

# Parent Power

at The Brilliant Club



The  
Brilliant  
Club  
2023

## Why engage with parents/carers?

Parents and carers from all backgrounds want the best for their young people and have a big influence on their future outcomes. The Education Endowment Foundation estimates that parental engagement helps young people make an average of 4 months' additional progress in education, with higher impact for students with lower prior attainment and younger students. The IFS has shown that parents and carers account for almost 50% of the factors that influence the socio-economic gap in education at age 11. Parent Power empowers parents/carers to secure opportunities for their children and support them to achieve their academic potential.

## Parent Power Model

Created by King's College London and Citizens UK in 2017, the Parent Power model builds parent/carer communities across the UK, each one supported by a local partnership. Through support to develop community organising skills, as well as advice and guidance on accessing higher education, parents are empowered to ensure their children have a fair chance in education and their future careers. The model gathers interest from parents, follows up with one-to-one meetings, and then facilitates six group meetings led by a local Community Organiser trained in community organising by Citizens UK. In meetings, parents decide which activities will benefit their communities – from tailored visits to universities for young people to training on student finance and university access.

# Aims of Parent Power

1

To provide training for parents to develop them into higher education experts

2

To work with parents to create local change which will support young people into university



## Parent Power at the Brilliant Club

Parent Power Chapter	Partnered with	Campaign focus
Cardiff Parent Power	Cardiff University	Cardiff parent/carers are campaigning to improve information, advice and guidance around contextual admissions
East London Parent Power	Queen Mary, University of London	East London parents/carers are campaigning to create more accessible youth spaces in the local area, alongside improving young people's mental wellbeing.
Oldham Parent Power	Oldham Council and Trinity College, University of Cambridge	Oldham parents/carers are campaigning to improve mental health support for young people in Oldham, a significant barrier to higher education
East Oxford Parent Power	Oxford Brookes University	East Oxford parents/carers are campaigning to increase access to summer schools and improve local universities' engagement with parents.
Fenland Parent Power	The University of Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin University	Fenland parents/carers are campaigning to improve public transport access in their region, so that children can access extra-curricular opportunities.
Knowsley Parent Power	Knowsley Council and Shaping Futures	Knowsley parents/carers are campaigning to improve post-16 options in the borough to increase opportunities for young people to progress to university
Mansfield Parent Power	Nottingham Trent University and DANCOP	Mansfield parents/carers are campaigning to increase the awareness of university as an option for young people, and supporting their transition.
Peterborough Parent Power	The University of Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin University	Peterborough parents/carers are concerned about the impact of the cost of living crisis on students and the divide between Cambridge and Peterborough

## Benefits for Partners

Establishing a reciprocal relationship with parents through listening means that Parent Power provides an opportunity for institutions to consult with parents about their wider initiatives, ensuring they are shaped by the needs of the local community. For universities, Parent Power can support Access and Participation Plans by widening access and improving success for under-represented groups. Through building a relationship of trust, universities can work in partnership with parents and carers to show that higher education is a viable option for their children and communities.



## Model Overview

The first year of Cardiff Parent Power illustrates how the model works:



### Launch Events

Working alongside Cardiff University, we first met Cardiff parents in four schools, as well as in the Grangetown Pavilion community centre.

### Group Meetings

- Cardiff parents discussed the issues they thought were most important to address, including applying to university, helping children choose their GCSE options, and imposter syndrome at university
- From this exercise, parents decided they needed more information and guidance opportunities in subsequent meetings. Cardiff University then delivered student finance training for parents. Group meetings are held every 6 weeks.

### Bespoke Open Days

- University - 'On their second visit to Cardiff University, parents enjoyed a bespoke open day. They also reflected on what more they wanted to find out about higher education, including the pastoral care on offer, the careers graduates go into and the funding options available.
- Parents also wanted to learn more about Oxbridge, so they wrote to Jesus College, University of Oxford and won a bespoke open day. Over 25 families visited Jesus College and gained an insight into what's on offer

### Campaign Win

Following on from the Celebration Event, parents met with Cardiff University and gained commitments to:

1. Change the way information is presented about contextual admissions in their prospectus
2. Create a translated, accessible video about contextual admissions
3. Run events for pupils in local schools which explain the contextual admissions process.

### Relational 121s

- We hold 121s with parents ahead of group meetings
- 121s are 30 minutes long and held with the Community Organiser
- By listening to parents individually, we are able to identify tangible and worthwhile issues that parents and universities can tackle together in group meetings



### Meeting on Campus

- As Cardiff Parent Power grew, so did its engagement with Cardiff University
- Parents held a Parent Power meeting on campus, where they discussed what they wanted to see from future campus visits and learnt more about the option to study abroad while at university
- At the close of the visit, parents reflected that they still had specific questions for the university, including more about the student finance system and details around eligibility.



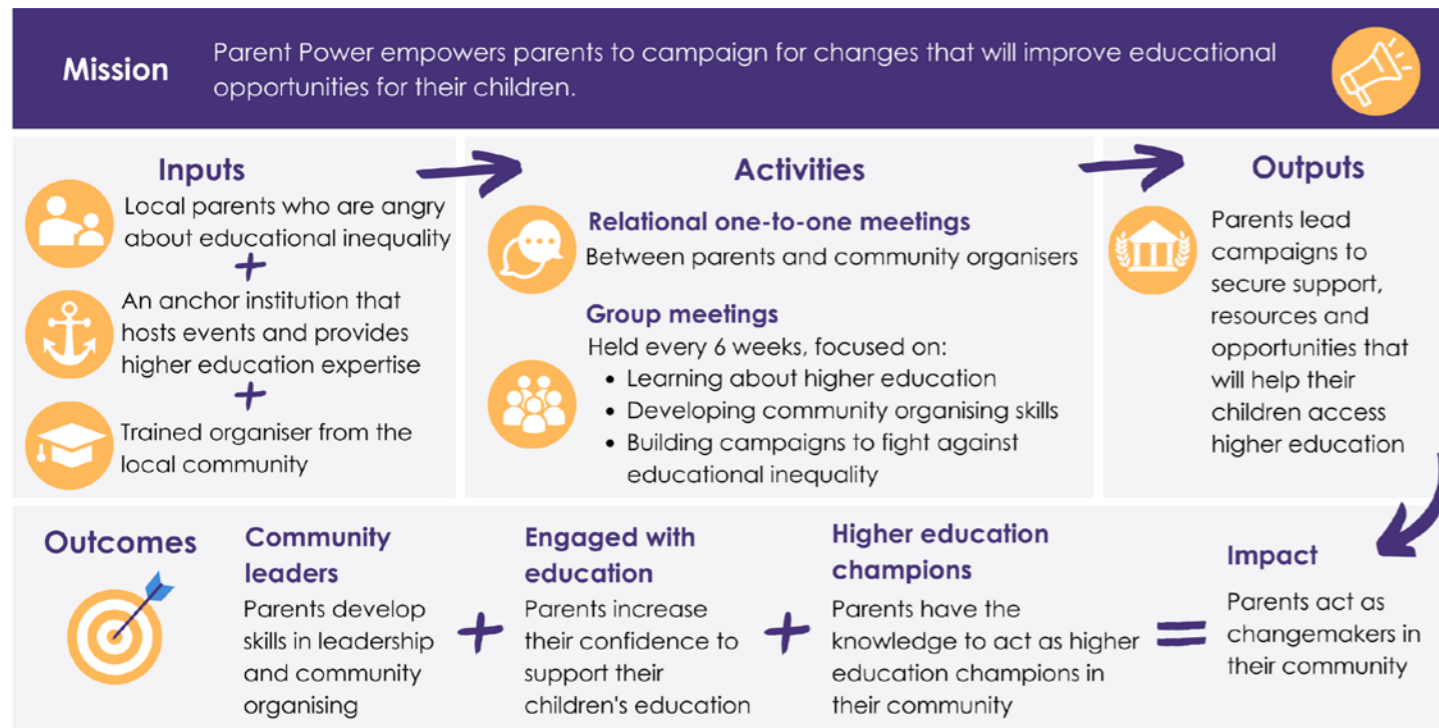
### Family Celebration Event

- We came together to celebrate the achievements of Cardiff parents/carers in 2022 and to look ahead to the change parents want to see in 2023
- Asha, one of our parent leaders, talked about her campaign to make contextual admissions information clear and transparent, and got a commitment from Cardiff University to meet with parents to discuss changes to their prospectus based on parent input
- Zara, another parent leader, explained why she was angry about potential unconscious bias in the UCAS application process, and other parents present signed her letter to UCAS asking them to clarify their processes
- Tyrese, the son of another parent leader, said "Even for me as a child - I know it's called Parent Power - but I still feel empowered."



# Impact

## Parent Power - Theory of Change



Across England and Wales, Parent Power works with...



After a trip to Trinity College, Cambridge, a Fenland parent told us that her daughter enjoyed seeing the college and that the students were...

**Just normal people like me!**

**University's never really entered my head because it doesn't 'exist' in my world. So being invited to be a part of Parent Power Fenland has opened up this subject area and now I feel I have a 'partner' in which to confidently explore this with support. I feel there is a path for us to follow now and we have been included in this 'conversation' now.**

*Parent, Fenland Parent Power*



**I feel like imposter syndrome has been zapped today, as a resident of Cardiff who's never been brave enough to step foot in the university. It was great to speak to current and former students and their experiences and ask them questions.**

*Parent, Cardiff Parent Power*

**We became a support network for each other**

*Rahiela Koser, Community Organiser, Oldham Parent power*

## Oldham Parent Power

Rahiela Koser, who has recently moved from chapter member to Community Organiser for Oldham Parent Power, believes she's in a job "created with her in mind". Rahiela was part of the initial cohort of parents when the group started in 2019 and is now working for The Brilliant Club in partnership with Trinity College, University of Cambridge and Oldham Council, to run the group of almost 20 Oldham-based parents.

"Parent Power has always had the aim of breaking down barriers to getting young people to university and empower parents with knowledge", says Rahiela. "Through Parent Power, I get to meet and talk to new people and promote education...it has also helped me find an identity of my own, and allowed me to connect with my aspirations."

Rahiela, who has completed a PGCE since she has been part of Oldham Parent Power, says much of the early work of the group centred around understanding how to apply and study at university, including student finance, with trips to universities being one of the most valuable experiences. But the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns had a big impact on the Oldham chapter.

"There was a lot of grief and anxiety in the community and our regular meetings on Zoom brought us closer together – we became a support network for each other", explains Rahiela. "We were talking about new topics too; home schooling, working online, the digital divide. Now we're moving out of the pandemic, we know we need to discuss knowledge and strategies around mental health. I am motivated to make sure everyone comes together as a community."

**100%** of parents/carers say they are able to talk to their children about higher education

**97%** of parents/carers say they are able to talk to people in their community about higher education

**94%** of parents/carers say they have gained new knowledge about higher education

**94%** of parents/carers are confident they can support their children to access university and succeed when they get there



**We mobilise our communities  
to support students who are  
less advantaged to access the  
most competitive universities  
and succeed when they  
get there**

**Join  
the  
Club**



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