

Young parents

Research briefing for professionals working with young people

One in three (33%) of the young people supported by young people’s violence advisors (YPVAs) or other specialist practitioners were pregnant and/ or had children of their own. These young people were particularly vulnerable, as were their children. Many live independently (43%) and very few (19%) are in education, employment or training.

In the year to January 2015, caseholders supported 113 young people who had children of their own and/or were pregnant.

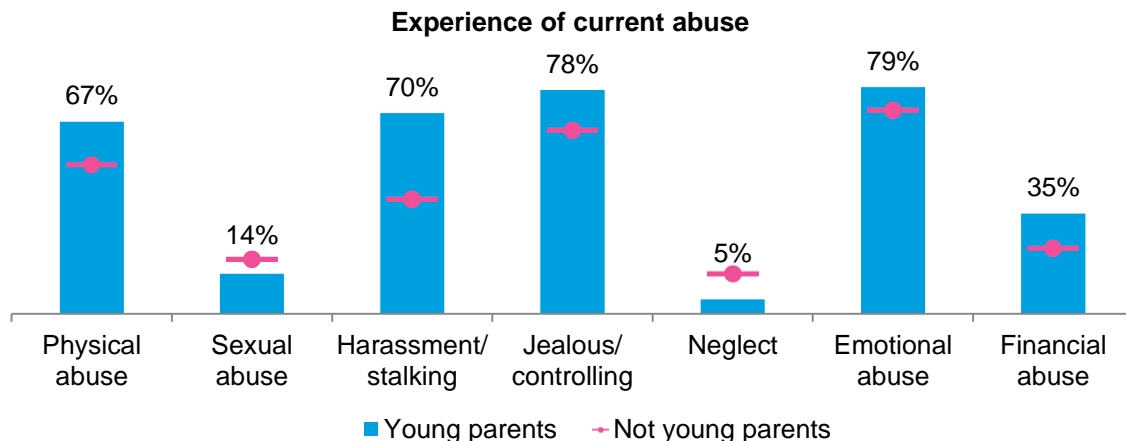
80 young people (23%) had children of their own, four of whom were pregnant with their second child. In total, 90 children were parented by young people who were supported by YPVAs or other specialist practitioners. A further 33 young women (12%) were pregnant.

The vast majority (96%) of the young people supported were female. They ranged in age from 15 to 25 years old. The majority of referrals were made by children and young people’s services (28%), criminal justice agencies (27%) or the Marac (21%).

For the vast majority (94%) of young parents, the primary reason for the referral was intimate partner violence.

91% of young parents were experiencing current abuse at the point of case engagement. The most frequently recorded type of abuse experienced was emotional abuse (79%). Harassment and stalking was particularly prevalent amongst young parents (70%), compared to young people who did not have children (40%). Each type of abuse was most frequently perpetrated by the young person’s current or ex-boyfriend.

More than half (52%) had experienced abuse in the past. Physical abuse was the most frequently recorded type of historic abuse, and was reported by 30% of young parents. One in four (25%) had experienced neglect in childhood.

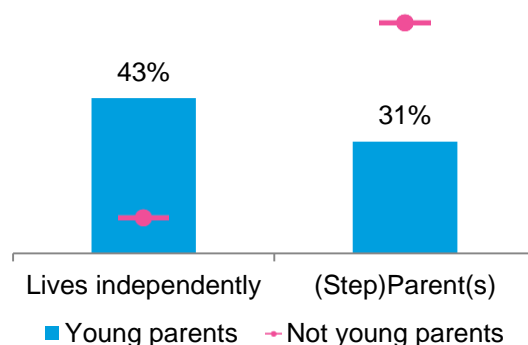


Young parents are more likely to live independently and less likely to be in education, employment or training.

Fewer young parents lived with their parents or step parents, compared to young people who did not have children. Almost half (43%) of the young parents lived independently, some of whom were as young as 16 years old. In comparison, 10% of young people who did not have children lived independently.

Three-quarters (75%) of the young parents supported were not in education, employment or training (Neet). This is considerably higher than the proportion of young people without children who were Neet (26%).

With whom does the young person normally live?



Many young parents were experiencing mental health issues, with depression and/or anxiety particularly prevalent.

Three-quarters (76%) of the young parents were experiencing mental health issues, most frequently depression and/or anxiety (68%). The biggest area of concern recorded by caseholders was around emotional wellbeing – for 72% of young parents, the caseholder recorded severe or moderate concerns. More than half (59%) of young parents were experiencing feelings of blame or responsibility.

The majority (82%) of young parents had agency involvement with children’s social care.

The vast majority (82%) of young parents had agency involvement from children’s social care in place at some point, most frequently (70%) during their engagement with the YPVA or other specialist practitioner. For one in three (34%) young parents, a child in need (S17) assessment was undertaken. A child protection plan was put in place for one in four (25%) young parents.

Young parents were supported to improve their understanding of abusive relationships.

The vast majority (90%) of young parents were supported with their health and wellbeing, most frequently (74%) to improve their understanding of abusive relationships. Almost half (48%) were supported with self-esteem issues.

At case closure, caseholders recorded considerable improvements in every measure of young parents’ health and wellbeing. In particular, there were fewer concerns about young peoples’ feelings of blame and/or responsibility, and their social behaviour and relationships.

Caseholders also supported young parents to access children’s centres (28%), health visitors (21%) and parenting programmes (13%).

Support and interventions	n=	131
Wellbeing advice and support	55	90%
Health advice and support	42	69%
Support with housing	39	64%
Criminal and civil justice process	31	51%
Financial and benefits advice	19	31%
Support with education	11	18%
Support with training and employment	10	16%

The support of a YPVA or specialist practitioner is effective in improving the health, safety and wellbeing of young parents.

More than half (52%) of the young parents reported that they were not experiencing any abuse at case closure. Caseholders reported that there was a reduction in risk for three-quarters (79%) of young parents.

The young people themselves reported positive changes in their safety and their quality of life.

Young parent's reported outcomes

