

## PARENTING APART PROJECT – OUTCOMES REPORT for Apr 2017 - Mar 2018

### Introduction

1,185 adults have participated in Parenting Apart sessions across Scotland since funding was awarded in April 2015. 487 parents participated in 2017-18, Year 3 of the project, which is a 23% increase on the previous year. Feedback from parents is overwhelmingly positive and encouraging. Children are benefitting from their parents understanding what they are going through and finding out how to work together as parents to focus on their needs.

### Evaluation Method

Parents complete Before and After Session forms immediately prior to and at the end of the Parenting Apart session. A Follow Up Review is completed three to six months after participation. This report summarises the analysis of the Before and After Session forms received for participation in 2017-18. The analysis of outcomes at the Follow Up Review stage includes data over three years, from April 2015 to March 2018, rather than the 12 month period to ensure there are sufficient for a robust analysis.

### Summary of key Parenting Apart Outcomes

- After attending Parenting Apart, 82% of parents said they *understood significantly more* about what their children may be experiencing through the process of divorce or separation
- 3 months after the session, 61% of parents thought they were *coping significantly better* with their family situation and 56% thought their *children were coping better*
- Before the session 59% of parents said their children were *sharing their time with both parents*, 3 months later 74% were
- 3 months after the session the percentage of parents *satisfied with the current arrangements* had risen from 20% to 44%
- 99% of parents would recommend Parenting Apart sessions to others

### In terms of impact on the use of statutory and other services:

After the session:

- 56% of parents were more likely to use mediation
- 22% were more likely to seek an agreement on child maintenance
- 25% were less likely to seek a court order

From analysis of the Follow Up Review data across the three year data set:

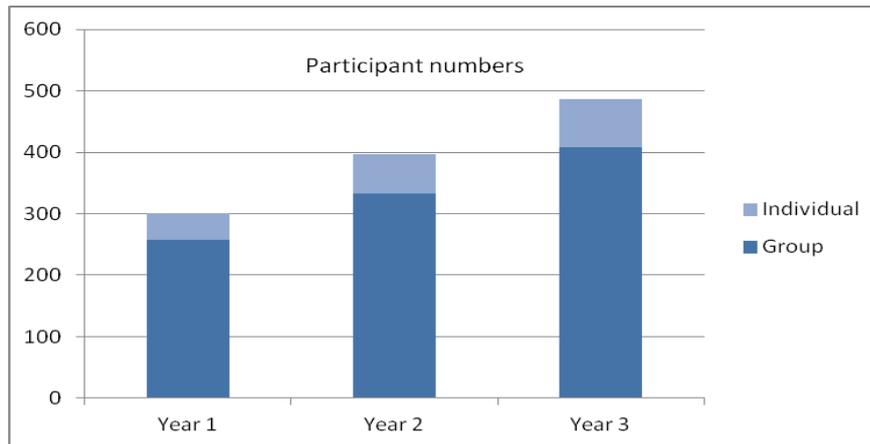
- Of those who did not have a *child maintenance agreement* in place before the session, 42% had one in place 3 months later
- Of those who were seeking a *court order* before the session, 50% were no longer seeking a court order 3 months later

## Participants 2017-18

487 parents participated in one to one or group sessions

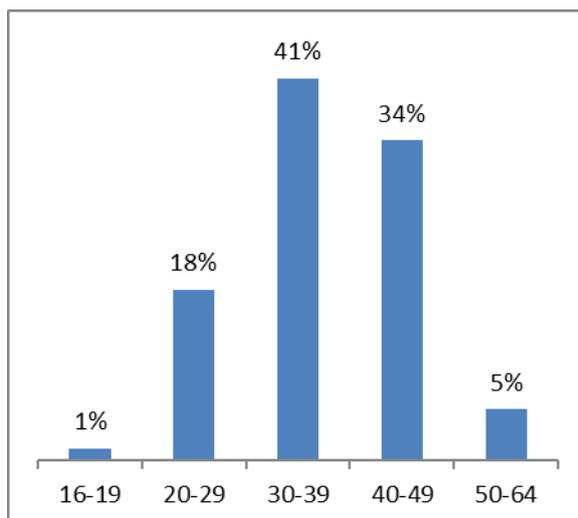
- 84% (408) attended group sessions
- 16% (79) attended an individual session

Numbers have increased year on year since 2015-16, Year 1 of the project:

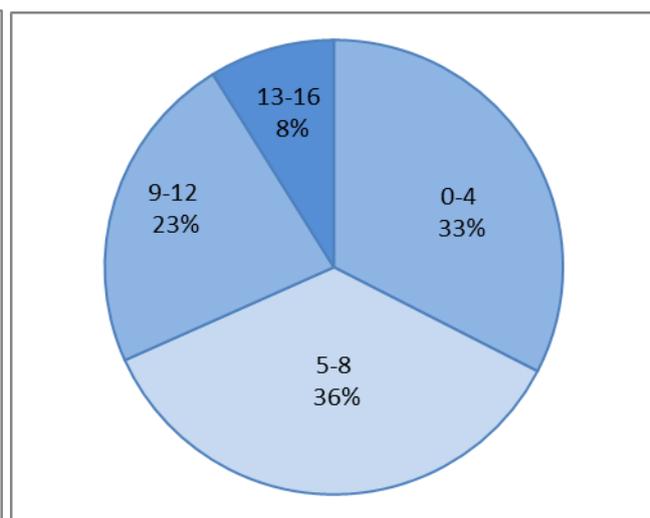


411 of the 487 parents completed a Before and After Session form (84%). In the 12 month time period the number of parents who had been able to complete a 3 month Follow Up Review was 31. For the following analysis, where responses after 3 months are analysed the three year data set was used. Of the 1,185 participants from the 3 year period 960 (81%) had returned a Before and After Session form and of these 186 (19%) had completed a Follow up Review. These 186 were used when analysing Follow Up Review responses.

### Age of Parents



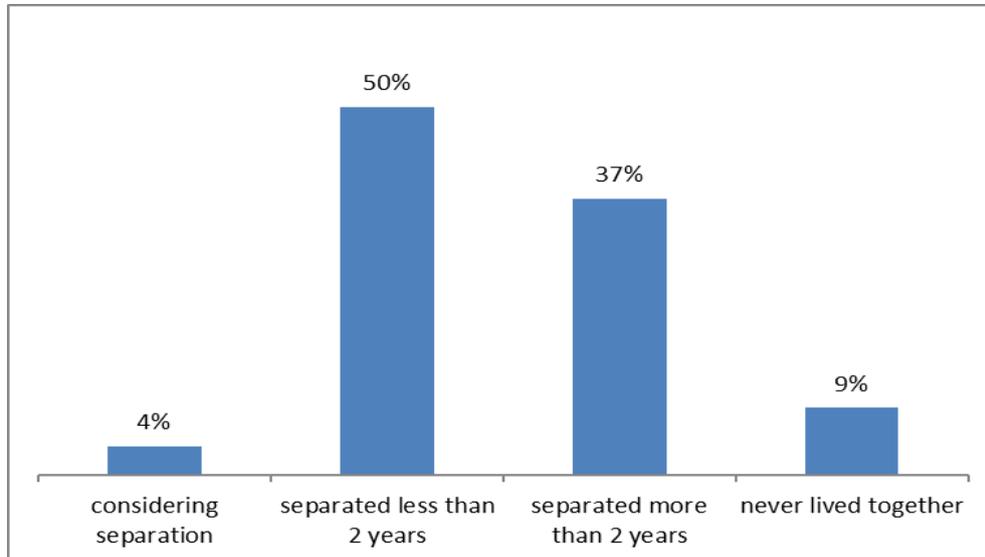
### Age of Children (under 16) of Clients\*



- 50% of parents were male, 50% female
- The 411 parents had 700\* children, 69% were aged 8 years or under

*\*Note that if both parents from the same family participate in Parenting Apart then their children are counted in the figures twice.*

## Relationship Status



It is interesting to note that one in 11 parents attending the sessions indicated that they have never lived with their child's other parent. Parenting Apart sessions are adapted to respond to the different needs and concerns within the groups.

## Outcomes

### Coping with Separation

#### **Before the Parenting Apart session**

Before attending Parenting Apart only 35% of parents felt their children were coping well or very well with their family situation, and only 30% of parents felt they were coping well or very well with their situation.

#### **After the session**

- 67% of parents said their understanding of how to cope better with their family situation had increased significantly
- 81% said their understanding of how to help their children to cope better had increased significantly
- 82% understood more about what their children may be experiencing

#### **3 months later**

- Of those parents who responded 3 months later, 61% were coping better with their family situation and 56% thought their children were coping better

## Communication, Conflict and Planning

Parents were asked how well they were able to communicate, make plans and deal with conflict

### **Talking to the other parent:**

Before the Parenting Apart session 69% of parents were finding it difficult to discuss issues about their children. After the session 71% said they understood more about how to discuss issues about their children and three months later 49% said they were better able to discuss issues about their children.

### **Making plans:**

Before the Parenting Apart session 69% of parents were finding it difficult to make arrangements for their children. After the session 68% understood more about how to make arrangements for their children and three months later 52% said they were better able to make arrangements for their children.

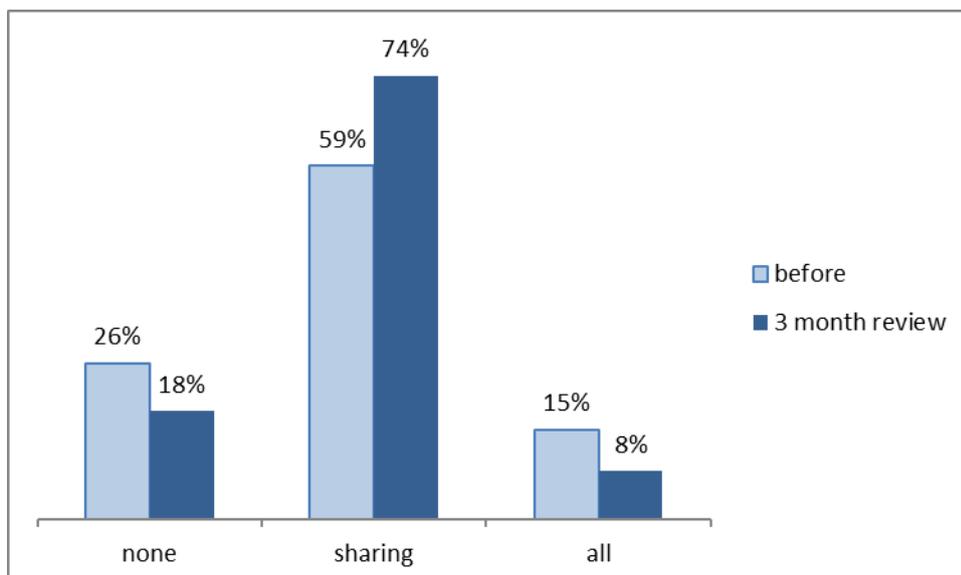
### **Dealing with conflict:**

Before the Parenting Apart session 80% of parents were finding it difficult to sort out arguments as parents. After the session 62% said they understood more about how to sort out arguments and three months later 53% said they were better able to sort out arguments.

## Time Children Spend with Parents

Before the Parenting Apart session, 41% of parents say their children spent *all* their time with one parent or the other (26%+15%). Three months later the figure had reduced to 26% (18%+8%) indicating that more children were now spending time with both parents.

### **The amount of time parents say their children spend with them**



Three months after the Parenting Apart session, the percentage of parents who say their children are spending time with both parents had risen from 59% to 74% and the percentage satisfied with the current arrangements had risen from 20% to 44%.

### Use of statutory or other support services

	<b>Before Session</b>	<b>After Session</b>
<b>Are you attending mediation?</b>	38%	56% more likely to use mediation 41% expect no change
<b>Are you using a solicitor?</b>	71%	60% expect no change 26% less likely to use a solicitor
<b>Are you seeking a court order?</b>	41%	61% expect no change 25% less likely to seek a court order
<b>Do you have an agreement in place about child maintenance?</b>	50%	73% expect no change 22% more likely to seek an agreement on child maintenance

- Of those not in mediation before the Parenting Apart session, 29% were in mediation 3 months later
- Of those who were seeking a court order before the session, 50% were no longer seeking a court order 3 months later
- Of those who did not have a child maintenance agreement in place before the session, 42% had one in place 3 months later

### Feedback from parents

#### **After the session**

- 82% felt that what they had learned at the Parenting Apart session would improve their family situation
- 99% would recommend Parenting Apart sessions to others

#### **3 months later**

- 73% felt that attending a Parenting Apart session had improved their family situation
- 78% had recommended Parenting Apart sessions to others

### Comments

Very professional and understanding staff. Very patient, helpful and impressive. Allows secure viewing of different perceptions through yourself, others and the most important - your children.

This is both a very useful practical and emotional mechanism for helping put broken families like us on the right track. More was achieved in 2 hours than months at solicitors.

Very helpful in understanding a little more how my son and ex-partner may be feeling. Reassuring to know that I'm not the only person going through this.

An informative and enjoyable session, felt able to share in a non-threatening environment. Thank you!

Good to get an insight for the future with my son and how to keep relationship as amicable as possible between mother and myself.

Very good explanations and going through the whole process of separation. Helped me to understand a lot of things I was not sure about. (Facilitator) answered my many questions in an excellent way.

Good session. Helpful insight into the process all members of the family go through with a separation, especially the different ways minor things may affect children deeply. Thank you.

Real eye opener getting to meet other people in a similar situation. Since my ex-partner came here things have been better between us, which has allowed me to see my son more, and meant the time has been better (as I've not been dreading taking him back to his mum), so thank you for that.

Useful session to help understand emotions that children experience when parents separate and how to cope. Provide ways to anticipate what difficulties they might face and help find ways to deal with them.

Very good content with two excellent facilitators. A good mix of results of research and practical tips / advice.

I think discussing with parents, both mums and dads, has been the most positive aspect. Knowing they are in the same position. It should also be encouraged for step-parents to come.

I have found the course in question very helpful. I could identify with certain aspects and realise I can make some positive changes. Once again I would like to take this opportunity to thank all at the Service.

Really good session, glad I came. Made me think, going to try harder. Will go away, think long and hard about my son's future. I want him to be happy and have a happy childhood.

I've liked to share my situation with others and liked to hear other situation from others. I really enjoyed the ability to clarify my train of thought. It gives me a sense of direction.

It was helpful to hear other people's stories and to realise that their lives are full of the same issues and problems on both sides.

It's a difficult process for all involved so it has been great to discuss situations with no blame or judgement. Very positive outcome. Thank you.

It was very useful to attend and listen to very helpful views of the other people attending as well as from the facilitators.

I thought it was really excellent, very relaxed and great advice. I also found it so helpful to hear (other dad)'s experiences – it's not just me!

I would advise every parent to attend such a session which are really helpful. This session gave more ideas and vision how to deal with (my child). I learnt how to play role as parent after separation. I would prefer to continue such session.