

**Evaluation of Making a Difference Programme:
Rosemount Lifelong Learning
July 2010**



Anne Meikle and Patricia Urquhart

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Executive Summary: Making a Difference Evaluation Report

Background

In May 2010, Rosemount Lifelong Learning (RLL) commissioned **afm associates** to conduct an evaluation of the 'Making a Difference' programme.

'Making a Difference' is delivered and managed from the Information Support and Guidance department of RLL and the programme is aimed at improving the life skills of young parents in Glasgow aged 16 – 25.

The aims of the evaluation were to –

- Assess the impact of the 'Making a Difference' (MAD) programme on tenancy sustainability and the value of such impact for housing organisations and tenants;
- Assess the effectiveness of the MAD programme in achieving improvements in core skills and qualifications, and in supporting parents to progress on to college / FE;
- Assess the effectiveness of the MAD programme in achieving improvements in parenting skills and in the health and well-being of parents and children.

Methodology

The methods used while undertaking the evaluation of MAD were –

- Desk research: this included examining funding applications; student records (including referral forms and personal development plans); the course programme and activities. Other key documents e.g. Glasgow Housing Association (GHA) Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan; Rosemount reports, Scottish Government policy documents, etc., were also considered.
- One to one interviews with programme participants (students)
- Focus groups with students (past and present)
- Interviews with stakeholders including GHA, Parent and Child Together (PACT) teams, two further education colleges, and other key contributors to programme.
- Meetings with staff at RLL.

The information gathered from above documentation, and written and oral evidence from the stakeholders and students, was then collated and analysed, with reference to the aims of the evaluation exercise. This evidence forms the main findings of this report.

Project Background and Description

Since 1998, RLL has developed specialised programmes working with vulnerable parents and their children in the North Glasgow area. The MAD programme (which has been developing since 2008) recognises the complex needs of young parents in particular, and attempts to address some of the key issues which can lead to problems with sustaining tenancies, including lack of developed life skills and poor budgeting skills. The programme is delivered currently in three areas of Glasgow – North Glasgow, East Glasgow and South East Glasgow.

Outcomes which the MAD programme hope to achieve are –

- Increased confidence, self-esteem and aspirations
- Improved tenancy sustainability
- Improved parenting skills
- Improved health of parents and children
- Increased core skills and employability

The MAD programme brings together young parents aged between 16 and 25 years old and develops over an academic year across three phases –

1. A Personal Development / Introductory course which lasts for 15 weeks;
2. A Learning Life Skills / Core course which lasts for 18 weeks, and
3. A Progression / Exit course which takes place over 10 weeks.

The young parents (students) attend two or three days each week with free childcare available for all. Each student receives a £15.00 payment (attendance based) training allowance. If they fully attend the course, a further £5.00 per week is paid into a credit union account which is opened for each student. Welfare benefits are not affected by these payments.

Each MAD programme is unique and programme content is, as far as possible, participant led. There are core activities that are delivered in line with the key aims and listed outcomes, such as money management, healthy cooking, confidence building, developing parenting skills and arts and crafts. Literacy and numeracy is built in as a core skill. There are also opportunities to gain certificates in areas such as First Aid, IT skills, and child development. The programme also includes a residential element during which a number of group work sessions are held, mostly focussing on future personal development, but also seeking to further develop the group in a community based project of their own choosing.

Rosemount Lifelong Learning is the main stakeholder of the programme, providing overall management, staff – including childcare staff, guidance staff (providing student support) and management support. RLL also provides funding in cash and in-kind to the programme.

There are a number of additional key stakeholders who contribute in a variety of ways to the MAD project –

- Glasgow Housing Association – providing grant funding referring students, and also providing input to programme sessions.
- Big Lottery Fund – providing grant funding.
- Local PACT (Parent and Child Together) teams – referring students and providing support to students during the programme; also providing input to programme sessions.
- Skills Development Scotland (Young Parents Project) – referring students and providing support to students during programme.

- Further Education Colleges (John Wheatley College and North Glasgow College) – providing support to students and input to programme sessions.
- Impact Arts – providing support and input to programme sessions.
- Glasgow East Mobile Crèche – providing free (to the students) professional childcare for those taking part in the East End and South East programmes.
- Save the Children – provide an input to the programme focussing on future development of the group. They also provide support to the residential element of the programme for the East End students.

Policy Context

Inequalities in health and other social outcomes have been well documented in Scotland over the last few years and, in particular, have been highlighted in three social policy frameworks produced by the Scottish Government –

- the ‘Early Years Framework’ – promoting early intervention strategies for young children (2009);
- ‘Equally Well’ – looking at how to tackle health inequalities (2008) and
- ‘Achieving Our Potential’ (2008) - the framework to tackle poverty and inequality in Scotland.

The concept behind the development of MAD recognises that these complex issues of health, inequality and poverty are inextricably linked. Therefore, MAD seeks to develop a preventative approach in working with young parents and their children in an attempt to break the cycle of poor outcomes for families in some of the most deprived communities in Glasgow.

The challenge facing all public services is in dealing with high demand on their services while trying to develop prevention work. For example, preventing the breakdown of a tenancy agreement between a young parent and their housing association is arguably more cost effective in the immediate term than dealing with a family that has become homeless. Early intervention work with families is proven to be worthwhile and while it has relevance to a wide range of social policy, it is of particular relevance to the early years.

Making A Difference: Results from Students

A personal file was kept on each student by the guidance and support team at RLL. Each file contained referral forms; personal development plans; childcare registration forms; any correspondence and exit evaluation forms written by the students themselves. The files also contained ‘distance travelled’ forms. These were forms completed by the students at the key stages of the project – initial, halfway and on exiting the programme. For this evaluation project, the records of 46 students were studied. (These students came from across all three projects - RLL, Toryglen and the East End – and took part in the MAD programme between April 2009 and June 2010)

There were concerns across all of the groups about leaving their children in childcare. These concerns ranged from nervousness about 'leaving my kid with strangers' to feeling worried about whether their child would settle into a childcare environment. (Almost all of the children were new to a formal childcare setting.) However, after a couple of weeks, these fears seem to have dissipated quickly as the students saw how well their children were progressing developmentally as a result of the childcare. This helped the students settle more into the MAD programme when they saw how well their children had settled.

In response to what barriers there were for participation, all reported that if there had not been free on-site childcare, and also help with travelling expenses; they would not have been able to participate in the programme.

All of the students interviewed stated that the MAD course had been extremely beneficial to them and also to their children. From the interviews, there were universally expressed views-

- There was some uncertainty at the beginning about joining and participating in a group but after a couple of weeks the group itself became quite important.
- All said that their confidence had increased greatly.
- Establishing a routine to the day and getting out of the house appears to be a lasting effect from being on the programme.
- All of the students interviewed felt very positive about the future and had developed a different attitude since completing the course. Three had applied to college and two received notice of a start date. One student commented that she would be speaking publicly for the first time at an event being held by the Big Lottery Fund in Glasgow City Centre.
- Support from the guidance staff and the role of the childcare staff at RLL and also at the East End Mobile Crèche team has been invaluable to the students. They all expressed how important that support had been to them and many of the students – both at interviews and in the focus groups – were very clear about the fact that they would not have been able to continue with the programme had it not been for the staff. The staff made them feel comfortable and supported while encouraging continued development and progression.

As well as benefits to the students themselves, the children of the students gained a lot from the MAD programme. As well as good quality childcare provision being an essential contributor towards the participation of these young parents, the childcare played a role in the children's development. Almost all of these children had no previous experience of formal childcare, so the students were anxious too, about them settling in, etc.

Making a Difference: Results from Stakeholders

An important part of the evaluation process was to meet with the key stakeholders who were involved in the MAD programme. Involvement of each stakeholder varied but some key

questions addressed included - what the stakeholders thought of the MAD programme; what benefits they had witnessed, if any; what contribution MAD made to their own organisational action planning and strategic aims, and whether or not they would be willing to support MAD future programmes.

Evidently, all of the stakeholders gained a lot by being part of the MAD programme. There were clear links of added value across the stakeholder organisations with all citing MAD as a very worthwhile and innovative project with which to be involved.

All of the staff at RLL noted that MAD had been a very successful programme. The programme is very labour and resource intensive. All of the staff, while acknowledging that this is a very complex area of work, including trying to breakdown cycles of inequality and deprivation, were very positive about the programme and its outcomes. Changes in the students and in the children made it a very worthwhile and rewarding project.

The Achievement of Outcomes and Key Learning Points

1. Distinctiveness of the MAD programme

- MAD is unique and delivers a programme unlike others in the city of Glasgow area. It is a very successful programme aiming to achieve many different but related outcomes. The MAD programme remains focussed on key outcomes and manages to achieve those outcomes while continuing to be responsive to the principles of being participant led and keeping a learner centred approach. The learning environment is very flexible which is important in maintaining the interest of the young parents.
- Benefits for both students and their children are very much for the longer term and a long term approach and vision is maintained.
- The provision of free on-site childcare is clearly invaluable and essential to the participation of young parents. Childcare not provided on-site would cause additional stress for the parents and children and disrupt the programme.
- The MAD programme is in great demand. It may be concluded that this demonstrates a lack of support programmes for young parents generally across Glasgow. Other training programmes do not provide free childcare which is a huge barrier for participation by young parents.

2. Staff Commitment

- Childcare staff at RLL had to change patterns of work and adapt quickly as the numbers of children from MAD and the timeframe in which to settle them in, etc., was quite different and at times challenging.
- The building of trust and developing a relationship with the staff was important to the students. Guidance staff were highly praised and all of the students were very clear about how the excellent support received maintained their involvement in the MAD programme.
- A dedicated worker for follow-up with MAD students has recently been appointed. This is a crucial element to the MAD programme. Comment cannot be made on the contribution to date but it is an important addition to the team.

3. Information and Communication

- There is already a good system in place of record keeping for students. This is a time consuming but essential element of the programme as funders and stakeholders require evidence for continued involvement in MAD. Methods of keeping records could be improved, however, with better use of database systems and simpler recording techniques.
- Communication is extremely important across RLL staff members, stakeholders, and those delivering the programme. The developmental and evolving nature of the programme demands clear lines of regular communication between all stakeholders.
- Publicity for the MAD programme is very effective. Students come from a wide range of referral methods via stakeholders while some came along as a result of general marketing and local publicity.

4. Development of Skills

- The programme strikes a good balance between educating the young parents while also informing them of their rights. For example, a number of issues were raised regarding housing, housing conditions, consumer rights, etc., and the parents were coached on how to deal with these situations effectively. Building such confidence and developing independence has been a very successful element of MAD.
- Students acknowledged their needs around literacy and were clear that they needed support in this area.
- Having the opportunity for the students to 'try out' some of the new skills learned in the programme, for example, going to Big Lottery Fund showcase event and getting the chance to speak in public about the programme, came across as one of the highlights for the students, giving them a sense of achievement.

5. Improved Parent – Child Relations

- There has been a noticeable increase in the quality of the parent-child relationship. While the majority of evidence for this comes from the young parents themselves, childcare staff also reported evidence of progress in this area.
- The children of parents taking part in the programme benefitted greatly from the childcare / nursery experience. The parents commented on how well their children had developed in terms of better speech; better sleeping (and routine); improved eating habits; learning to play and be with other children; bonding with childcare staff etc.
- Students stated that they often felt criticised as parents – both by other family members and also professional workers. Many did not want to answer the questions (on evaluation sheets) on improvements in parenting skills, as to write that this had improved may have suggested that their skills were previously weak. While students were sensitive about this issue, they did agree that taking part in

the MAD programme had helped them look at the issue and think of ways of changing behaviour.

6. Health

- Maintaining good mental health is a key issue for a majority of the students. A number of the students disclosed that they were in receipt of prescription drugs for depression, and wanted to look at alternative ways to address this. Taking part in the MAD programme appears to have assisted the students in improving their mental health and sense of well being. Almost all of the students reported feeling much better with a greater sense of structure and purpose to their week. Many reported that their children were much calmer (as a result of increased activities with other children during the day) and so they, too, felt calmer and more able to cope with the demands of the children.
- Changes in diet were also reported by students – for them and their children – as a result of learning new cookery skills and also money management. Childcare staff also reported improvements in diet of children.

7. Partnership Working

- The MAD Programme relies very heavily on the input from other partner agencies. The programme needs in-kind support commitment and a multi-agency approach for survival.

Conclusions

Tenancy Sustainability

There is evidence that taking part in the MAD programme has increased the awareness and confidence of students of their rights and responsibilities regarding their tenancy agreement. Effective links and communication between RLL guidance staff and GHA staff meant that arrangements were made for housing officers to go along and talk to the students about expectations of being a good tenant; what a tenancy agreement meant and to encourage students to join tenant organisations.

Evidence also suggests a greater ability to engage positively with the housing provider and also improved skills in budgeting and money management have all contributed to greater likelihood of tenancy sustainability. Indeed, during the course of the programme, no tenancies have been lost.

However, fully assessing the longer term impact of MAD on tenancy sustainability is more complex as a result of –

- Lack of monitoring of tenancies of previous students. GHA do not monitor MAD students specifically once they have left the programme so there is no way of tracking continuous improvement or sustained progress;

- Lack of clear indicators as to how the tenancy has improved and lack of written records regarding each tenancy.

Improvement of Core Skills and Supporting Parents to progress onto Further Education

The methods through which core skills were developed (in group work and non-threatening approach) were mentioned by students and guidance staff as being particularly useful. While it is more difficult to assess the **actual** improvement of core skills, such as literacy and numeracy, (as there are limits to the results which can be evidenced by this type of approach) all students reported an increase in confidence and improved self esteem which did have an effect on core skill development. It is important to acknowledge the incremental improvements of the students in these areas – particularly given the context of complex barriers to learning which have been experienced by the majority of students.

Improvements in parenting skills and in health and well-being of parents and children

The report shows evidence from PACT teams, RLL childcare and guidance staff, and students which suggests improvements in these areas. Despite the fact that the students were reluctant to discuss “parenting skills” as part of the evaluation, the majority stated that they enjoyed the child development sessions that were delivered as part of the MAD programme.

‘Parenting’ is a very difficult area to assess. Evidence here is subjective and individual. While this does not make the evidence of visible improvement, as witnessed by childcare or other staff invalid, clearer indicators on what ‘parenting skills’ actually mean, is required.

Improvements in mental health and feelings of well being were reported by all students in focus groups and interviews and these improvements are also documented in written Personal Development Plans. A very real concern for many however, was the ‘what’s next after MAD’.

Recommendations

1. Distinctiveness of MAD

- MAD is a highly successful programme which should continue as it is meeting the needs of many young parents. It is also meeting the strategic and operational needs of many of its stakeholders.
- If MAD is to be developed in other areas, on-site childcare needs to be provided as it is essential to the smooth running of the project.
- While MAD is an expensive programme to run, it can be argued that it is cost effective. It is recommended that a Social Return on Investment (SROI) exercise is undertaken so that a ‘social value’ description can be given. (see Appendix 2)

- A clearer system needs to be put in place for monitoring the effectiveness of the MAD programme in relation to tenancy sustainability. The potential impact for housing associations cannot be measured if there is no monitoring of tenancies beyond the life the programme.

2. Staff Commitment

- While it is labour and resource intensive, the guidance staff: student ratio needs to be maintained in order to sustain the high success and low drop out rate of MAD. There is always the potential for the need for crisis management.
- Funding for the follow-on/support worker must be a primary component of MAD project design. The role of this worker is crucial in terms of tracking progress of the students and for future evaluation exercises. It is also important for the ex-students to receive a bit of support once the programme has ended. This support should be for at least 6 – 9 months in duration.

3. Information and Communication

- Improved systems for record keeping need to be established. This would save time for staff and also assist them when providing information and updates to stakeholders. This will help not only RLL but provide validation for involvement by external partners. This could also save costs in external evaluation.
- An 'Exit Pack / Resource Pack' should be developed for each student. This pack would contain information on the range of topics covered and where to get support e.g. health services, including mental health; childcare services; education and employability programmes; consumer rights; arts and leisure courses, etc.
- National and Local policy can be informed by the results of projects such as MAD. RLL should make the success of MAD known to policy makers and other practitioners and potential partners.
- RLL should be planning for an evaluation of MAD in two or three years time so that the longer term benefits, from the early days of the programme, can be reported.

4. Development of skills

- Literacy is key issue for the students. There is recognition amongst the students themselves of this need. Support needs to be put in place for this so as to avoid potential disappointment and failure when seeking further education or employment opportunities. Types of 'access' or 'bridging' programmes should be investigated so that these may be offered to MAD completers.

- Further work needs to be done on how assessment is made in particular key areas, for example, parenting, and literacy. Indicators for improvements in levels of literacy (and in parenting skills) in the MAD programme may need to be reconsidered, as it is difficult to evidence skill improvement in the current programme. This is of particular importance when students are to be encouraged to apply for FE courses.
- The residential element of the programme should be inserted at an earlier stage and not at the end of the programme. As an integral part of the programme, it can be used in a constructive way at a midway point for example, and deal with issues such as routine, behavioural / childcare issues, healthy eating etc. it also serves as an important part of the bonding and team working factors of the programme.

5. Partnership Working

- A system of self-evaluation should be established amongst the stakeholders and delivery partners. This will improve communication between stakeholders. This could be a system of meetings or regular recording amongst all those involved in the programme, including delivery.
- Clearer indicators are needed as all Stakeholders need to know what they are working towards achieving. Dialogue with the young parents may assist in developing indicators, for example, on issues such as parenting skills and what it means to them. The students themselves will then be more aware of the improvements towards which they are working.
- MAD needs to continue to develop a more inclusive way of involving the students – as young people, as parents, as tenants, as potential students, employees, etc. More student user involvement in the design of programme in addition to consultation (with previous students) through evaluation of each programme is one way to address this issue.
- The multi-agency partnership approach to MAD needs to develop a system to ensure that there are agencies ready to take referrals from the follow-up/support worker.

Section 1

1.1 Background: Rosemount Lifelong Learning

Rosemount Lifelong Learning (RLL) provides a variety of adult learning opportunities, with supporting childcare, at its two centres in North Glasgow – the Millburn Centre and the Flexi centre. RLL states that its mission is to, “reduce poverty by providing high quality childcare and increasing lifelong learning opportunities in an approachable and supportive community setting.”

RLL employs 53 staff to deliver childcare and learning to more 1000 adults and 350 children each year. Established in 1998, RLL was built on a former Save the Children Project and has now developed more broadly to support residents in North Glasgow take up accessible learning opportunities, allied to quality childcare. All childcare services are run by experienced and qualified childcare staff.

RLL’s stated vision is: “We want every adult and child in North Glasgow to have the confidence, skills and contacts to enjoy life’s chances, diverse friendships, health and prosperity.”

A range of courses are offered varying from Core Skills classes that run all year, and non-vocational and accredited courses that run at different times of the year.¹

As well as the Lifelong Learning feature, RLL provides other support services to the local community such as the Rosemount Family Links service – a service which supports children and families affected by drugs and alcohol misuse. There are also services and group work sessions available for long term unemployed, local residents with mental health issues and others experiencing social isolation. There is also an active Men’s Group and a programme for young parents (Making a Difference).

1.2 Programme Description: ‘Making a Difference’

Since 1998, RLL has developed specialised programmes working with vulnerable parents and their children in the North Glasgow area. The ‘Making A Difference’ (MAD) programme (which has been developing since 2008) recognises the complex needs of young parents in particular, and attempts to address some of the key issues which can lead to problems with sustaining tenancies, including lack of developed life skills and poor budgeting skills.

Outcomes which the MAD programme hope to achieve are –

- Increased confidence, self-esteem and aspirations amongst the young parents;
- Improved tenancy sustainability;
- Improved parenting skills;
- Improved health of parents and children;
- Increased core skills and employability.

¹ For a full range of courses available see www.rosemount.ac.uk

The MAD programme brings together young parents aged between 16 and 25 years old and develops over an academic year across three phases –

- A Personal Development / Introductory course which lasts for 15 weeks;
- A Learning Life Skills / Core course which lasts for 18 weeks, and
- A Progression / Exit course which takes place over 10 weeks.

The young parents attend two or three days each week with free childcare available for all. Each student receives a £15.00 payment (attendance based) training allowance. If they fully attend the course, a further £5.00 per week is paid into a credit union account which is opened for each student. Benefits are not affected by these payments.

Each MAD programme is unique and programme content is, as far as possible, participant led. There are core activities that are delivered in line with the key aims and listed outcomes, such as money management, healthy cooking, confidence building, developing parenting skills, and arts and crafts. Literacy and numeracy is built in as a core skill. There are also opportunities to gain certificates in areas such as First Aid, IT skills, and child development.

The programme also included a weekend residential component during which a number of group work sessions are held, mostly focussing on future personal development. A further purpose of the residential weekend was to move the group forward by means of identifying a project that could be undertaken in the local community. The weekend is spent identifying the project and creating an action plan for its implementation. This took the students through a series of steps including thinking about what project resources might be needed and who would be key stakeholders etc. Any agreed project from the residential weekend would become part of the 'Inspiring Change' programme which is funded and supported by Save the Children.

The programme is currently delivered in three different areas of Glasgow – North Glasgow (at RLL); East Glasgow (at the East End Healthy Living Centre) and South East Glasgow (at Toryglen Resource Centre).

Rosemount Lifelong Learning is the main stakeholder of the MAD programme, providing overall management, including financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and referring students to the programme. RLL also provides all guidance staff and support staff – including childcare staff. It is also the role of RLL to coordinate and support input from other stakeholders and promote development of the programme.

There are a number of additional key stakeholders who contribute in a variety of ways to the MAD project –

- Glasgow Housing Association – provides grant funding, refers students, and provides input to programme sessions;
- Big Lottery Fund – provides grant funding;
- Local PACT (Parent and Child Together) teams – refers students, provides support to students during programme and provides input to programme sessions;

- Skills Development Scotland – refers students and provides support to students during programme;
- Further Education Colleges (John Wheatley College and North Glasgow College) – provides support to students and input to programme sessions;
- Impact Arts – provides input to programme sessions;
- Glasgow East Mobile Crèche – providing free (to the students) professional childcare for students taking part in the East End programme.
- Save the Children - provided an input to the programme focussing on future development of the group. (This development is through the identification of a project for implementation in the local community.) Save the Children provide support to the residential element of the programme for the students.
- Toryglen After School Care Services Ltd – provided free (to the students) professional childcare for students taking part in the South East programme.

There are other supporting partners who take part in the delivery of the programme, including Ruchill Family Centre, Glasgow Works, Depot Arts, and the East End Healthy Living Centre. (Other partner agencies will contribute depending on requested input.)

Section 2

2.1 The Evaluation: Making a Difference

In May 2010, RLL commissioned **afm associates** to conduct an evaluation of the ‘Making a Difference’ programme – a programme that has been developing at RLL for young parents since 2008.

‘Making a Difference’ is delivered and managed from the Information Support and Guidance Department of RLL and the programme is aimed at improving the life skills of young parents in Glasgow aged 16 – 25 years.

The aims of the evaluation were to –

- Assess the impact of the ‘Making a Difference’ (MAD) programme on tenancy sustainability and to assess the value of such impact for housing organisations and tenants;
- Assess the effectiveness of the MAD programme in achieving improvements in core skills and qualifications, and in supporting parents to progress on to college / FE;
- Assess the effectiveness of the MAD programme in achieving improvements in parenting skills and in the health and well-being of parents and children.

Methodology

The methods used while undertaking the evaluation of MAD were –

- Desk research: this included examining funding applications; student records (including referral forms and personal development plans); the course programme and activities. Other key documents e.g. Glasgow Housing Association (GHA)

Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan; Rosemount reports, Scottish Government policy documents, etc., were also considered.

- One to one interviews with programme participants (students)
- Focus groups with students (past and present)
- Interviews with stakeholders including GHA, Parent and Child Together (PACT) teams, two colleges of Further Education, and other key contributors to programme.
- Meetings with staff at RLL.

The information gathered from above documentation, and written and oral evidence from the stakeholders and students, was then collated and analysed, with reference to the aims of the evaluation exercise. This evidence forms the main findings of this report.

2.2 Policy Context – National and Local

“There are strong positive links between having the best start in life, having enough money to provide for yourself and your family, and enjoying good health”²

Inequalities in health and other social outcomes have been well documented in Scotland over the last few years and, in particular, have been highlighted in three social policy frameworks produced by the Scottish Government –

- the ‘Early Years Framework’ – promoting early intervention strategies for young children (2009); (1)
- ‘Equally Well’ – looking at how to tackle health inequalities (2008); (2)
- ‘Achieving Our Potential’ (2008) (3) - the framework to tackle poverty and inequality in Scotland,

The concept behind the development of MAD recognises that these complex issues of health, inequality and poverty are inextricably linked. Therefore, MAD seeks to develop a preventative approach in working with young parents and their children in an attempt to break the cycle of poor outcomes for families in some of the most deprived communities in Glasgow.

“We need to promote and foster people’s assets and capacities for health and well-being. Health assets include people’s aspirations and sense of control and social and community factors.”³

The challenge facing all public services is in dealing with high demand on their services while trying to develop prevention work. For example, preventing the breakdown of a tenancy agreement between a young parent and their housing association is arguably more cost effective in the immediate term than dealing with a family that has become homeless. Early intervention work with families is proven to be worthwhile and while it has relevance to a wide range of social policy, it is of particular relevance to the early years.

² p5, Equally Well, Scottish Government, 2008.

³ p7, Review of Equally Well, Scottish Government, 2010

Linking MAD with more local strategic policy, part of the evaluation asked stakeholders to comment on the contribution that the MAD programme made towards their own organisations' action plans and strategic focus. Examples included -

- GHA : under GHA's strategic theme of 'Supporting Tenants', MAD contributes to this by enabling GHA to, "...Support our tenants to access services that encourage health and well-being, tenancy sustainment and to take advantage of life opportunities". GHA Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan 2010 – 2011.
- PACT: the MAD programme supports the key aim of PACT work with parents and with children, including "...Addressing emotional needs, increasing individuals' resilience, promoting play and development, increasing self-esteem, reducing isolation, fostering development of positive relationships and addressing individual health and lifestyle choice issues". (North Glasgow Community Health and Care Partnership Development Plan summary 2007 – 2010)

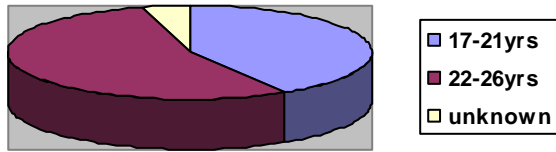
Section 3: Key Findings

3.1 Analysis of Student Records

A personal file was kept on each student by the guidance and support team at RLL. Each file contained referral forms; personal development plans; childcare registration forms; any correspondence and exit evaluation forms written by the students themselves. The files also contained 'distance travelled' forms. These were forms completed by the students at the key stages of the project – initial, halfway and on exiting the programme. For this evaluation project, the records of 46 students were studied. (These students came from across all three projects - RLL, Toryglen and the East End – and took part in the MAD programme between April 2009 and June 2010)

Of the 46 students who were part of the evaluation -

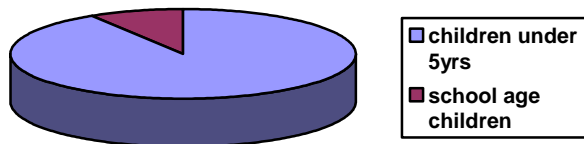
Gender	100% of students were female
Welfare Benefits	100% of students were in receipt of some form of state benefits – e.g. housing benefit, council tax credit, etc.
Age	54% were aged between 22 and 26 years 41% were aged between 17 and 21 years 4% unknown



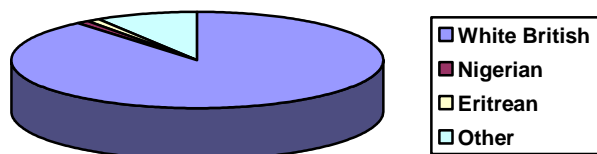
Household Status 96% were lone parents
4% were living with partners



57 children were currently living with the students. 91% were under 5 years old and the remaining 9% were of school age.

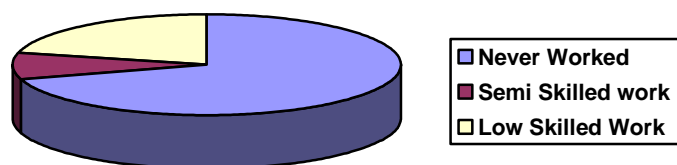
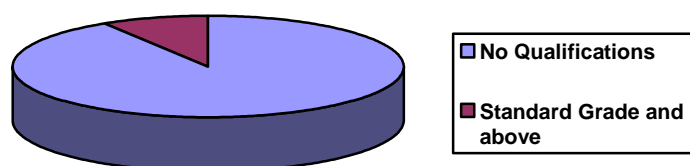


Ethnic Origin 89% of students classified themselves as White British
11% of students were of other unknown ethnic origin. There was one Nigerian and one Eritrean student.



Employment and Skills

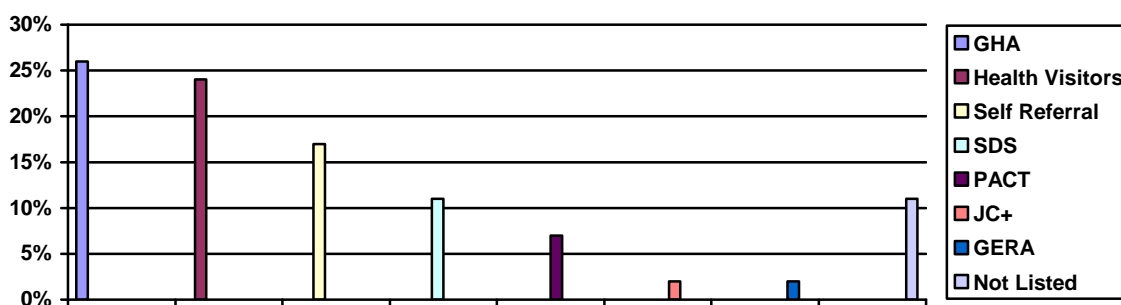
91% of students had no qualifications
 9% of students had formal qualifications of Standard Grade and above
 57% of students had never worked
 17% of students had previously been engaged in low skilled employment
 7% of students had previously been engaged in semi-skilled employment



Five students (11%) had Refugee or Asylum Status. It is difficult to gauge UK equivalent qualification and skill level for these students, or any previous employment, as these have not been listed in the materials studied for the evaluation.

Student Referrals

Students taking part in the MAD programme were referred from a number of agencies. Of those students taking part in this evaluation, referrals came from –



- 26% (12) were referred by Glasgow Housing Association (GHA)
- 24% (11) were referred by health visitors
- 17% (8) were either self referrals through contact with RLL or were referred by a friend, or responded to a poster or leaflet in their local area
- 11% (5) were referred by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) Young Parents Programme
- 11% (5) of forms did not have a referral agency listed
- 7% (3) were referred by PACT (Parent and Child Together) teams
- 2% (1) were referred by Jobcentre Plus
- 2% (1) were referred by Glasgow East Regeneration Agency (GERA)

The reasons for the referral were discussed with all students and listed on the forms by the referring agency. There were nine categories for referral –

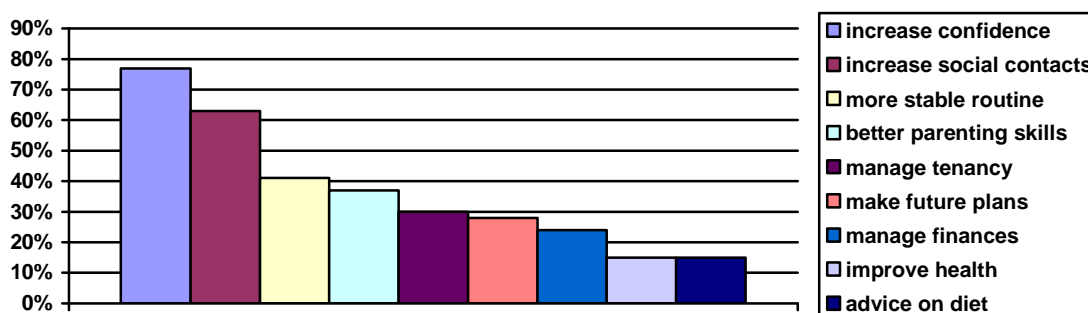
1. Better able to manage tenancy
2. Increased confidence and self esteem
3. Increased social contacts
4. More stable routine
5. Increased aspirations / plans for the future
6. Improved diet and nutrition
7. Better financial management
8. Better parenting skills
9. Improved understanding of health issues

Referral agencies, in consultation with the students, listed approximately four reasons for each student to come on the course –

- 77%(33) wanted to increase their confidence and self esteem
- 63% (27) wanted to increase their social contacts
- 41% (19) felt they needed a more stable routine at home
- 37% (17) felt they wanted to learn better parenting skills
- 30% (14) wanted to be able to manage their tenancy better
- 28% (13) wanted to increase their aspirations and make plans for the future

- 24% (11) wanted to be able to manage their finances better
- 15% (7) wanted to increase their understanding of health issues
- 15% (7) wanted some help with advice on diet and nutrition.

Reasons for coming on the MAD programme



Personal Development Plans

These plans were completed with the assistance of a guidance support worker; further common themes were listed by the students themselves as reasons to participate in the MAD programme –

- They were aware that they had feelings of low confidence and self esteem that affected their general health and sense of well-being;
- They felt stress at home sometimes and were in need of a break from the children;
- They had a desire to learn new skills and to set some goals for the future;
- The majority of the students expressed that they often felt isolated. Some had visited GPs as a result of these feelings and disclosed that they were on prescribed drugs for depression. Those on medication expressed a desire to come off these drugs and hoped that the MAD programme would enable them to feel a greater sense of well-being in order for this to happen.

This year (2010), the Personal Development Plan (PDP) forms had a slightly different format from previous years and students were asked to list -

- Their present circumstances
- ‘Areas of my life that I need to develop further....’
- ‘Difficulties / issues that affect my PDP at the moment....’
- ‘Goals I’d like to work towards in next 3 months....’

These PDP forms are signed off by the student and guidance worker. Also alongside this PDP, students are asked to fill in forms that will plot their ‘distance travelled’ over the course of the programme. There are three forms – one filled in at the start of the programme (Initial Form); another at the mid-way point (Review Form); and then at the end of the programme (Exit Form).

Fourteen key areas are listed on each of these forms and students are asked to rank where they are on a scale of 0 to 10 in each of these areas – for instance, where they feel they are at the beginning of the programme, at the mid-way point and then on completing the programme. The areas for personal measurement are –

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial and money management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routes into education or training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans and goals for the future (education and employment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health issues a) for you and b) your child
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diet and nutrition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy and numeracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable routine
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sources of support

The scale of self rankings was between 3 and 6 at the Initial stages of joining up to the project with most ranking themselves at 4 or 5 on the above areas. At the stage of exiting the programme, most students ranked themselves at 7 and 8. Only 5 students (11%) ranked themselves as low as 5 at the Exit stage, however, this was still a sign of improvement as these students had marked themselves fairly low (2 or 3) at the start. The majority of students, on completion of the programme, ranked themselves at 8. Areas in which most improvement was recorded were –

- Understanding health issues for you and your child
- Diet and nutrition
- Parental role
- Team working
- Budgeting / money management.

3.2 Analysis of oral evidence

Focus Groups

Focus groups were held in three locations. A total of 48% (22) students attended the groups which were held at –

Toryglen Resource Centre on 9 June 2010. Eight current students attended.

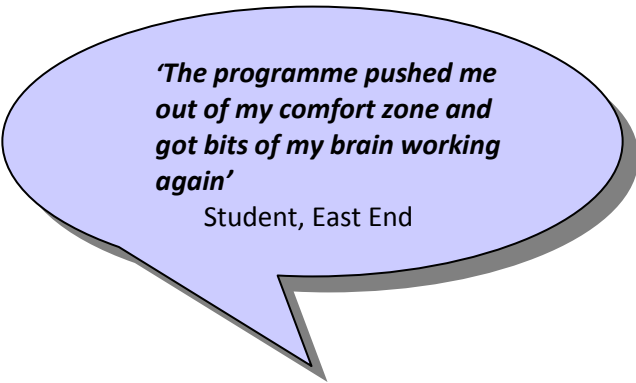
East End Healthy Living Centre on 9 June 2010. Five previous students attended.

Rosemount Lifelong Learning on 23 June 2010. Nine previous students attended.

The purpose of the focus groups was –

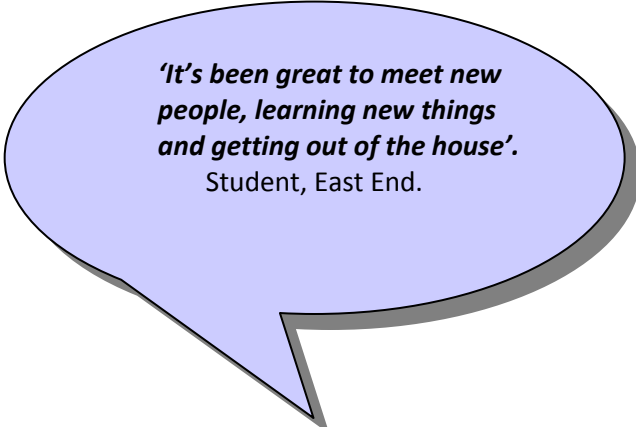
- To bring students together and conduct a facilitated and structured discussion in order to capture views on issues such as - course content; experiences on the course, likes/dislikes etc.;
- Discuss any changes felt, by the students, as a result of taking part in the programme, and also
- Explore the impact of the course on the student's personal development and aspirations for the future.

Students had mixed views about how they felt about joining the group. A few expressed feelings of apprehension and nervousness. These were mostly students who felt quite isolated and stayed at home a lot of the time. This issue was particularly highlighted by one woman who expressed her worry that she would not be able to 'get into the routine' that the programme required. She also stated that she suffered from panic attacks and was frightened of 'coming out of her comfort zone' to get to the group. However, the majority of students stated that they eventually got over any nervousness and felt keen to come along and be involved in something. All students expressed that the welcoming attitude and approach of the RLL guidance staff contributed to them settling into the group quickly and with ease.



'The programme pushed me out of my comfort zone and got bits of my brain working again'

Student, East End



'It's been great to meet new people, learning new things and getting out of the house'.

Student, East End.

There were concerns across all of the groups about leaving their children in childcare. These concerns ranged from nervousness about 'leaving my kid with strangers' to feeling worried about whether their child would settle into a childcare environment. (Almost all of the children were new to a formal childcare setting.) However, after a couple of weeks, these

fears seem to have dissipated quickly as the students saw how well their children were progressing developmentally as a result of the childcare. This helped the students settle more into the MAD programme when they saw how well their children had settled.

- ***'It's so good for my youngest son to be in an environment with other children of a similar age so that they can play and develop together.'***
Student, East End
- ***'My child has come out of his shell'*** Student, East End

Likes and Dislikes of the MAD Programme

When asked about the activities on the programme and which of those they had enjoyed, the students listed-

- learning to cook
- enjoyed making things for their homes
- learning better money management and budgeting

Other aspects of the programme from which the students felt they benefitted included-

- developing a better routine at home (for themselves and their children);
- being part of a group and socialising and making friends;
- the creative side of the programme and making furnishings for their home (Impact Arts);
- the music and song writing (Depot Arts);
- the residential element of the MAD programme and felt that this created a good sense of bonding, team working and trust within the group.

In response to what barriers there were for participation, all reported that if there had not been free on-site childcare, and also help with travelling expenses; they would not have been able to participate in the programme.

Dislikes on the programme varied quite a bit according to area and personal preference. For example, the students at Millburn did not like the input from the local PACT team. The students didn't like the presentation and stated they felt that the tutors "treated us like children" and unlike the rest of the tutors on the programme, with the PACT team "it was like being back at school". Input from PACT teams in other areas did not receive the same level of criticism.

When asked what they liked least about the programme, one group stated, ***"that it finished!"*** As they had finished the programme some months before, they also stated that, ***"it would be really good if it (the project) came back and helped other people"***

Student Interviews

The purpose of the one-to-one interviews was to discuss the experience of the programme with the student and get a sense of what improvements, if any, they felt in their lives as a result of taking part in the MAD programme. Seven interviews were set up but only five took place as two students did not turn up at the agreed time.

All of the students interviewed stated that the MAD course had been extremely beneficial to them and also to their children. From the interviews, there were universally expressed views-

There was some uncertainty at the beginning about joining and participating in a group but after a couple of weeks the group itself became quite important.

“I enjoyed.....time for catch up and being with the members of the group and the discussions we had. For example, a discussion on fathers and how they should be involved with the kids and how it can be good for the kids.” Student, Millburn.

All said that their confidence had increased greatly.

“I gained more confidence – I’ll talk more to people now and people talk back to me and that feels good”

Student, North Glasgow

“Confidence! I wish you’d met me a year ago...then you would definitely be able to see the difference!”

Student, North Glasgow

Establishing a routine to the day and getting out of the house appears to be a lasting effect from being on the programme.

“I still have stability and routine – even though course has finished, that’s still part of my life now.”

Student, North Glasgow

“I needed to take control of my day and get into a routine as things just seem to happen”.

Student, East End.

All of the students interviewed felt very positive about the future and had developed a different attitude since completing the course. Three had applied to college and two received notice of a start date. One student commented that she would be speaking

publicly for the first time at an event being held by the Big Lottery Fund in Glasgow City Centre.

“I learned to set goals for myself on the course. One of my goals was to decorate my daughter’s room – I’ve almost finished it now. Every bit of this course has helped – what I have learned I am putting into practice e.g. assertiveness – I now know how to approach this situation with the college” Student, North Glasgow

Support from the guidance staff and the role of the childcare staff at RLL and also at the East End Mobile Crèche team has been invaluable to the students. They all expressed how important that support had been to them and many of the students – both at interviews and in the focus groups – were very clear about the fact that they would not have been able to continue with the programme had it not been for the staff. The staff made them feel comfortable and supported while encouraging continued development and progression.

“Every part of the course has given me something. Certificates and skills and confidence – I’ve changed back to me!” Student, North Glasgow

“Carol, John and Izzy were just great - - I wrote a poem about them!” Student, North Glasgow.

Fewer Interviews

The number of one-to-one interviews was lower than requested in the original bid. Offers were made by both Save the Children and Skills Development Scotland to set up interviews with some of the students with whom they were still in contact. However, almost 100% of these students had come along and taken part in the earlier focus groups. The evidence gathered at the focus groups had been so informative and useful to the aims of the evaluation that a decision was made not to pursue further individual interviews. All of the students participated in the focus groups and the way that the groups were facilitated meant that every student had the chance to speak – stating what their experience of the MAD programme had been, etc. Additional costs for interviews (childcare, travel etc.) also had to be managed by RLL and information gathered from such interviews may not have added more value to the quality of information already brought together.

3.3 Stakeholder interviews

An important part of the evaluation process was to meet with the key stakeholders who were involved in the MAD programme. As mentioned earlier in the report, involvement was varied but there were some key questions that needed to be addressed including, what the stakeholders thought of the MAD programme; what benefits they had witnessed, if any; what contribution MAD made to their own organisational action planning and strategic aims, and whether or not they would be willing to support MAD future programmes.

The Rosemount Team

“Rosemount has built a reputation for good projects / project delivery, so we need to keep that up!” Member of the management team.

RLL is the main stakeholder of the MAD programme and has been the key driver to its success and progressive development. RLL provides all management support services and also provides the crucial element of free childcare. The guidance staff at RLL provide an important support function to the students and the development of relationships with each group of students has ensured a very low drop out rate on the MAD programme.

For this evaluation, eight members of the Rosemount staff team were interviewed, coming from the management team, guidance and support team and childcare team.

All of the staff noted that MAD had been a highly successful programme. The programme is very labour and resource intensive and evidence was being gathered all the time for positive development and continuous improvement of the programme. There were some challenges listed by the RLL staff including –

- **Resource planning:** From the pre-course stage, through to the initial engagement with potential students; organising open days/marketing/taster sessions; linking into local agencies who already work with this client group – for example PACT Team/Careers Scotland. This includes the amount of preparatory work, planning and development required when the staff are taking the programme into a new area.
- **Intensive support needed from staff members** - Guidance staff are a crucial element in sustaining the students through each part of the process. The two guidance staff and “on-site” tutor communicate well together which is an essential link within the operation and success of the programme. This is acknowledged by everyone involved in the programme; students, stakeholders and childcare staff.
- **Guidance and support to young parents on shaping realistic goals** - This challenging work of supporting students with often very complex needs is managed well by the programme’s guidance system.
- **Ensuring the quality of tutors essential** *“as the young parents are very able to say what they don’t want!”*

All of the staff while acknowledging that this is a very complex area of work, including trying to breakdown cycles of inequality and deprivation, were very positive about the programme

and its outcomes. Changes in the students and in the children made it a very worthwhile and rewarding project.

“What really struck me as a guidance worker was how a group of quite diverse young parents with multiple and complex issues, were able to engage with each other on a level that enabled the development of a positive and inclusive learning environment.” Member of guidance staff, RLL. Report of East End MAD Programme, June 2009.

Other Stakeholders

Those interviewed were – GHA; Impact Arts; North Glasgow College; PACT teams (North and East); Skills Development Scotland (Young Parents Project); Save the Children; John Wheatley College; East End Mobile Play Team.

Evidently, all of the stakeholders gained a lot by being part of the MAD programme. There were clear links of added value across the stakeholder organisations with all citing MAD as a very worthwhile and innovative project with which to be involved.

Glasgow Housing Association –

“MAD project is an important cog in the big wheel in this regeneration of the area”.

Reported that at the beginning of the programme, the tenants wouldn't have approached the housing association, however, by the end of the programme, the young tenants were speaking to GHA staff when they went along to the sessions ***“in an assertive, confident way”***.

Impact Arts-

Impact Arts stated that while their work is mainly ***‘practical not pastoral’*** they share the same messages about maintaining tenancy and the same strategic aims of keeping young people in their own homes and supporting them. Over 90% of those young people taking part in the Fab Pad programme across Scotland manage to sustain their tenancies. Impact Arts stated that making MAD students proud of their homes by personalising it through their own efforts made a huge difference to the confidence and self esteem of students while also potentially making them more interested in seeking further education in subjects such as design and crafts. The Fab Pad element is mutually beneficial to RLL and Impact Arts as some of those students who come along to Fab Pad as referrals, come along to RLL for other supports, and vice versa.

North Glasgow College -

NGC believes that the programme works well at achieving its aims and that...***“This (MAD) is not just another pre-employment course. It's a longer term piece of work, which is more realistic. It creates progression, sustainability.... And the balance of formal/informal learning works well.”***

PACT teams -

One of the Teams believed it is.....***“Testimony to the MAD project that other agencies got involved and offered support. This joint working through MAD has shown that work on positive parenting can work and works well”*** The other Team commented that***“Projects***

like this are useful as it can help young parents to maintain a home, budget and cook from scratch. It can offer new experiences to very isolated young parents....”

John Wheatley College

JWC stated that they witnessed real changes during the progression of the course in the individuals taking part in MAD. The college believe the MAD programme to be, **“very worthwhile and providing valuable testers to the students who may wish to come onto the courses we offer full time”**. The college tutors reported that the MAD programme was important as it encouraged some participants into seeking more learning opportunities. As a general rule, JWC would support MAD and similar programmes as they are community based and in touch with potential future students.

Skills Development Scotland –

Skills Development Scotland’s Young Parents Project has a lot in common with the MAD programme. SDS staff were very clear that MAD helps to **‘fill an enormous gap in service provision for young parents.’**

MAD also helps student to ‘make a commitment’ without it being completely full time / 5 days a week. **“There is also a bit of a safety net there and students do get help if they are struggling with anything. Knowledge of having this safety net is quite important for many of them. This could be the reason why there is such a low drop out rate for MAD.”**

MAD also helps young parents **“open their eyes and helps them look to the future. It helps them look towards goals and not always focus on the barriers to their participation.”**

Save the Children (SCF)⁴ - facilitate a workshop during the MAD programme to let groups know that there is a possibility, after MAD, of moving onto the SCF community development project, Inspiring Change’ (IC). IC is more focussed on group work and group action. It describes itself as a ‘change project’ with clear links to community issues.

MAD fits with a number of strategic aims of SCF in tackling child poverty and promoting the empowerment of families and children in the poorest parts of Britain.

SCF commented that the childcare had a real impact as it allowed the women to **‘recharge their batteries’**. Some of the ex-MAD students went on to the Inspiring Change programme. As this group progressed, SCF staff noted that there was **‘a lot more laughter’** as trust developed within the group and they became more comfortable with the formal childcare. SCF noted that they saw a positive difference in the students as a result of the residential in terms of self esteem and willingness to move on and try new ventures. One concern noted by SCF, however, was the overall literacy levels of the students and how they would cope outside of the MAD programme.

East End Mobile Play Team –

EEMPT are convinced that working with MAD programme was a very positive joint venture in delivering a positive experience for the young parents and their children. **“Childcare is one**

⁴ Save the Children offers a route for ex-MAD students to get involved in a community development project – which the group identify themselves – as being important for their local area. It must be noted, however, that not all groups and / or individuals exiting MAD will be at a stage of taking a project like this forward. It does require a level of skill and commitment which may not be appropriate for some ex-students.

of the most important elements within this programme. If that works, it can allow parents to have their own opportunities. It enabled the students to grow by taking part in the project with the other young people, but also gain confidence in themselves as parents”

All of the stakeholders interviewed said that they would be willing to support future MAD projects. A few mentioned the importance of follow up and were concerned to know what would happen to the young parents after taking part in the MAD programme. Stakeholders were pleased to learn that a support worker had now been employed at RLL to undertake follow up and on-going support to the young parents beyond their involvement on the MAD programme.

3.4 Benefits to Children from the MAD programme

As well as benefits to the students themselves, the children of the students gained a lot from the MAD programme. As well as good quality childcare provision being an essential contributor towards the participation of these young parents, the childcare played a role in the children’s development. Almost all of these children had no previous experience of formal childcare, so the students were anxious too, about them settling in, etc.

- All of the students said that their children benefitted greatly from being part of the MAD programme. All praised the childcare teams very highly, despite initial reservations about leaving their children with unknown staff.
- RLL staff completed observation sheets and summative reports on the children which were given to parents, and staff discussed the children regularly with the parents. Everyone acknowledged the benefits of communicating together about the children’s progress, as well as talking about issues such as healthy eating.
- Children had the opportunity to experience messy play, which they had never had before. With the childcare teams having access to equipment that would not be available at home, the parents enjoyed seeing their children have these opportunities.
- A few of the children, whose first language was not English, developed better language skills.

The students all reported the positive impact the childcare had on their children. They were all in a better routine; sleeping patterns had improved; speech had developed as a result of contact with other children and trained workers, and learning to play with others and developing friendships were all important. Also there were improvements in eating habits, for example, often the mums would say their child would not eat particular foods, but were surprised when the children did, and would ask for the recipes for meals the children had been given.

Section 4

4.1 The Achievement of Outcomes

The MAD programme remains focussed on key outcomes (as listed in Section 1) and manages to achieve those outcomes while continuing to be responsive to the principles of being participant led and keeping a learner centred approach. The learning environment is very flexible which is important in maintaining the interest of the young parents.

In terms of 'tenancy sustainability', the RLL guidance staff believe most of the students are sustaining their tenancies with some changing housing provider in order to better sustain tenancies. As a consequence of effective links and communication between RLL guidance staff and GHA staff, housing officers came to talk to the students about expectations of being a good tenant, what a tenancy agreement meant and to encourage students to join tenant organisations.

Representatives from GHA agreed that one of the many positive elements to the programme was that RLL guidance staff were able to pick up on housing issues from the group or at one-to-one sessions (for example on housing repairs). They helped the students resolve the problems by going through the correct route within the housing association, to learn from this experience and encourage them to deal with future problems themselves. By including the students in the process of problem solving, they learned skills on how to deal with issues in an assertive, confident way.

"GHA want tenants who are confident and can look after properties and surrounding environment. The young people in MAD programme can gain life skills, develop through their participation and have healthier lives for themselves and their children" (GHA rep, East End)

The stated outcome of 'improved parenting skills' caused a mixed response from the students taking part in the evaluation. Students often felt 'criticised as parents' from some of the course tutors. Also when evaluation sheets were handed out at the focus groups, most students said they did not like the question about 'parenting skills' –

"It's as if we were cr at it before we went on the course".**

This was a general view shared by other students -

"My parenting skills are good already"

"I don't feel as though my parenting skills have changed as I feel I was a good mum from the start."

Increased confidence was evidenced in a number of ways. One student stated one of the rewards that MAD had given her was that she **"wasn't afraid of books any more"**. In the past, she was scared to pick up a book with her child as she didn't want to get to words / sections that she did not understand. Now, she felt a lot more confident about picking up a book and understanding it – with more confidence that she could read it.

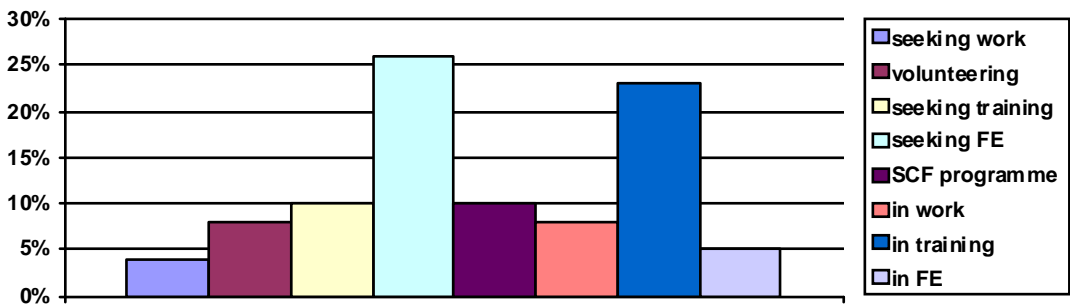
Evidence on achievement of outcomes is listed throughout the interview and focus group analysis. Further progress of past students appears in Appendix 1.

Ten of the young parents that took part in the evaluation focus groups were in the middle of the MAD programme; therefore, their end goal cannot be reported here. However, their immediate aims and aspirations taken from the discussion clearly show they were committed to completing the programme and were very positive about the future.



4.2 Student Progress

The following figure represents an illustration of where some MAD students move onto after completing the course. Please note that this graph represents a group of 39 previous MAD students and does not represent all of those who took part in the evaluation. This chart only shows the destination of 39 previous MAD students, as known by RLL guidance staff, at April 2010. (Please see Appendix 1 for fuller explanation)



4.3 Key Learning Points

1. Distinctiveness of MAD

- MAD is unique and is delivering a programme unlike others in the city of Glasgow area. It is a very successful programme aiming to achieve many different but related outcomes. On the surface, it may appear to be trying to do too much, but the length of the programme, variety of input and extensive support from staff ensures high numbers of completers with an extremely low drop out rate.

- The provision of free on-site childcare is clearly invaluable and essential to the participation of young parents. Childcare not provided on-site would cause additional stress for the parents and children and disrupt the programme.
- Benefits for both students and children are very much for the longer term. While there are some very visible 'quick wins' with noticeable changes to both students and children, it is still very much a long term vision and approach that needs to be maintained.
- The MAD programme is in great demand, demonstrating the real lack of support programmes for young parents generally. By contrast, other courses which aim to encourage young parents into training and work opportunities do not provide childcare.

2. Staff Commitment

- Childcare staff at RLL had to change patterns of work and adapt quickly as the numbers of children from MAD and the timeframe in which to settle them in, etc., was different from the expected age profile and at times challenging.
- The building of trust and developing a relationship with the staff was important to the students. Guidance staff were highly praised and all of the students were very clear about how the excellent support received maintained their involvement in the MAD programme. While this is very labour intensive for RLL, it is a vital component to the success of the programme.
- During the course of a recent programme, staff at RLL had to deal with a situation where students were not happy at the input made by one of the stakeholders. This appears to have been handled well by RLL team thus illustrating the need for the co-facilitation by RLL tutors.
- A dedicated guidance worker for follow-up with MAD students has recently been appointed. This is a crucial element to the MAD programme. Comment cannot be made on the contribution to date but it is an important addition to the team.

3. Information and Communication

- There is already a good system in place for record keeping for students. This is a time consuming but essential element of the programme as funders and stakeholders require evidence for continued involvement in MAD. Methods of keeping records could be improved, however, with better use of database systems and simpler recording techniques.
- Communication is extremely important across RLL staff members, stakeholders, and those delivering the programme. The developmental and evolving nature of the programme demands clear lines of regular communication between all stakeholders.
- Publicity for the MAD programme was very effective. Students came from a wide range of referral methods via stakeholders while also some came along as a result of general marketing and local publicity.

4. Development of Skills

- The programme strikes a good balance between educating the young parents while also informing them of their rights and how best to deal with situations. For example, a number of issues were raised regarding housing, housing conditions, consumer rights, etc., and the parents were coached on how to deal with these situations effectively and not ignore them, as they would have been likely to in the past. Building confidence and developing independence has been a very successful element of MAD.
- Students acknowledged their needs around literacy and were clear that they needed support in this area. It was very important to the students that MAD provided them with formal certificates as few of the students had formal qualifications.
- Having the opportunity for the students to 'try out' some of the new skills learned in the programme, for example, going to Big Lottery Fund showcase event and getting the chance to speak in public about the programme, came across as one of the highlights for the students, giving them a sense of achievement.

5. Improved Parent – Child Relations

- Over the course of the MAD programme, there has been a noticeable increase in the quality of the parent-child relationship. While the majority of evidence for this comes from the young parents themselves, childcare staff also reported unmistakable progress in this area.
- The children of parents taking part in the programme benefitted greatly from the childcare / nursery experience. The parents commented on how well their children had developed in terms of better speech; better sleeping (and routine); improved eating habits; learning to play and be with other children; bonding with childcare staff etc. Staff at RLL and the East End Mobile Play Team also observed improvements in the children in a very short space of time.
- Students stated that they often felt criticised as parents – both by other family members and also professional workers. Many did not want to answer the questions (on evaluation sheets) on improvements in parenting skills, as to write that this had improved may have suggested that their skills were previously weak. Students were particularly sensitive about this issue.

6. Health

- Maintaining good mental health is a key issue for a majority of the students. A number of the students disclosed that they were in receipt of prescription drugs for depression. This is an important issue to consider, particularly towards the end of the course, for follow up work and personal progression.

7. Partnership Working

- The MAD Programme relies very heavily on the input from other partner agencies out with RLL. The programme needs in-kind support, commitment and a multi-agency approach for survival.

Section 5 - Conclusion

The three aims of the Evaluation were to –

1. Assess the impact of the MAD programme on tenancy sustainability and the value of this impact for housing associations;
2. Assess the effectiveness of the programme in achieving improvements in core skills and qualifications and in supporting parents to progress onto Further Education;
3. Assess the effectiveness of the programme in achieving improvements in parenting skills and in the health and well-being of parents and children.

5.1 Sustaining Tenancies

There is evidence that taking part in the MAD programme has increased the awareness of students of their rights and responsibilities regarding their tenancy agreement. This has come through in both oral evidence from students as well as on their own written forms – either on exit from the programme and as part of the evaluation. It can be assumed, therefore, that these tenancies must have a more sustainable future. This view is also supported by GHA representatives and the guidance staff at RLL. By inviting GHA housing officers along as part of the MAD programme helped the students understand that the tenancy agreement was a ‘two-way’ process – with the housing provider having to respond to the needs and issues of the tenant while the tenant had a responsibility to keep to a regular payment schedule and also take care of the property. Budgeting and money management guidance helped the students to see the importance of not allowing rent arrears to build up, while the involvement of Impact Arts Fab Pad programme encouraged the students to take a bit more pride in their property and showed how small but significant improvements can be made on very little money. Some students commented that these activities helped their overall health and well being by creating a more settled and pleasant home environment.

Evidence suggests a greater ability to engage positively with the housing provider and also improved skills in budgeting and money management have all contributed to greater likelihood of tenancy sustainability. Indeed, during the course of the programme, no tenancies have been lost.

A common feature of many of the students prior to coming on to the MAD programme was to ignore communications – usually formal letters – from the housing provider. This was mainly due to a general lack of interest and understanding of what the letters contained and the consequences of ignoring the communication. The increase in confidence gained by the students throughout the MAD programme meant that they increased engagement with their housing provider. For example, issues relating to their homes were raised verbally with housing officers when they visited the programme, and some of the students were also given guidance and support (from the RLL team) on writing letters to the housing provider.

The only housing provider interviewed as part of this evaluation was the Glasgow Housing Association. (The value that they attach to the MAD programme appears earlier in this report.) However, fully assessing the longer term impact of MAD on tenancy sustainability is more complex as a result of –

- Lack of monitoring of tenancies of previous students. GHA do not monitor MAD students specifically once they have left the programme so there is no way of tracking improvement or progress;
- Lack of clear indicators as to how the tenancy has improved and lack of written records regarding each tenancy.

5.2 Improvement of Core Skills and Supporting Parents to progress on to Further Education

There is clear evidence throughout this report that the core skills of the students participating in MAD were greatly enhanced. This was evidenced in written reports developed throughout the course of the programme (by the students themselves) as well as through the visible progress witnessed by participating stakeholders and staff over the course of the programme. The methods through which core skills were developed (e.g. in group work, non-threatening situations) were especially mentioned by students. All students reported an increase in confidence and improved self esteem, with many feeling that this has contributed to an increase in their general health and well-being.

Assessing the improvement of core skills such as literacy and numeracy of the MAD students is a bit more difficult. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed and regarded as a running theme for improvement throughout programme, rather than hosting separate sessions on each. While this approach helps ensure the participation of students and reduces some of the stigma that many may feel associated with poor literacy and numeracy skills, there are limits to the results that can be evidenced by this type of approach. For example, this approach will not give the results or show levels of progress that could be measured by written assessment. While such assessment is not being recommended in this evaluation, indicators for improvements in levels of literacy in the MAD programme may need to be reconsidered. This is of particular importance when students are to be encouraged to apply for FE courses.

Results from interviews with RLL childcare staff and guidance staff and other key stakeholders working directly with the students throughout their journey, show that incremental improvements have taken place in the students – especially in terms of their engagement in the learning process and increased confidence levels. This cannot be underestimated. These significant improvements need to be considered in the context of the many barriers to learning the students are striving to overcome throughout the MAD programme. For example, students are often very isolated, leading chaotic lifestyles when they initially join the MAD programme, with negative experiences of education.

With support, the students have shown an ability of being able to commit to the various stages of the programme and ultimately progress on to completion of the programme and develop plans for the future – either in further education or considering work or training opportunities which would not have been seen as optional before the programme. The active participation of the group of students from North Glasgow in the Big Lottery conference (Spring 2010) and the work the group of students from the East End who are now involved in with a community development Save the Children programme, are two further examples of students' progression.

Some previous MAD students have progressed onto FE but no written evidence was found during this evaluation as to the students' success or progression on these courses. Interviews were set up with two previous students who are now attending college but unfortunately, neither of them was able to attend the interview on the day as arranged. Information is available on the destination of some previous students (see Appendix 1) but there is no written evidence on progress and therefore, no assessment can be made. Some of the recently completed students had applied to start FE courses in the new academic year (August 2010). Recognition should be noted, however, on the progress of the students by the end of the programme – in personal development terms – regarding decision making and application to potential further education or other training courses.

5.3 Improvements in parenting skills and in health and well being of parents and children

This report shows evidence from PACT teams, childcare staff, students and RLL staff which suggests that there were improvements in these areas. The best written evidence is available through RLL childcare records as well as the on-going guidance staff records. The Mobile Crèche Team from the East End do not keep any written records but gave verbal testimony to the improvements they have witnessed with the parents, children and relations between both.

Despite the fact that the students were reluctant to discuss 'parenting skills' as part of the evaluation or write about improvements to their parenting skills (many did not fill in the section asking about parenting skills on the form issued as part of the evaluation process), many stated that they enjoyed the child development sessions delivered as part of the programme. Also for those who had completed MAD, it was an area recorded as 'improved' in the Exit Personal Development Plans.

'Parenting' is a very difficult area to assess. Evidence here is subjective and individual. While this does not make the evidence of visible improvement, as witnessed by childcare or other staff invalid, clearer indicators on what 'parenting skills' actually mean, is required.

Improvements in mental health and feelings of well being were reported by all students in focus groups and interviews and these improvements are also documented in written Personal Development Plans. Taking part in the MAD programme appears to have assisted the students in improving their mental health and sense of well being. Almost all of the students reported feeling much better with a greater sense of structure and purpose to their week. Many reported that as a result of their children being calmer (as a result of increased activities with other children during the day) they, too, felt calmer and more able to cope with the children. A very real concern for many however, was the issue of 'what's next after MAD'.

5.4 Conclusions drawn from the above -

- Clearer indicators are needed as all Stakeholders need to know what they are working towards achieving

- Dialogue with the young parents may assist in developing indicators, for example, on issues such as parenting skills and what it means to them. The students themselves will then be more aware of what improvements they are working towards.
- MAD needs to continue to develop a more inclusive way of involving the students – as young people, as parents, as tenants, as potential students, employees, etc. More student user involvement in the design of programme in addition to consultation (with previous students) through evaluation of each programme is one way to address this issue.
- A clearer system needs to be put in place for monitoring the effectiveness of the MAD programme in relation to tenancy sustainability. The potential impact for housing associations cannot be measured if there is no monitoring of tenancies beyond the life the programme.
- Further work needs to be done on how indicators for assessment are developed in particular key areas, for example, parenting, and literacy.

Section 6: Recommendations

Distinctiveness of MAD

MAD is a highly successful programme which should continue as it is meeting the needs of many young parents. It is also meeting the strategic and operational needs of many of its stakeholders.

If MAD is to be developed in other areas, on-site childcare needs to be provided as it is essential to the smooth running of the project.

While MAD is an expensive programme to run, it can be argued that it is cost effective. It is recommended that a Social Return on Investment (SROI) exercise is undertaken so that a 'social value' description can be given. (See Appendix 2)

Staff Commitment

- While it is labour and resource intensive the guidance staff: student ratio needs to be maintained in order to sustain the high success and low drop out rate of MAD. There is always the potential for the need for crisis management.
- Funding for the follow-on/support worker must be a primary component of MAD project design. The role of this worker is crucial in terms of tracking progress of the students and for future evaluation exercises. It is also important for the ex-students to receive a bit of support once the programme has ended. This support should be for at least 6 – 9 months in duration.

Information and Communication

- Improved systems for record keeping need to be established. This would save time for staff and also assist them when providing information and updates to stakeholders. This will help not only RLL but provide validation for involvement by external partners. This could also save costs in external evaluation.
- An 'Exit Pack / Resource Pack' should be developed for each student. This pack would contain information on the range of topics covered and where to get support e.g. health services, including mental health; childcare services; education and employability programmes; consumer rights; arts and leisure courses, etc.
- National and Local policy can be informed by the results of projects such as MAD. RLL should make the success of MAD known to policy makers and other practitioners and potential partners.

- RLL should be planning for an evaluation of MAD in two or three years time so that the longer term benefits, from the early days of the programme, can be reported.

Development of skills

- Literacy is key issue for the students. There is recognition amongst the students themselves of this need. Support needs to be put in place for this so as to avoid potential disappointment and failure when seeking further education or employment opportunities. Types of 'access' or 'bridging' programmes should be investigated so that these may be offered to MAD completers.
- The residential element of the programme should be inserted at an earlier stage and not at the end of the programme. As an integral part of the programme, it can be used in a constructive way at a midway point for example, and deal with issues such as routine, behavioural / childcare issues, healthy eating etc. it also serves as an important part of the bonding and team working factors of the programme.

Partnership Working

- A system of self-evaluation should be established amongst the stakeholders and delivery partners. This will improve communication between stakeholders. This could be a system of meetings or regular recording amongst all those involved in the programme, including delivery.
- The multi-agency partnership approach to MAD needs to develop a system to ensure that there are agencies ready to take referrals from the follow-up/support worker.

Afm/PU
Afm associates
August 2010

Appendix 1

Students' Progress (as at April 2010)

From the information given by RLL Guidance staff, progression of students from East End programme and Rosemount programme included -

- Save the Children Inspiring Change programme – 4
- Registered with Working Links to seek employment – 2
- Registered with Glasgow Volunteers Centre – 2
- Registered with Glasgow East Regeneration Agency (GERA) – 3
- Started Rathbone CI TOPS Young Parents programme – 3
- Applied for Glasgow commonwealth apprenticeship opportunities – 1
- Applied for and secured a place on an NQ in Childcare at Glasgow College of Nautical Studies – 1
- Started 10 week REIS cookery course delivered By Glasgow Met College based at Millburn Centre – 1
- Applied to North Glasgow College for a place on NC Social Care Course (awaiting outcome) – 2
- Complete Princes Trust Youth Work certificated course – 1
- Volunteering with Young Peoples Futures Project – 1
- Part time employment (security) – Celtic Park - 1
- Applied and accepted to Glasgow Met College for NC Design Portfolio Course – 1
- Completed SQA module in keyboard skills – 1
- Applied to Central College for place on VCTC Holistic Therapies course (awaiting outcome) – 1
- Working with GNRA to develop Business Plan to trade as a Beautician – 1
- Applied and accepted to Clydebank college HNC Fashion Make up Artistry – 1
- Secured part time freelance contract (Personal Grooming workshop) with Rathbone CI Training - 1
- Part time employment - KFC Glasgow – 1
- Applied for and accepted for Introduction to Counselling skills course – 1
- Applied to North Glasgow College (evening class) – 1
- Started 10 week Women's Safety programme – 2
- Accessing training through WISE group on Social Care - 1
- Accessing FAB PAD – 2
- Started an Introduction to Positive Parenting programme – 1
- Attending Cardonald College – English class – 1
- Applied for and secured a college course place at Coatbridge college – Access to Forensic Science - 1

NB. This is not a fully comprehensive list as some students were involved in more than one activity. However, it does give examples of the areas to which MAD students progress.

Appendix 2

SROI (4) was developed from social accounting and cost-benefit analysis and is based on seven principles. These principles underpin how SROI should be applied. The principles are:

- Involve stakeholders.
- Understand what changes.
- Value the things that matter.
- Only include what is material.
- Do not over-claim.
- Be transparent.
- Verify the result.

Carrying out an SROI analysis involves six stages:

- 1 Establishing scope and identifying key stakeholders.**
- 2. Mapping outcomes.**
- 3. Evidencing outcomes and giving them a value.**
- 4. Establishing impact.**
- 5. Calculating the SROI.**
- 6. Reporting, using and embedding.**

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