you so much.



A stylized, handwritten signature in dark blue ink, appearing to read 'Eli'.

Dr Eli Gardner, Clinical Psychologist
Co-founder & Executive Director of Kids Matter

Who we are

Our vision is simple. We want to **see every child in need raised in a strong family**. Parenting is hard, and can often be even harder for mums, dads and carers who are facing disadvantages. Our charity was born out of a desire to see children to thrive.

What we do

We provide free-of-charge community-based parenting programmes, with a crèche, that run in the heart of communities facing disadvantage across the UK, or in prisons. Our trained peer facilitators guide small groups of 6-8 parents through weekly two-hour sessions for six weeks, helping them to gain key parenting skills and develop new friendships and support networks.

Why we do it

To equip parents and carers with the competence and confidence to build strong relationships with their children, enabling them to thrive despite their circumstances.

Babies Matter

Supporting both expectant parents and those with new babies, Babies Matter aims to help parents and carers to lay a firm foundation for their family.

Kids Matter in the community

Our programme for mums, dads and carers of children aged 1-10, equipping them with the tools to build strong relationships giving every child in need the chance to thrive in life.

Kids Matter in Prisons

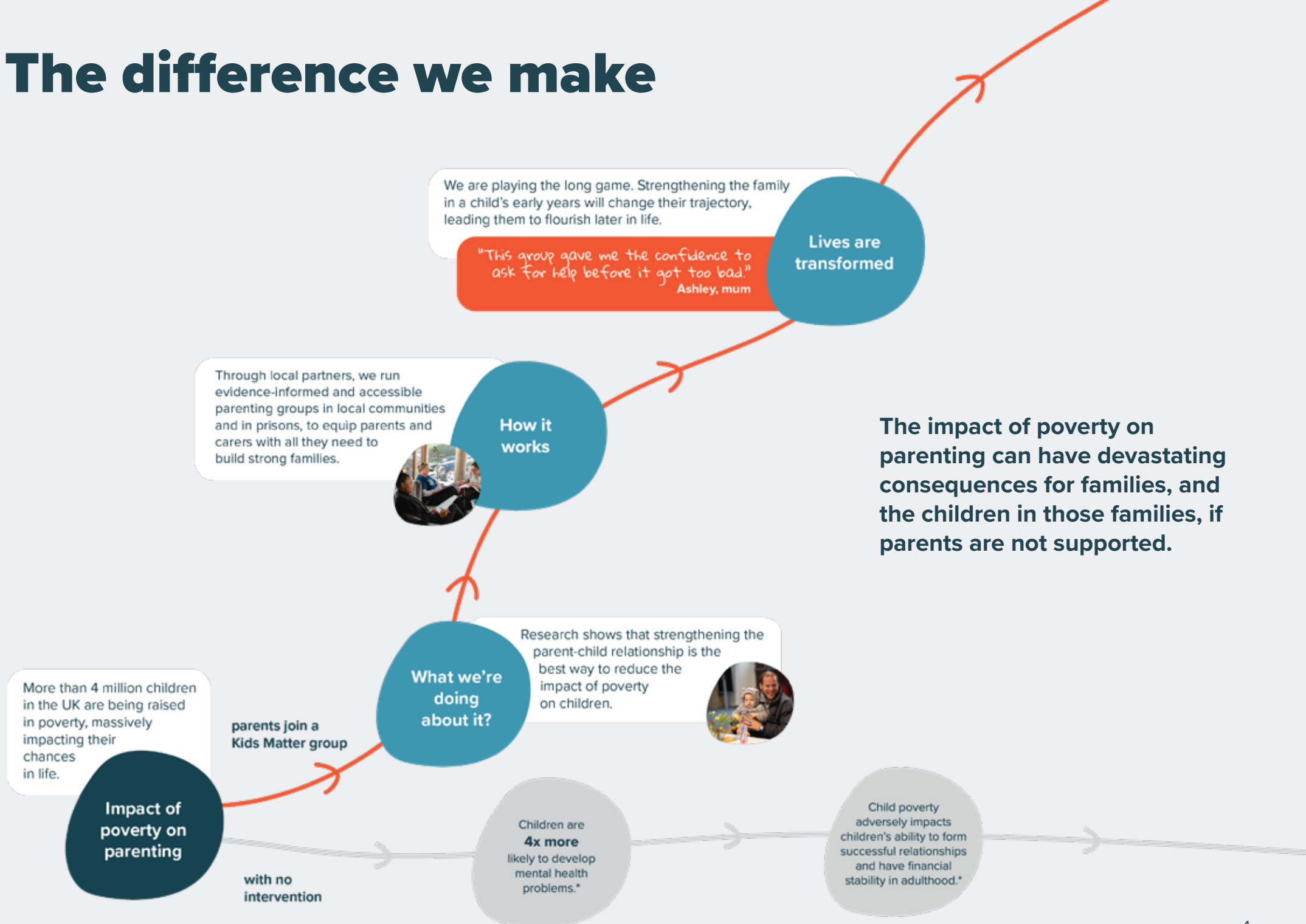
Supporting parents by strengthening their connection with their children and increasing understanding of what children need to thrive, whilst also helping to break the cycle of reoffending.



"Babies Matter helped me with the whole parenting team aspect of things. The more we talked about it the more I realised that I really needed to work on my relationship with my partner, and that we were a team for Kobi."

Jasmin, Mum

The difference we make



2023 in numbers

78 programmes run

(352 in total)

892 children impacted

(4,203 in total)

432 parents reached

(1,933 in total)

"My child says to me 'Mum, you seem more relaxed now you did that thing in school [Kids Matter] and that makes me not feel as stressed because you are relaxed'."

Jane, Mum



Stacey's story

“

I'm Stacey, a single parent to a 6-year-old and a 14-year-old. Before I completed the Kids Matter programme I was really struggling with parenting and my mental health. I felt very alone and had terrible mum guilt. I was emotional and shouted a lot. I felt like I was failing my children.

I've never been one to go to groups, especially groups where I don't know anyone, but I knew that my family home life was at breaking point. I knew something had to change and that I was the only person who could make that change, so I joined a Kids Matter group.

Talking to other parents who have gone through the same traumas as me has made me realise that I was never alone. I've made some friends and swapped parenting tips and ideas, and it's really changed my home life for the better.

There's a lot less shouting and screaming; we now have set family days once a week and we have also introduced a "sharing book" so if my children want to express how they're feeling but feel like they can't talk to me, then they can write it in the book. Our family home is now filled with love, hugs, happy times, routine, and rules.

I've also attended Kids Matter several times and am now part of the programme as a group helper.

”



Highlights of 2023

There have been so many great moments over the year, from the launch of new programmes and meaningful partnerships, to symbolic events, dynamic learning experiences, and adjustments within the team.

While relishing significant occasions is gratifying, it is the smaller, everyday moments (encouraging stories from facilitators and parents, positive team culture, and relational wins) that continually motivate us in our pursuit to alleviate the impact of poverty in our communities.

Working in partnership

United by a vision to reduce the impact of poverty on children, we are pleased to be partnering with Christians Against Poverty (CAP), training 19 churches enabling the Life Skills Managers to offer a two-part Kids Matter parenting session to mums, dads and carers.



Babies Matter launch

We officially launched Babies Matter, our 6-week parenting programme for new and expectant parents facing disadvantages.

The launch event was well attended by Kids Matter partners, facilitators and friends as well as community members interested in supporting young families in their respective contexts.



Taking EDI seriously

The whole team took part in equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) training to grow in diversity across every aspect of our work. This is something that we are passionate about and is a key focus for us as we strive to reflect the communities impacted by our programmes.

Big strides forwards with our prison work

After the restrictions Covid-19 placed on prison administration and outside access, Kids Matter is back in a big way!

In 2023, we ran workshops in London's HMP Pentonville and Brixton prisons, and with a new full-time prison facilitator on team, we are working hard to increase our impact through exciting new partnerships and more workshops.



Our new online programme

This year, we have partnered with Safe Families for the launch of an online version of our community programme.

Kids Matter ran online during the pandemic and we have since developed and refined our online sessions, which are a good way to reach parents who may not have immediate access to a local group.



Kids Matter took to the river!

Those who followed our story will know that that the Great River Race was a special event for us, with the race starting in Millwall, where our first and longest standing partnership is, and ending in Ham, where Kids Matter was born – a physical representation of the Kids Matter journey.

We rowed the 21.6-mile route in a time of 2 hours and 56 minutes, and raised a total of £7,955 for Kids Matter.

The importance of partnership

By working together to build strong families, we believe it is possible to see children in need thrive. Catherine Clayton, Partnership Engagement Lead at Kids Matter, talks us through 2023 and what the Partnerships Team is hopeful for in the year ahead...

Why is working in partnership important to Kids Matter?

We are passionate about strengthening family life and we cannot do this alone. There are churches and organisations in virtually every village, town and city in the country that can build long-term, flourishing relationships with the families in their local communities. Therefore, for us, it is essential to form partnerships in order to see every child in need raised in a strong family.

How have partnerships grown/developed for Kids Matter this year?

In 2023, our strategic focus was to work alongside churches in Merseyside in partnership with local organisations invested in sustainable transformation. Not only did we find a partner in Liverpool-based charity Imagine If but we also employed a new staff member, Keren Baker, who has lived in Liverpool for 30 years and is based out of the Imagine If offices. We now have four new partner churches and are looking forward to reaching even more children in need.

What was a highlight of 2023 for the Partnerships Team?

Seeing the growth of partnerships in Merseyside after a decision to invest in the area.

What is your greatest hope for 2024?

To see the start of other key partnerships that can lead to meeting the need in other areas of the UK long term, and to see 20 new church partnerships formed across the country.



**In 2023,
we had...**

51 new facilitators
113 in total

18* new partners
66 in total

*Includes 2 charity partners



Image: Our partnership team: Catherine, Keren and Kylie.



"We saw a need in our area for families who were struggling to make sense of parenting on top of straining to make ends meet. Kids Matter offer wisdom and help to struggling parents in an environment that is not patronising and more collective and encouraging."

George, Church leader, Merseyside



"Parents are great at problem solving. I knew that, but [Kids Matter] reinforced it. Give them a bit of space, the right tools and a bit of encouragement and watch what they'll do!"

Rachel, facilitator



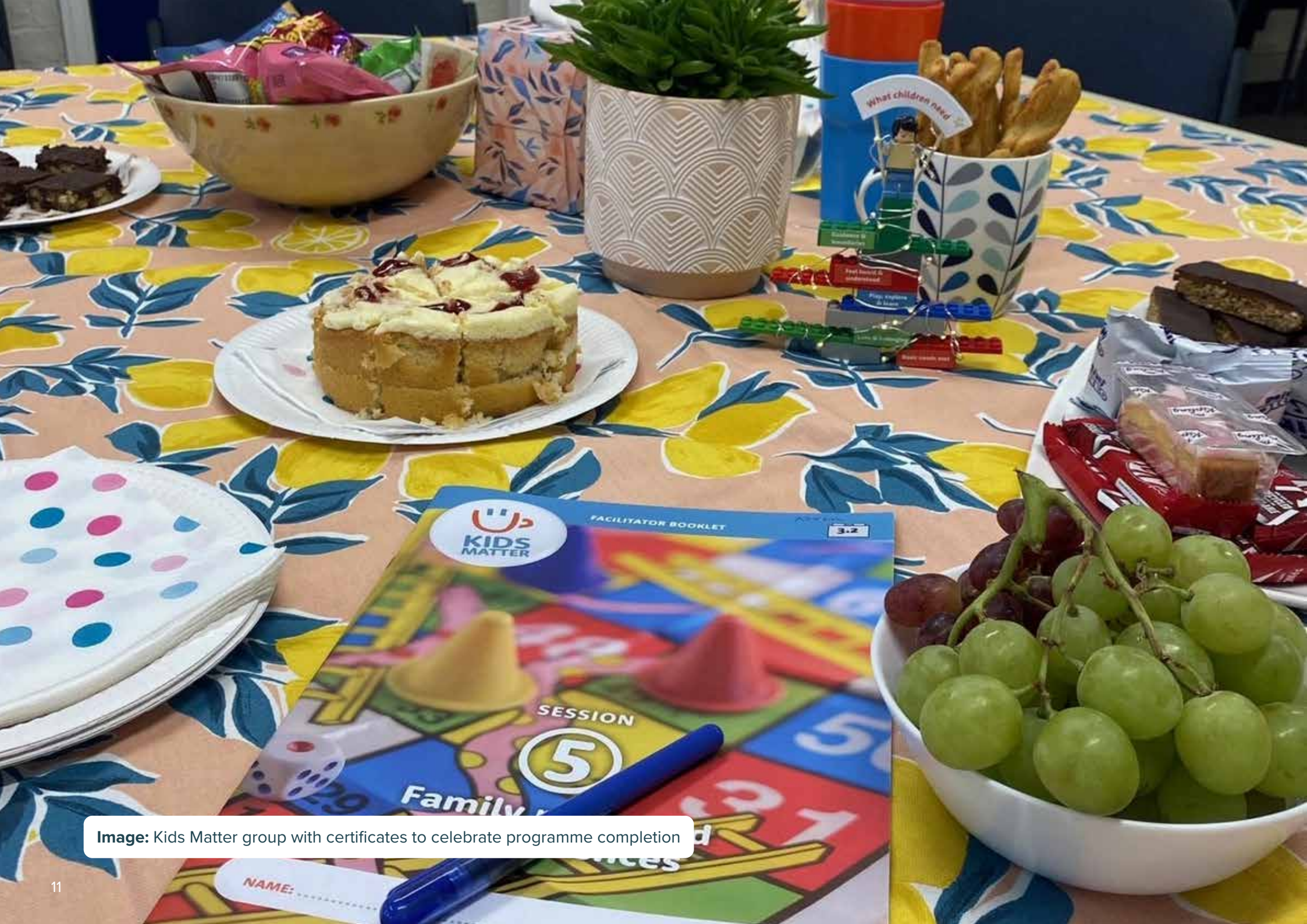


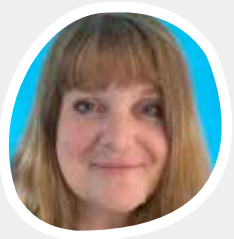
Image: Kids Matter group with certificates to celebrate programme completion

The latest from Merseyside

Merseyside has been a focus for Kids Matter over the last year and we have worked in partnership with Imagine If, a Liverpool-based charity that shares our vision to reduce the impact of poverty on children in need by strengthening families.

We have three current partners in Liverpool; all of whom ran their first programmes in 2023, and three programmes ran in deprived areas. We also have a new partner in Merseyside who is ready to start running programmes in 2024.

Keren Baker, our Parentership Manager for the North West, shares what her year has been like on the ground in Liverpool...



"It's been a privilege to partner with Safe Families at Imagine If; to be part of a programme and to see the impact Kids Matter can have.

"From one parent explaining that she'd done lots of parenting courses, but this was the first one that helped with all of her blended family, to another parent inspiring us all with her determination to get her family helping with family jobs. She'd report back each week on how the rotas were going and earned herself the title 'Routine Queen'.

"More than anything, I learned about the value of community in Kids Matter programmes. Community became so strong that the group continues to meet (facilitated by Imagine If) fortnightly, and love supporting and encouraging each other."

"Liverpool is a vibrant, multicultural city with a rich history and a real community spirit. However, it's also one of the most deprived cities in the UK with high rates of poverty."

- James Sloan,
Imagine If



In Merseyside...

3 partners ran their first programme

17 parents were reached

43 children reached

Sarah's story

“

Before Kids Matter, I was feeling guilty and stressed. I live in a flat with my two children. I decided to do Kids Matter because I was looking for solution: how to make my kids and myself happy and healthy family, and enjoy my kids while they grow.

One thing I enjoyed most about doing Kids Matter is knowing other ladies and trying to help our families (and I made friends). I am calm now and use most of the strategies and understand my children's behaviour overall. I am able to achieve my goal which is a happy family.

I would tell others to try Kids Matter because it helps more than you read in books or media, because you have to work and experiment and then you will see the result.

”



Training

We aim to deliver the best training possible to the facilitators who will be running Kids Matter programmes in their communities. We equip them with the tools to ensure our programme materials are relational and accessible in a group context, and that facilitators feel equipped to offer follow-up support to parents and carers after programmes have ended.

Facilitator Training

We ran four Kids Matter and two Babies Matter trainings in 2023, training a total of 51 facilitators. All our facilitators attend four days of online training to equip them with all the knowledge and skills they need to run our programmes. We go through the theories behind the programmes, how to support people through the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and develop facilitation skills.

"One of the best (if not the best) training programmes I've participated in. Fantastic culture. Highly professional. Look/listen to the testimonies of parents who have completed a Kids Matter programme - it's making a real difference." - a newly trained facilitator

94%
rated facilitator
training as excellent



External Training

We don't just run internal training programmes but also look to support churches and other organisations with the work they are doing to come alongside families facing disadvantages.

The ACEs module in our facilitator training is invaluable and informs training that we offer outside of Kids Matter. This year we ran a two-part training on ACEs for the staff team and volunteers at Riverbank Trust, a charity that supports and equips single mothers.

Evaluation

We are keen to ensure that mums, dads and carers finish our programme more confident in their parenting and are able to improve their own wellbeing; both key factors to bringing about change in family functioning, parent-child relationships and consequently child behaviour.

Our impact is measured through two standardised measures (TOPSE and WEMWB) and through stories from those who complete and deliver our programmes. Whilst data and statistics are critical components of cohesive and rigorous evaluation, it is the first-hand accounts from families, partners, facilitators, and community links that personalise the impact.

Hearing how mums, dads and carers are playing more with their children, putting boundaries in place, listening to and encouraging their children, building friendships in their communities, and how their children are responding with better sleep and school attendance, or fewer tantrums, is true testimony to the fact that Kids Matter makes a real, lasting difference.



When asked for one thing they've enjoyed during the programme, parents said:

"Not feeling alone."

"Being able to open up about personal matters and getting support."

"To help me understand more positive stuff about kids - family rules and consequences."

"I love coming to Kids Matter because you find out loads of information; we laugh and feel loved."

99%

have found coming to the group has helped them

66%

say they can listen and encourage better now

100% would recommend going to a Kids Matter group to a friend



Image: Kids Matter group in action

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

Towards the end of 2023, the team took part in two days of EDI training as a way of aligning goals and thinking through expectations.

Guided by two experienced and qualified coaches, we looked at every aspect of our work, from hiring practices to programme content and external communications.

We then looked at each area of our work: how we hire people, what goes into the programmes we run, what our outside communications is like, how and who we approach to partner with us to deliver our programmes. In each area, we were able to see a lot of what we are doing well, and how we can improve to actively reflect the communities we come alongside.

Our commitment is to foster diversity across all aspects of our work, driven by the belief that it is crucial for effectively supporting every child in need to be raised in a strong family.

We are on a journey and may not always get it right, but we want to be held accountable so that we can grow, authentically and intentionally, as individuals and as an organisation.



"It was brilliant to not just talk about ideas, or theories, or history, but actually look at practical ways by which we can ensure all aspects of how we operate is more reflective of the society we are part of."

Matt, Head of Communications



"I personally found the values we looked at and the ways we explored themes allowed for new understanding, emotional connection to what we were doing and ultimately hope for changes I could make that will make a difference."

Sophie, Support Coach



Image: Kids Matter group with certificates to celebrate programme completion

Looking ahead to 2024

A decorative orange line graphic that starts as a horizontal line and then curves upwards and to the right, ending under the 'Growing existing partnerships' box.

Exciting prospects await in 2024! We are looking forward to enriching current partnerships and exploring new ones. There are some excellent fundraising opportunities for others to join in on, and we are keen to be collaborative and impactful as we come alongside children and families in need.

Growing existing partnerships

In partnership with CAP, Safe Families and Children Heard and Seen, we're really excited to be working towards groups running regularly throughout the year, with consistent numbers of parents/carers attending.

Fundraising opportunities

Team members and friends will be cycling 100 miles from London to Essex as part of the RideLondon Challenge, and we are pleased to be taking part in The Great River Race for a second year to help raise money in support of our vision.

Developing prison work

With prison groups up and running in Pentonville and Brixton, we plan to launch our programme in Wormwood Scrubs alongside efforts to grow our volunteer base, enabling us to run more programmes in prisons.

Get involved

We believe that every child in need deserves the best chance in life and are grateful to all those who support our vision, enabling us to come alongside children and families.

If you would like to get involved, go to kidsmatter.org.uk/get-involved to learn more about making a difference in your community.

Here are four ways to get started

1

Partner with us

We work through an effective network of churches, charities, and community-driven initiatives that share our vision to reduce the impact of poverty on children in need.

2

Donate

For children to have a home in their future, we rely on the generosity of people like you.

3

Volunteer

An exciting volunteer opportunity has arisen at Kids Matter to support the facilitation of our prison parenting programme.

4

Pray

Join us in praying for an end to poverty and that every child in need may be raised in a strong family.

For all the latest news, inspiring stories and general updates from Kids Matter, sign up to our monthly newsletter! Just scan this QR code:



Thank you!

As we reflect on the past year, we are sincerely grateful for your unwavering support, which has been instrumental in helping us persevere in our vision to see every child in need raised in a strong family.

Whether financial or in-kind, your contributions have made a meaningful impact on our efforts to create a positive and lasting difference in the lives of children in need. And for anyone who has taken the time to read this report, thank you for caring! Together, we have taken steps towards building stronger families and communities.

Your support empowers us to continue our vital work, and we extend our heartfelt appreciation for standing alongside us on this journey.

Thank you!



Image: Kids Matter team day, December 2023

Become a Family Champion

Do you believe in the potential for families to build resilience amidst poverty? Do you want parents and carers to gain the confidence, competence and community needed for their children to thrive? We rely on the support of our Family Champions, people just like you, who share our heart for seeing every child in need raised in a strong family.

Through a regular donation of just **£13 a month**, you will be able to help us empower and support more families facing disadvantages, making a positive difference to more children in need. **Will you join us?**



Our evidence-informed materials designed by Clinical Psychologists specifically to reduce the impact of poverty on children



£13/month

provides the materials for a parent/carer to complete a Kids Matter programme, enabling their children to thrive.

Sign up at **kidsmatter.org.uk/family-champions**



Any amount and every donation, no matter how small, goes towards seeing every child in need is raised in a strong family.

