



A service for LGBT parents and their children, and LGBT parents to be.

## Impact evaluation report 30 September 2021




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# 1. Our story

**Our vision is a world where all family services recognise and address the needs of LGBT+ families and parents to be.**

<p><b>We are an inclusive organisation which supports Greater Manchester LGBT+ parents and carers on their journey to parenthood and then as a family.</b></p>		<p><b>We deliver sessions to increase knowledge, build confidence and parenting skills, improve wellbeing, build peer support networks and reduce isolation.</b></p>
<p><b>We are beneficiary led. Everyone has experienced the LGBT+ journey to parenthood.</b></p>		<p><b>We develop awareness with agencies and communities and tackle issues this marginalised community faces.</b></p>

We achieve this through

- Providing information on the various routes to parenthood for prospective LGBT+ parents and carers
- Supporting people on their chosen route to parenthood
- Social and peer support sessions for LGBT+ parents and families to reduce isolation and increase wellbeing
- Support services for LGBT+ parents, carers and families to increase parenting skills and confidence, address key concerns, and improve wellbeing of parents, carers, and young people
- Youth group for young people who have LGBT+ parents
- Developing awareness with agencies, services and communities of the issues our marginalised community faces and support them to address these

Our founder, Matt Taylor-Roberts, has a Masters in Young People, Community Education and Development and worked for Sure Start. He quickly identified a gap for inclusive drop-ins for LGBT+ parents and their children and set these up. These proved popular and resulted in requests for more services. Therefore Matt founded Parents 2 B CIC on 9 September 2013.

We are proud to be beneficiary led. All our trustees and volunteers have lived experience of the LGBT+ journey to parenthood and the joys and challenges that LGBT+ parents and carers experience.

We have grown rapidly recently with a 114% increase in our income from 2019 to 2020.

## 2. This programme

We are grateful to Reaching Communities for enabling us to give our LGBT+ parents, carers, and families a voice and enabling us to support their parenthood and family journeys.

### 2.1 Outputs

Output targets	Actual	Achievement
Engage with 200 parents and children	500	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Deliver 12 monthly weekend meet-ups – delivered in-person and online - e.g. parents quiz night-in, drag queen entertainment, home schooling, behavioural management, stress management, wellbeing	12	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Deliver 20 mid-week meet-ups – delivered in-person and online – as above. These focus on parents and carers of preschoolers, including parents on adoption, maternity, surrogacy or paternity leave.	25	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Deliver 4 parent-to-be discussion groups – delivered in-person and online	6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Deliver 1 family fun day – designed and delivered an online festival in May	Not possible to do in-person due to Covid but delivered an online festival instead	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Deliver 12 youth group sessions – delivered in-person and online – e.g. boredom busting packs in August and Christmas packs; outdoor forest school event for Halloween; outdoor Christmas party saw 40 children getting mucky in the forest, enjoying story time and a socially distanced visit with Santa; digital fun with Captain Fantastic; digital session with Santa; dance session with Stars Dance Academy to finish the year with a high kick and swirl.	12	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Develop 1 new community resource	4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Attend 4 promotional events	6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Increase our visibility on social media and hits to our website - social media campaigns significantly grew followers and drove traffic to our website	Facebook 2,019 followers 1,789 who 'like' the page  Over 30,000 hits on website	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Develop a volunteer programme	Not possible due to Covid	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>Build links with relevant organisations and ensure the voices of LGBT+ parents and their children are being heard by the wider LGBT+ community, through board membership on a relevant organisation –</p> <p>Built links with 32 organisations: Manchester Pride * Tameside Pride * Salford Pride * Stockport Pride * Geronimo Festival * Dads Matters * LGBT Foundation * Perinatal Mental health Team Greater Manchester * Home Start Greater Manchester *</p> <p>Sure Start Children Centres * Assured Fertility * Manchester Fertility Clinic * Pride Angel * Three Circles Fostering * Adoption Counts * Emmeline Pantry * Greater Manchester and East Cheshire Strategic Clinical Network : Surrogacy UK * The National Autistic Society * Speech and Language Services * Gateway Psychology * Children and Parent Service (CAPS) * Child and Adult Mental Health Service (CAMHS) * Sinclair Law * Stonewall * LGBT Consortium * Liverpool LGBT Families * LGBT Parents UK * New Family Social * Mermaids * Sparkle * We Are Family *</p> <p>Board member for 2 organisations: Adoption Counts, and Forward (Stockport LGBT+ organisation)</p>	<p>Built links with 32 organisations</p> <p>Appointed to 2 boards</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Increase visibility and awareness of LGBT+ parents and their children</p> <p>Delivered training to 5 organisations: Home Start * National Autistic Society * Adoption Counts * Three Circles Fostering * Greater Manchester and Cheshire East Strategic Clinical Network (210 professionals each received 8 days of training) *</p> <p>Developed and delivered an exhibition of images of LGBT+ parents/carers and their children for the People History Museum in Manchester which was open to the public from July to September 2021.</p>	<p>Delivered training to 5 organisations</p> <p>Delivered a 3-month museum exhibition</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Ensure all sessions recognise attachment issues and support relationship building in a safe and supportive environment</p>		<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>New session support worker - advertised in September, started in October</p>		<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

## 2.2 Outcomes

Output targets	Achievement
Parents report improved confidence	✓
Parents report reduced isolation	✓
Parents report improved wellbeing	✓
Parents report improved skills e.g. behaviour management	✓
Parents feel more positive about their parent/child relationship	✓

## 2.3 Impact of Covid-19

Inevitably 2020/21 has been exceptionally challenging. Our face-to-face activities had to cease in March 2020 when England went into a national lockdown. However, we have approached this as an opportunity.

We quickly moved our peer support sessions online ensuring we kept our community connected, reducing isolation and improving wellbeing. Online sessions started in April. We were creative in our delivery. For example offering parent quiz nights in, and entertainment from our resident drag queen.

In May we designed and delivered an online family festival. This replaced our annual trip to the Geronimo festival.

Responding directly to community needs, from July we started to deliver online sessions to improve skills and resilience including home schooling, behaviour management, stress management and wellbeing. In August we provided boredom busting packs to help parents during the summer holidays and then provided Christmas packs. These were extremely popular and flew out.

Our young people enjoyed digital and outdoor fun including an outdoor forest school event for Halloween; outdoor Christmas party getting mucky in the forest, enjoying story time and a socially distanced visit with Santa; digital fun with Captain Fantastic; digital session with Santa; and a dance session with Stars Dance Academy to finish the year with a high kick and swirl.

Alongside this we successfully recruited a session worker and won a contract with Greater Manchester and Cheshire East Strategic Clinical Network to deliver training to raise awareness and inclusivity of LGBT+ parent led families for Health Professionals

Our online sessions and festival have provided a lifeline for our parents and families, significantly improving wellbeing, providing a much-needed structure with something to look forward to, and enabling participants to both maintain and develop their skills, and importantly their peer support networks.

Whilst we are resuming our in-person delivery as restrictions are lifted, we are also exploring whether to maintain some online sessions as these enable people to benefit from our services who find it difficult to attend in-person.

## 3. Our impact

### *3.1 Evaluation methodology*

We use a combination of questionnaires and focus groups to understand the needs of our community and the impact we have had.

### *3.2 Social return on your investment in us*

It has not been possible to undertake a full in-depth social return on investment calculation as we are unable to track our participants' individual journeys and circumstances. For example, it is likely that our support contributes to

- Prospective parents proceeding to adopt meaning that a child leaves the care system
- Improved parenting skills and confidence reducing reliance on other services

However, we are unable to quantify this.

But we have been able to undertake a partial calculation based on the data we have.

Where it is possible to do so, a financial value, (fiscal saving and/or social value and/or local economic value), has been placed on the impact we delivered through this programme using the figures provided within the national TOMS database and New Economy Manchester Unit Cost Database.

The New Economy Manchester Unit Cost Database contains national costs derived from government reports and academic studies. The costs cover crime, education and skills, employment and economy, fire, health, housing and social services. The derivation of the costs and the calculations underpinning them have been quality assured by New Economy in co-operation with HM Government.

The national TOMS database provides a minimum reporting standard for measuring social value. The values contained within it are agreed by the Social Value Taskforce. Taskforce participants include Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Star Procurement (Stockport, Trafford and Rochdale).

The social return on investment was **£397,897**

- Social value - £280,249
- Economic value - £117,648

Social value arose from

- Improved wellbeing
- Volunteering
- Reinvestment in community
- Training

Economic value arose from

- Expenditure on salaries and sessional workers

This means that **for every £1 invested in us, we delivered £2.60 of social impact.**

### *3.3 Outcomes*

With the guidance of an external consultant we have surveyed our participants to understand the difference we have made through this programme. The detailed analysis is provided at Appendix 1.

100%

Enjoyed their involvement

94%

Proud of their involvement



88%

Influenced to participate by seeing 'people like us' involved

72%

Always feel they belong

94%

Feel happier

94%

Wellbeing has improved



81%

Self-esteem has increased

100%

Family feels less isolated



90%

Confidence as a parent or parent-to-be has increased

71%

Feel more positive about their parent/child relationship



94%

Feel better about their family life and future

81%

Have gained new skills and/or knowledge

### 3.4 Consultations

We have regularly consulted our participants throughout the programme. For example:

- What they liked or valued most
- What we could improve
- Their biggest challenge and how we might be able to help
- The one piece of advice they would give to other LGBT+ people thinking about becoming parents
- What advice or recommendations they would give professionals working with LGBT+ parents/carers during their route to parenthood or after

We are:

- Building on the aspects of our services that participants value most
- Addressing opportunities to improve and communicating progress e.g. through ‘you said it... we did it’
- Considering the challenges our participants have highlighted and using this to inform changes to existing services, development of new services, and discussions with other organisations who provide services our participants use, or want to use
- Collating their advice to provide resources for other community members and service delivery organisations

A summary of representative responses is provided below.

#### What we liked or valued most

A safe place to meet families like ours, and for our children to meet other children with queer parents. Wonderful! We’ve made good friends here and enjoyed activities and opportunities that we wouldn’t have had otherwise. We also know it’s a place of support if we needed it. Fab!	I know meeting other same sex families will have a positive impact on my child in the future. It is also great to talk to other mums about specific conversations and challenges they have faced in schools and other settings which helps me feel more prepared and supported.

It is brilliant for the kids to see other families like theirs and hopefully to grow up alongside these families through continued involvement with the group. It has also been a lifeline for me to find midweek activities to attend with the children in a supportive non-judgmental environment.	There is always someone who has been through the same processes that you have and so it is very helpful to have that support on hand. The social aspects are also exceptional - always someone there or a meet up for when you've had an extended period with only a toddler for company!
That they are there when needed, no pressure to get involved but when you do you are warmly welcomed like an old friend. Plenty of diverse opportunities for all age groups.	The opportunity to meet other families like ours. For our child to make friends with children from similar families. Because of this our daughter has never felt different because she has met so many children like her. This is such a huge relief for us as parents.
Being around same sex parents who understand our situation. Having our daughter mix with other families with same sex parents.	Opportunity to connect with other LGBT families. I also feel it's important and valuable for my children to see that there are lots of other families like theirs.
Seeing families like mine and having our son see families just like his. It's great fun meeting with everyone regularly to talk about babies but other life events. Free sessions are imperative during this difficult time.	Seeing and meeting other families like mine; my kids seeing and meeting other kids and families like ours; sharing ideas, stories and dilemmas with other people with similar experiences; celebrating same sex families and parents.
The opportunity to come together with other families and chat with parents similar to myself	Being able to meet other same sex parents. My son meets other with the same parent set and feels included and "normal" having the opportunity to do things like days out with other parents and not feel like we stand out
The ability for our son to see and experience other families like ours. I think this is really important for him as he grows up.	It's friendliness & inclusivity. Plus a holistic programme which carers for those children & young people who attend.
A place to meet similar families and catch up with people. A safe environment for our daughter. Somewhere to get support if needed. The fact that it's provided as a free service makes us feel valued and prioritised and we're very grateful.	As well as giving us the opportunity to build strong friendships with families that reflect our own P2BPs has also given our children the opportunity to socialise children from a range of backgrounds (adoption, fostering, surrogacy, IVF as well as single parents, co-parents and others). It's important to us that our children know and value all types of diversity.
This is the only place we go where we can be sure that our family will be completely accepted, and it is a vital opportunity for our daughter to learn that she's not alone.	This service is crucial for same sex families, for children growing up to feel included, safe, secure and part of a community, for parents to chat and share experiences.
The opportunity to socialise with other parents	How everyone is super kind and welcoming
Free activities with other children with same sex parents - helps reinforce the message that there is nothing "wrong" or "odd" about their family.	P2BPs is an invaluable friendly service. Through it we've not only been able to form friendships with other families like ours but get support and advice from people who understand the challenges of being a same sex family.
The support they offer families	Feeling accepted
Funded activities mean we can do more of them. Our children having time with other families like ours.	That the community has visibility and there are free events and resources available
The friends we've made	The friendliness of the staff. Matt, Myrtle and Katie are all brilliant! And that my son gets to join in activities with families that are like his!
Proud 2 b Parents has been a complete lifeline to my family. We have enjoyed every session we have attended and have made some friends whom we hope will be friends for life. More importantly, perhaps the most	Knowing that my daughter can socialise and understand that there are other families just like ours. A safe space for her and us to reflect and discuss our concerns to access support and guidance in a non-judgmental

important, our little one understands that his family arrangement isn't unique to just him.	manner.
We love Proud to be Parents. It has helped us to feel more relaxed but also given us the confidence to ask the right questions in our sons new school around LGBT inclusion. We have made life-long friends in the group and we are so grateful for the group existing.	It's a place that I or my family don't need to 'come-out' as a LGBT family, we are the norm, with no hesitant awkward pauses from others. Hopefully one day the rest of the world will catch-up and be more open and accepting.
I feel the group has a positive impact on my identity as a gay parent and hope that it will have the same for my children and children of same sex parents.	Without you me and my family would have been completely lost in the lockdown it is has provided unique server and has allowed us lesbians couple with very young child feel normal and connect with other families in LGBTQ community

### What we could do to improve

Alongside the wider-ranging feedback below we also capture feedback on individual sessions and address any issues raised e.g. refreshments, venue suitability, etc.

More notice of up and coming meets/events. People working shifts have at least 4 weeks of rotas, having more notice would mean we can attend more meets.  Advertise the events a bit further in advance	More support targeted towards trans parents and trans families
Perhaps more teenager led activities. The P2B me sessions are very popular & sometimes numbers are limited.  More for young teens	Provide more free activities for 5 to 7 year olds and more support for lone/Co parents. Have more activities in different areas like Bolton for those who live further afield. More support within sessions but hopefully that's been rectified with the community engagement officer now.
Provide more activities for ages 6/7/8. Too old for cheeky cherubs but too young for youth group. More activities for school age kids	More focus on sessions for babies/parents  More baby events (for those under 3) would be great.
Some parent meet ups, to chat share ideas	More meet-ups
Maybe holding meet ups that are more guided so that families can talk to each other and make friends	Variety of areas for meet ups across Greater Manchester. (Although this does seem to be happening at the moment). Also to have a way where possibly a staff member or buddy helps you approach other families if you are new and nervous. We found it especially difficult to approach new people in the beginning.
I would perhaps encourage additional smaller area meets in between the monthly meets to support friendships (both adult and child) within more local communities, due to the large area P2B serves.	Something we would find useful is a resource sharing session, for example discussing books to read to different age children on LGBTQAI+ topics, explaining about different family dynamics, and how to work through difficult situations such as children feeling different at school etc.
Secure funding to ensure it continues	More ways of keeping in touch with other parents
A lot of the funding goes on weekly meet ups as working parents we cannot access these so perhaps think more about inclusion for working parents and schedule more events in holidays or around work.	The places on the activities can be quite limited so we sometimes miss out.

For our family, more events with activities that span a wider age band, so there are things than are suitable for very young and older children, as soon we will have 5 aged 0-9	Just making friends with other families. Maybe have a buddy up system- some families at meet ups that would be keen to meet new families that haven't attended before and maybe match them up. As some people can be shy and some large groups not very approachable at meet ups
More one off training/info sessions on key topics like pregnancy, going back to work, getting ready for school , moving to secondary school and other key transition moments. I know you've done some of this sort of thing but make them more of regular part of the annual programme and produce accompanying resources. Maybe even consider consultancy/training to organisations that interact with LGBTQ parents.	It would be fantastic if there could be something that would apply across multiple age ranges such as a therapeutic parenting talk.
I wonder whether there could be explicit opportunities for discussions between those with similar experiences such as a zoom evening for adoptive parents/foster carers/those who have conceived via donor conception/single parents to discuss areas that might not be of interest to or relevant to the wider group.	

**During Covid-19 we moved our services online. What would you like us to continue doing from this digital programme or do differently? (e.g. digital activities, social media activities, parents night in etc.)**

There was a brilliant range of content but I found that I often missed things and only noticed them once they were over (I'm not sure if this was an issue with advertising/sign posting or me just be oblivious as usual!). I would find it easier to commit to attending more things online but believe physical attendance would be more valuable in lots of cases.	The digital program was amazing, especially for my family who struggle to attend meetings, it was lovely to be able to take part at home, and feel that we weren't missing out, the drag story time was the highlight, this would be something that would be amazing if it could continue even one a month, just helps those who can't attend to feel included
More notice of sessions and maybe some you can watch again	More please. Especially parents nights in on zoom, especially for those of us who can't get into Manchester City centre at night without a lot of hassle and money.
Our kids loved the drag story on festival day so more of these please. Could there be a regular slot each month for something ....like an online art lesson or craft session where they share their art work. CBeebies has a show called 'our family' and my kids always ask where the family with 2 mums or dads are! We could do our own online version.	It was actually so wonderful, I loved singing along to the pride event and my baby loved his massage led by Matt! Please do continue doing these things they are so much fun
Think it would be a nice idea to do some sort of email pal thing- so where you asked people if you want to sign up to be matched with another family to email/chat to etc. that have similar circumstances. So only people who are willing get matched then there's some more communication between families	

## What are the main challenges you face as an LGBT+ parent led family and what could we do to help?

<p>There's always small issues but I think the main at the moment has been the language used when school searching - the assumption is always of heterosexual parents. I've had it assumed I'm a single parent before people have realised why my son doesn't have a mom. I think some advice on how to push back on this for people not confident in doing so in that setting, or on a longer term maybe some training into schools</p>	<p>Explaining our baby has two mums (the need to always explain/answer questions/educate/come out). It's refreshing to be able to go to new places completely relaxed knowing that Proud2b have removed the need to do that through simply organising the venue. We are new parents so haven't been faced with any other challenges yet but I'm sure when it comes to nursery/school we will be looking for help/support/recommendations through the group. It is important that we find a school and nursery that is both diverse and inclusive. Do Proud2b work with any schools?</p>
<p>Stigma - work in schools perhaps</p> <p>Low level bullying in school through lack of education. P2bParents could sort by offering service to visit schools/ provide resources (thinking of the future)</p>	<p>More training for employers and public sector workers.</p>
<p>Main challenges- people ignoring one parent, parents at school not being able to explain to children why my lad has two mums,, Maybe funding to do workshops in schools with ks1 children and parents</p>	<p>I would be interested to see material relating to helping children from same sex families understand the difference to other families, and how this might affect them at various milestones (my children are quite young and I suppose I feel quite anxious about how they might be affected in future, and how to beat help them out!)</p>
<p>Lack of understanding from others, ongoing education to services that work with and come into contact with families</p>	<p>Other people understanding family set up (two mums one dad)</p>
<p>How to calmly tackle the constant misinterpretation particularly in settings which should know better - NHS and schools/nurseries to be specific.</p>	<p>Lack of visibility of LGBT+ Families in Schools &amp; childcare provisions partic. lack of diverse story books. Could provide starter resource packs for nurseries and primary schools</p>
<p>Invisibility. Education to schools and services about not assuming sexuality because of being a lone parent.</p>	<p>Challenges in discrimination from some educational settings because we are same sex parents.</p>
<p>We are the only trans couple known to the agency we are currently applying to foster and adopt through, which is a bit nerve wracking!</p>	<p>Challenges in people not understanding the trauma of adoption and therefore struggling to understand the unique needs of our children.</p>
<p>Services not recognising us - it's a world issue</p>	<p>Fearing judgement when asking for support. You being here simply allows us to build our confidence seeking support.</p>
<p>Isolation, lack of representation</p>	<p>Being accepted</p>
<p>Still being seen as a minority when there are so many other LGBT+ families out there. Although society doesn't represent us that well in tv/books etc still I feel like the biggest thing we get from this group is representation which is priceless.</p>	<p>Visibility in the world around - book / TV recommendations for all ages would be good. We know picture books and films for teenagers but nothing really in between</p>
<p>Heteronormative books everywhere! Get books about all sorts of families to schools, playgroups, other community groups (where straight families go!)</p>	<p>How to speak to my child about LGBT when they are in mainstream society and have little visible signs of being an LGBT family.</p>
<p>Lack of visibility of other similar families for our children. Lack of friends with families, isolation etc</p>	<p>Finding inclusive spaces, making friends who understand our family.</p>

Feeling singled out as we don't live near other same sex families	Few places to meet with other LGBTQ families, but proud to be parents provide a safe space to meet which is invaluable.
Going to mainstream baby/toddler groups and constantly having to 'out' yourself as you constantly meet new people. Some sessions on helping your child transition to school or nursery and how to handle questions or prejudice might be good. We know what we say but other people might be different who are prejudice or just ignorant.	People always assuming that our little girl has a daddy and them struggling to grasp that she doesn't. We try to educate people the best we can but it's not always received very well received. This upsets our little girl as she always feels different when strangers mention her daddy.
A resource such as, a leaflet for our older children/teenagers relating to our types of family units. Basic, informative guide re tips to challenge peers or adults who may be negative or curious about their family unit i.e. so to strengthen the young person with some snappy facts/ script in how to reply/ respond to.	Maybe a guide to give to parents to give out to their schools on LGBT family education and how schools can improve and ensure they're in the know. We had some school viewings where head teachers looked surprised to see two mums, taken aback almost. I would have loved to have handed them a flyer in those circumstances to show what they might do differently! But in a supportive informative way.
Maybe a guide to answering difficult questions from kids, what's appropriate to say...when your child starts school many kids are interested to know why they have same sex parents and I never know what to say as I've no idea what their parents have said to them	Resources for children of same sex families, and relating to helping children through milestones (e.g. starting school) / Starting school guide

### You said it ... we did it

Examples of how we have used feedback gained through consultation to improve our delivery and/or introduce new services include

<i>You said it</i>	<i>We did it</i>
I'd like to see something for single/ lone LGBT parents - an emerging group with not much representation or activities	We have developed a social group called Proud for single parents and co parents, this is an opportunity to get to know others and arrange meet ups local to members
Perhaps have introductions at the start of the meet ups, we found it difficult to walk into a very busy meet up knowing no one and seeing lots of already established gr	This year we have employed Katie our sessional worker to be at our meet ups to support new families and be on hand to support the session. Until we are back to physical meet ups, Katie is on hand at our digital meets to chat and to get to know everyone.
Without proud parents me and my family would have been completely lost in the lockdown it is has provided unique server and has allowed us with very young child feel normal and connect with other families in LGBTQ community	We secured funding to continue our digital activities until May, when we hope to be back to our new normal and have regular physical meet ups again
I'd love to see guides/advice/shared experiences regarding managing milestones such as preparing for starting school etc.	In 2021/2022 we will be working on an early education and primary school inclusivity project. This will be aimed at parents and professionals, ensuring they feel comfortable with discussing family make up, including LGBT+ parent led families. This will be co-produced with our participants.
Requests for extra activities	Throughout 2020 we delivered parent support sessions, tackling a variety of topics which has continued due to its success. We also hope that once our physical monthly meet ups start again, we will be able to have guest speakers and activities to add more to our service

	delivery
Just lots of lovely social opportunities. We'd be up for camping, trips to the woods, picnics, museums and anything else people think of	In 2021 we will introducing more opportunity to meet up, and socialise in the school holidays.
Mini P2B festival / I'd love to see an annual wider family event where grandparents, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews could come along, have involvement and have the opportunity it's to see/provide positive examples of different families. Ours remains the only gay family that some of the children in our wider family have ever had contact with	After the success of our Digital Proud 2b Parents festival, we wanted to change 2021's family fun day to a festival for our families and their wider families, to participate and support us as a community. We look forward to bringing you this event in June 2021 (all being well!)

## 4. Organisational capacity and capability

### 4.1 Our Board

We are proud to be 100% beneficiary led. All of our team, including our Board, have lived experience of the LGBT+ journey to parenthood.

In the last year we have refreshed and strengthened our Board, bringing on 1 new director, Katie Bates who is also our new sessions worker. Katie joins:

Abbey Clephane-Wilson (Chair)

- Safeguarding Advisor for the Diocese of Manchester
- Previously an Adoption Social Worker
- Abbey and her partner regularly attend our sessions

Matt Taylor-Roberts (Founder and Secretary)

- Manchester City Council Outreach Worker for Sure Start Children Centre. I
- Independent panel member for Adoption Counts
- Matt and his partner Shaun adopted their gorgeous son in November 2017 and regularly attend our sessions

Debbie Baxter Heyes (Treasurer)

- Ward Manager for a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit
- Extensive experience and practical support around attachment development
- Debbie, her partner and children regularly attend our sessions

Gaynor Fanning

- Social Care specialist with over 30 years' experience
- Currently Senior Adoption Support Social Worker and Adoption Panel Member for Adoption Counts
- Gaynor and her son regularly attend our sessions

### 4.2 Co-production

Co-production is embedded into everything we do. All of our activities are designed and delivered by LGBT+ parents and carers. This ensures they are fully inclusive and visibly demonstrates that 'people like us' can be exemplary parents.

Participants are consulted throughout, and their feedback responded to. Please see *3.4 Consultations* above

## 4.3 Organisational review

We recognise the need to regularly review our capacity and capability and have recently completed an organisational review which has identified several key recommendations. These are summarised below.

Two key areas requiring particular attention are

- Monitoring, evaluating and reporting of social impact
- Whole team awareness of the important role and contribution of our volunteers

### 4.3.1 Board capability

In order to assess the skills, knowledge and experience currently within the Board a self-completion audit was conducted. This has been used to identify where the Board has gaps that need to be filled, recognising that different members bring different skills and experience.

Where a risk has been assessed as red this means that we have no experienced or expert Board members for this skill.

Where a risk has been assessed as amber, this indicates that we only have 1 experienced or expert Board member for this skill. Therefore if they are absent or resign, we will be exposed.

We agree that risks should be mitigated by

- Prioritising these gaps when recruiting new Board members
- Training existing Board members
- Retaining the services of suitably qualified and/or experienced professionals or consultants

The audit has identified that one board member brings no relevant experience. Therefore we will review their appointment.

Skill / knowledge	Risk	No experience	Needs guidance	Experienced	Expert
Company law	Red	5	2	0	0
Employment law	Red	4	3	0	0
Tax and financial reports	Green	2	2	3	0
Social impact reporting	Amber	4	1	2	0
Social return on investment	Red	6	1	0	0

We are currently exposed through a lack of expertise in company law and employment law. We will seek to fill this gap by retaining the services of an accountant, HR consultant and lawyer.

We will also

- Seek training aimed at the VCSE sector e.g. offered by infrastructure support organisations such
  - GMCVO [www.gmcvo.org.uk](http://www.gmcvo.org.uk) |
  - MACC [Home](#) | [Macc](#)
  - UnLtd [UnLtd - Home](#) | [The Foundation for Social Entrepreneurs](#) |
  - School for Social Entrepreneurs [The School for Social Entrepreneurs \(the-sse.org\)](http://the-sse.org)



- Subscribe to relevant professional news updates e.g.
  - Consilia Legal who provide informative updates on employment law through their regular bulletins
    - [Employment Law Advice | Leeds Employment Solicitors | Consilia Legal](#)
  - Beever and Struthers who provide informative updates on tax and accounting through their regular newsletters
    - [Charities - Beever and Struthers \(beeverstruthers.co.uk\)](#)

We recognise that it is common for small organisations to lack expertise in social return on investment and that this gap is usually filled by engaging an external consultant.

We note that 2 of our board members self-assess that they are experienced in social impact reporting, yet this does not appear to be an area of strength for our organisation. This may indicate that board expertise is not being applied.

We will ask our 2 experienced Board members to review and strengthen our social impact monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes.

We will also consider strengthening our team's knowledge and experience through

- Appropriate training e.g. from the organisations listed above
- By reviewing available guidance e.g. the Big Lottery guide <https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/research/making-the-most-of-funding/impact-and-outcomes/monitoring-and-evaluation>

Skill / knowledge	Risk	No experience	Needs guidance	Experienced	Expert
Strategic planning		2	2	2	1
Social enterprise performance management		4	1	2	0
Growth planning		3	2	2	0
Income generation		3	1	3	0
Business continuity		2	3	2	0

There are no gaps to fill.

Skill / knowledge	Risk	No experience	Needs guidance	Experienced	Expert
Partnership development/management		2	1	4	0
Stakeholder management		1	1	4	1
Influencing		1	2	4	0
Conflict management		3	1	2	1

There are no gaps to fill.

Skill / knowledge	Risk	No experience	Needs guidance	Experienced	Expert
Project management		0	4	2	1
Risk management		0	4	2	1
Change management		3	2	1	1

Continuous improvement		0	4	2	1
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There are no gaps to fill.

Skill / knowledge	Risk	No experience	Needs guidance	Experienced	Expert
Grant funding		3	3	1	0
Grant management		4	2	1	0
Winning contracts		3	3	1	0
Managing contracts		3	3	1	0
Outputs and outcomes		1	2	4	0
Monitoring and evaluation		0	2	5	0

Grant funding is an important income stream for us and our ability to win, manage, monitor and evaluate these are essential skills. We currently lack this experience at Board level, and this is a gap we will seek to fill when recruiting new Board members.

It is noted that 4 of our board members are experienced in outputs and outcomes and 5 in monitoring and evaluation. This indicates a highly experienced Board, yet monitoring and evaluation does not appear to be an area of strength for our organisation. This is further reinforced by 57% of our team not agreeing that we have good processes in place to monitor outputs or outcomes.

This may indicate that board expertise is not being applied. Therefore, we will ask our experienced Board members to review and strengthen our monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes.

Winning and managing contracts will be increasingly important as we seek to increase your trading income and is a gap to full on our Board when next recruiting.

Skill / knowledge	Risk	No experience	Needs guidance	Experienced	Expert
Innovation		2	2	3	0
Market research		2	3	1	1
Competitive analysis		2	3	1	1
Consultation and engagement		1	3	3	0
Opportunity evaluation		4	0	3	0
Developing services		1	2	4	0
Costing services		1	4	2	0

There are no gaps to fill.

Skill / knowledge	Risk	No experience	Needs guidance	Experienced	Expert
Leadership		0	2	4	1
Managing people		0	1	5	1

Managing volunteers		2	1	3	1
Developing people and/or volunteers		1	2	3	1
Succession planning		3	3	1	0

It would be prudent for our Board member who is experienced in succession planning to train other Board members to eliminate this gap. We will arrange this.

Skill / knowledge	Risk	No experience	Needs guidance	Experienced	Expert
Profile raising		2	1	4	0
Social media		3	1	2	1
Marketing		3	3	0	1
Fund raising		3	2	2	0

It would be prudent for our Board member who is an expert in marketing to train other Board members to eliminate this gap. We will arrange this.

Skill / knowledge	Risk	No experience	Needs guidance	Experienced	Expert
LGBT+ routes to parenthood		0	1	4	2
LGBT+ parent led family challenges		0	3	3	1
Organising meetups and events		0	2	5	0
Designing and delivering workshops and/or training		0	3	2	2
Designing and delivering young people's activities		2	1	1	3
Health and wellbeing		0	2	4	2

There are no gaps to fill.

Skill / knowledge	Risk	No experience	Needs guidance	Experienced	Expert
Policies		0	2	3	2
Business processes		1	1	3	2
Business systems and technology		1	1	4	1
Health and safety		0	1	4	2
Safeguarding		0	2	3	2

There are no gaps to fill.

### 4.3.2 Organisational strengths questionnaire

In order to assess our organisation's strengths a simple questionnaire was used.

Throughout this section, issues have been highlighted to address. These have been identified using a combination of individual answer scores and considering the overall section. Some of these may be issues of perception, but prudent reviews will ensure that concerns are considered and addressed.

#### Our leadership and governance

<i>Question</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither disagree nor agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
I know what our vision is				2	5	
I know what our purpose is				1	6	
I know what our values are				2	5	
Directors act in accordance with our values				2	5	
Volunteers act in accordance with our values				3	1	3
Our Directors are effective and have the right skills and experience				2	5	
Our Directors have good relationships with key partners e.g. Council				5	2	
I know what our plans are for our future as an organisation				5	2	
Our Directors are good at identifying and managing risks				5	2	
Our Directors are good at managing change			1	2	4	
Our Directors are committed to continuously improving				2	5	
Our Volunteers are committed to continuously improving				2	2	3

It appears that some people are unaware or do not have visibility of the contributions our volunteers make. We will address this through communication and reporting.

#### Our people

<i>Question</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither disagree nor agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
I have the skills and experience to do my job				4	3	
Our team has the skills and experience we need to deliver				2	5	
Our volunteers have the skills and experience we need to deliver			1	1	2	3

We have enough people to deliver			2	4	1	
We have enough volunteers to deliver			3	1	1	2
I get the training and development that I need to do my role			2	1	3	1
I get the training and development that I need to achieve my aspirations			2	2	2	1
We have good policies and processes in place to manage and support our team		1	1	2	2	
I can talk to a Director at anytime				2	4	
It is easy to tell a Director when something goes wrong				2	4	
I am encouraged to make suggestions to improve the way we do things				1	5	
I am asked about changes before they happen and given the opportunity to contribute			2	1	3	
We help each other					4	
I am the only person in our team who can do my role	1	3		1		1
When I am absent there is somebody else who is trained and able to step in					4	3
I feel valued				1	5	

There appear to be concerns or a lack of awareness about numbers of volunteers and their skills and experience. We will

- Undertake a review of volunteer capacity to establish where there are shortfalls, with recruitment undertaken if necessary
- Address skills shortfalls through recruitment and training
- Address experience shortfalls through recruitment and individual development

A number of people do not agree that we have sufficient team members and also that they themselves get the training and development they need for their role and to achieve their aspirations. Therefore we will

- Review team capacity to establish where there are shortfalls, with recruitment undertaken if necessary
- Undertake skills audits and create personal development plans to address shortfalls and help achieve aspirations

1 person states that they are the only person who can do their role. Therefore we will ensure there is at least 1 deputy for each role. As we have a small team, it might be necessary to achieve this by having different people deputise for different aspects of the role.

There are mixed views on whether policies and processes are effective. Therefore we will review both.

There also appear to be some communication issues with 2 people not agreeing that they are consulted about changes or given the chance to contribute. Therefore a review of how changes are identified, decided and communicated will be undertaken.

## Communication and marketing

<i>Question</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither disagree nor agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
We consult and communicate with our team regularly and well			1	2	4	
We consult and communicate with our volunteers regularly and well				2	2	3
We consult and communicate with the people who use our services regularly and well				2	5	
We consult and communicate with our community regularly and well				3	4	
We consult and communicate with our partners (e.g. Council) regularly and well			1	3	3	
We are good at marketing and 'selling' our services			1	4	2	
We are good at using social media to engage our community				4	3	
We are good at using social media to promote what we do				4	3	
We are good at using social media to influence others e.g. partners, funders			4	1	2	
We are good at reporting our social impact to different audiences e.g. funder, partner, community			3	1	3	

There appears to be a lack of awareness about the need to consult and communicate with volunteers. We will address this through communication and training.

The majority of people have indicated that social media isn't being used as a strategic tool to influence others. As we have marketing expertise on our Board we will ask these Board members to help develop an appropriate strategy and plan in this respect.

Several people don't agree that we're good at reporting our social impact to different audiences. This reinforces the lack of experience and expertise referred to above which we will address through training.

## Innovation

<i>Question</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither disagree nor agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
Our Directors are good at coming up with new ideas				3	4	
Our Volunteers are good at coming up with new ideas				3	1	3
We regularly look at what other organisations across the UK and beyond are doing to discover new ideas and ways of doing things			5	2		
We have a clear process for evaluating ideas and deciding which to take			3	2	2	

forward						
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There appears to be a lack of awareness of the importance and role of volunteers. We will address this through communication and training.

We will implement a process of regularly looking outside of our organisation for new ideas and ways of doing things.

We will develop, communicate and train people in a process to evaluate ideas.

### Services

<i>Question</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither disagree nor agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
We have a good process in place to understand the costs of delivering our services and regularly review these			2	2	3	
We have a good process in place to set appropriate prices for our services and regularly review these			2	2	2	1
We have a good process in place to manage delivery of grants and projects – they are delivered on time and within budget			3	1	3	
We have good processes in place to monitor and evaluate outputs (e.g. numbers of people who attend session)		2	2	1	2	
We have good processes in place to monitor and evaluate outcomes (e.g. reduced isolation)		2	2	1	2	
We have a good process in place to write grant applications				4	3	

Grant funding is an important income stream for us and our ability to monitor and evaluate outputs and outcomes are essential skills. 57% of our team have not agreed that we have good processes in place to monitor outputs or outcomes. However, it is surprising as 4 of our Board members self-assess as being experienced in outputs and outcomes and 5 in monitoring and evaluation. This indicates a highly experienced Board, yet monitoring and evaluation does not appear to be an area of strength for us.

This may indicate that Board expertise is not being applied. Therefore, we will ask our experienced Board members to review and strengthen our monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes.

Managing grants is also a key skill but 43% of our team are unable to agree that we have a good process in place to manage delivery on time and within budget. We will review our processes and training in this respect.

Our team appears unsure about our processes for understanding and setting costs for our services. As our Board has this experience, we will ask them to develop and deliver a staff training session in this respect.

## Infrastructure

Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
Our computers, technology and software meet my role needs			1		1	5
The management information we produce meets my role needs			1	2	1	3
I have the equipment I need to do my role				3	3	1
We have strong financial planning and management skills			2	4	1	
We have strong financial planning and management processes and systems			3	3	1	
We actively manage cash flow and are able to anticipate problems			3	3	1	
We regularly review our financial performance and address any opportunities to improve			3	2	2	
We have diverse income streams and are not dependent on any one source		1	2	2	2	
We regularly review our operational performance and address any opportunities to improve			1	4	2	
We have good processes in place to measure and report our social impact		1	3	1	2	
We regularly review our social impact performance and address any opportunities to improve		1	2	2	2	

The majority of amber boxes have probably arisen due to these team members not being involved in these aspects of our organisation.

As before there are issues with measuring, reporting and improving social impact which need to be addressed.

As a social enterprise, diversifying our income streams is important. We are starting to address this through seeking to sell training services.

## 5. Sustainability

The Board recognises that it needs to develop a sustainability strategy to increase trading income and reduce reliance on grants.

Our strongest potential income stream is selling training. We have evidenced this by selling training to organisations that include Home Start, The National Autistic Society, Adoption Counts, Three Circles Fostering and the Greater Manchester and Cheshire East Strategic Clinical Network. To strengthen this offer we will also seek CPD accreditation for our programmes to make them more attractive to all sectors.

We believe that we can also develop a consultancy offer to support organisations develop inclusivity specifically relating to LGBT+ parents/carers. Initial research indicates that buyers would include the health care sector, adoption and foster agencies, and education.



We will seek to diversify our fundraising by seeking corporate sponsorship and corporate promotion packages that will provide funds for us and also support the LGBT+ parent/carer community to be aware of and access relevant services. We have allocated time to our Managing Director develop this. We will also seek to raise funds using digital channels, donation buckets at events, raffles, etc. Our Community Engagement Worker will take responsibility for this and will be supported by volunteers and our parent committee boards.

We remain committed to developing a strong volunteer programme and parent committee boards which will help to ensure we remain user-led as well as increase our capacity. These initiatives were placed on hold during the pandemic.

## Appendix 1 – Evaluation data

A representative focus group complete the evaluation questionnaires.

### Q1: How long have you been involved with Proud 2B Parents?

	I am new	1 to 3 months	3 to 6 months	6 to 12 months	Over 1 year
Number of participants		1	2	5	24
Percentage of participants		3%	6%	16%	75%

### Q2: Do you consider yourself to?

	Be from the LGBT+ community	Be from the BAME community	Have a learning disability or be autistic	Have a physical disability
Number of participants	32	1	3	3
Percentage of participants	100%	3%	9%	9%

### Q3: How are you involved with Proud 2B Parents?

	I attend sessions	I am a volunteer	I am a paid member of staff	I am a director
Number of participants	27	1	2	2
Percentage of participants	84%	3%	6%	6%

### Q4: Which sessions have you attended?

	Monthly meetups	Mid-week meet-ups	Family fun day	Parents 2B sessions	Workshops	None – engage via social media or newsletter	Other
Number of participants	30	16	24	3	10	1	6
Percentage of participants	94%	50%	75%	9%	31%	3%	19%

### Q5: Seeing people like me involved in Proud 2 b Parents influenced my decision to join?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Number of participants	22	6	4	
Percentage of participants	69%	19%	12%	

**Q6: I feel that I belong at Proud 2 b Parents?**

	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never
Number of participants	23	8	1	
Percentage of participants	72%	25	3%	

**Q7: How proud do I feel of my contribution to Proud 2 b Parents?**

	Very proud	Proud	Occasionally proud	Not proud
Number of participants	20	10	2	
Percentage of participants	62%	31%	6%	

**Q8: How much have I enjoyed my involvement with Proud 2 b Parents?**

	I enjoyed it very much	I enjoyed it	I didn't enjoy it
Number of participants	30	2	
Percentage of participants	94%	6%	

**Q9: How much happier has being involved with Proud 2 b Parents made me?**

	Happier	The same	Less happy
Number of participants	30	2	
Percentage of participants	94%	6%	

**Q10: My confidence as a parent or parent to be has improved because of being involved with Proud 2 b Parents?**

	Yes	No
Number of participants	29	3
Percentage of participants	90%	9%

**Q11: My self-esteem (the way I feel about myself) has improved because of being involved with Proud 2 b Parents?**

	Yes	No
Number of participants	26	6
Percentage of participants	81%	19%

**Q12: My wellbeing has improved because of being involved with Proud 2 b Parents?**

	Yes	No
Number of participants	30	2
Percentage of participants	94%	6%

**Q13: I/my family feels less isolated because of being involved with Proud 2 b Parents?**

	Yes	No
Number of participants	32	
Percentage of participants	100%	

**Q14: I feel better about my family life and future because of being involved with Proud 2 b Parents?**

	Yes	No
Number of participants	30	2
Percentage of participants	94%	6%

**Q15: I feel more positive about my parent/child relationship because of being involved with Proud 2 b Parents?**

	Yes	No
Number of participants	23	9
Percentage of participants	71%	28%

**Q16: I have gained new skills and/or knowledge through Proud 2 b Parents?**

	Yes	No
Number of participants	26	6
Percentage of participants	81%	19%