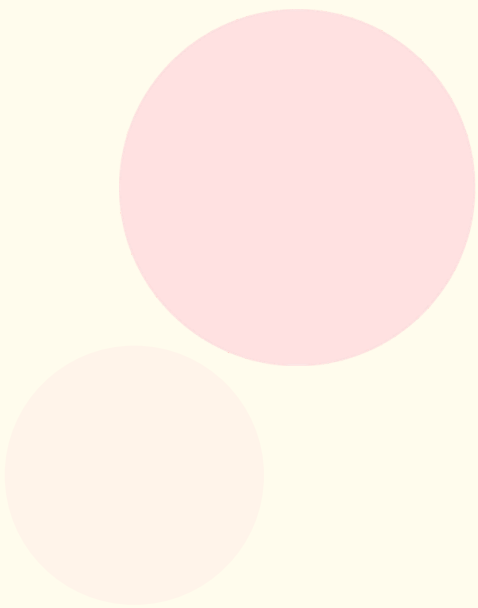


Two overlapping pink circles of different shades, with the larger one in the foreground.

STROUD MOTHERHOOD COLLECTIVE

Connection. Confidence. Community.

ANNUAL REPORT 25-26

Two overlapping pink circles of different shades, with the larger one in the foreground.

Welcome

It has been another busy, creative, and very impactful year for Stroud Motherhood Collective. In our third year, we worked alongside 272 individual women across 169 sessions, and facilitated 1,437 individual attendances across our peer support groups, wellbeing programmes and creative circles – our biggest year yet.

This report looks back on the groups we ran, the difference they made, and the year's finances. It also shines a light on a project we are especially proud of: the Birth Experience Peer Support Circle, now at the midpoint of its first full pilot year, which is producing some of the most powerful outcomes we have ever measured.

Thank you to every mother who came through our doors this year, to our facilitators, assistants and volunteers, and to everyone who has supported us with funding, venues and encouragement. This work only exists because of you.



Structure, Management, Trustees

Structure

Stroud Motherhood Collective is a Community Interest Company. Current trustees are the founders of the organisation, and Athene Greig joined as an active Director in August 2025.

Trustees: Catherine Forrester, Athene Greig, Polly Rodgers, Holly Swinbank, Freya Morgan.

Any future trustees will be recruited according to the needs of the organisation and prospective trustees' relevant skills and experience.

Day-to-day management is currently handled by Catherine Forrester on a predominantly voluntary basis, and we are seeking funding to allow us to pay her a salary for this work.

Steering Group

This year we recruited for a voluntary steering group, which brings together nine mothers with a wide range of life experiences, helping us bring greater diversity and richer perspective to our work. They have been actively involved in helping us shape our funding priorities for the year ahead and will continue to be involved in strategic decision making.

Thank you:

Jen Adams

Gemma Jerome

Ash Otesanya

Ruth Batham

Emma Dakin

Laura Leete

Millie Kidson

Kate Dufaud

Gri

Our Team

Facilitators

Hayley Coburn
Catherine Forrester
Athene Greig
Verity Goodfield
Emma Hetherington
Gillian Holmes
Tara Mexis
Oli Silverwood-Cope
Millie Kidson
Lou Kempton
Jessie Percival
Lisa Ford

Assistants

Janey Francome
Sophia Giles
Beth Marriott

Volunteers

Hollie Benneyworth
Hailey Green
Hannah Gawanda

Objectives this year

We aimed to continue running our core funded programme – the New Mothers' Wellbeing Circle, Creative Journaling Circle, Mothers' Sharing Circle and Infant Sleep Support Group – alongside a range of commercial offerings. We aimed to develop new groups where we saw both community need and business opportunity. We also developed and launched a twelve-month pilot for a birth trauma support group, and worked to secure funding to put the project on a more sustainable financial footing.

Programmes this year

In our third year we continued to run a number of weekly and monthly peer support groups, funded through a mix of grants, commercial income and donations. Feedback across all groups has remained overwhelmingly positive.

Fully funded groups

Free of charge for participants to attend

Group	Sessions	Attendees
Creative Journaling Circle	6 six-week courses	71
New Mothers' Wellbeing Circle	6 six-week courses	72
Infant Sleep Peer Support Group	13	97
Mothers' Sharing Circle	4	18
Single & Solo Mums Group	3	7
Birth Experience Peer Support Circle	18	21

The Creative Journaling Circle and New Mothers' Wellbeing Circle continue to be the core of our funded wellbeing offering and are consistently fully booked. This year several participants returned with their second babies, having attended with their first in our first year.

The Infant Sleep Peer Support Group remained popular; based on participant feedback we moved to more regular, shorter and smaller sessions this year.

The Mothers' Sharing Circle continued to see disappointing attendance despite experimenting with timings, themes and promotion, so we have paused it indefinitely.

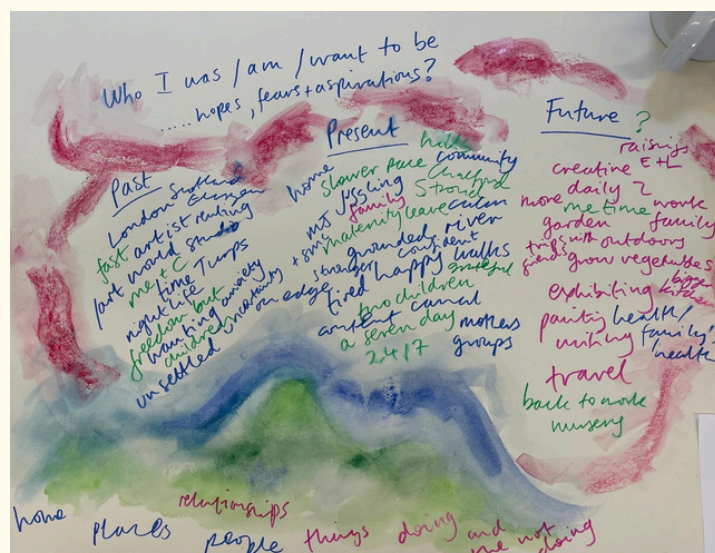
The Single & Solo Mums Group also saw low take-up as a formal drop-in so we could not continue to offer it as a facilitated session. However, the pilot prompted the formation of an active WhatsApp community that continues to support informal meet-ups and foster community in this under-supported group – and we consider this to be a success in its own right.

Commercial groups

Participants are charged on a sliding scale, with some free spaces available.

Group	Sessions	Attendances
Evening Creative Journaling Group	21	162
Mothers Yoga Circle	5	33
MotherSong Monthly	8	67
“Shape of Mum” Movement Workshops	3	23
Birth After Caesarean Circle	1	8
Stroud Birth Stories Hub	1	6

The Evening Creative Journaling Group was well received and built a loyal core group, though income was not consistent enough to keep it running; we are considering other ways to offer child-free journaling in the future. Mothers Yoga Circle and MotherSong Monthly were both well-attended and financially sustainable. The Shape of Mum movement workshops and the newly piloted Birth After Caesarean Circle were both well received in their early stages and plan to continue on an ad hoc basis, and the long-running Stroud Birth Stories Hub joined the Collective this year and will continue every two months.



By Donation Groups

Offered on a completely sliding scale, by-donation basis, made possible by crowdfunding.

Group	Sessions	Attendees / Attendances
Monthly Wellbeing Programme	9	76
New Mothers' Wellbeing Circle: Dursley	6	7

Just under 40% of the Monthly Wellbeing Programme's costs were covered by participant donations – above our goal, and a promising sign for the sustainability of this mixed-income model. We have recruited a project manager to lead this programme for the next six months, with the aim of building it into a sustainable part of our offer.

We ran one final cohort of the New Mothers' Wellbeing Circle in Dursley this year. It was well received with excellent feedback, but due to limited facilitator capacity we have redirected the remaining funds raised for this project towards the Monthly Wellbeing Programme and are delighted that we have sufficient funds to run this for at least one more calendar year – twice the length of time that we originally aimed for with our crowdfunding campaign.



What participants have told us...

"So grateful for the space to breathe and focus on the bigger picture, rather than the monotony & intensity!"

"A safely held space to be creative, rest in the company of other women, and take time for you whilst baby is cared for nearby."

"Reminded me that all of my feelings about motherhood are valid"

"It gives a bit of a breather every week. I'm always so pleased to come here."

"This series and group of mothers has felt safe, open, fair and unjudgmental, which has helped me feel less like a terrible mother."

"I find this time so therapeutic. Sharing with other mums and time to be creative. Feeling safe and not so alone recharges me for the week ahead."

"I feel so much better after each session. Having time to reflect and a bit of space to be creative means so much."

Spotlight: Birth Experience Peer Support Circle



This year we developed and began piloting a six-week course for those who have had difficult birth experiences. The pilot is going extremely well, with strong attendance and outstanding feedback. We hope to secure long-term funding for this group, and are exploring the idea of developing a training programme so that other facilitators can run similar groups elsewhere in the country.

Mid-pilot Evaluation

We have now completed three of our five planned cohorts for this year-long pilot. Following a co-creation process with the first cohort – including focus groups during and after development – we adjusted the delivery for later cohorts to make the experience more interactive, and are very happy with how the group now runs.

Each closed group of up to eight participants moves through a six-week programme (with an optional seventh session on future pregnancies), combining psychoeducation with somatic practices for grounding and regulation. Every participant is offered a 1:1 birth reflection session with Oli, an NHS midwife, yoga teacher and trainee Somatic Experiencing practitioner – repeatedly highlighted as a particularly impactful part of the course. A childcare assistant in the room means babies are welcome while mothers focus fully on the work.

Course Outline

Week 1: Introduction, group safety, and the expectations we take into birth

Week 2: Introduction to birth trauma and the neuroscience of trauma

Week 3: Nervous system states and our window of tolerance

Week 4: The relationship between physical and psychological needs and our emotions

Week 5: How consent and autonomy shape our experience of birth

Week 6: Integration, post-traumatic growth, and reflection

Optional session: Planning for future pregnancies and births

Outcomes So Far

A total of 16 women have completed the programme to date, with consistently excellent verbal and written feedback.

100% of participants reported a reduction in how much their birth trauma affects daily life (average 50% reduction in impact scores)

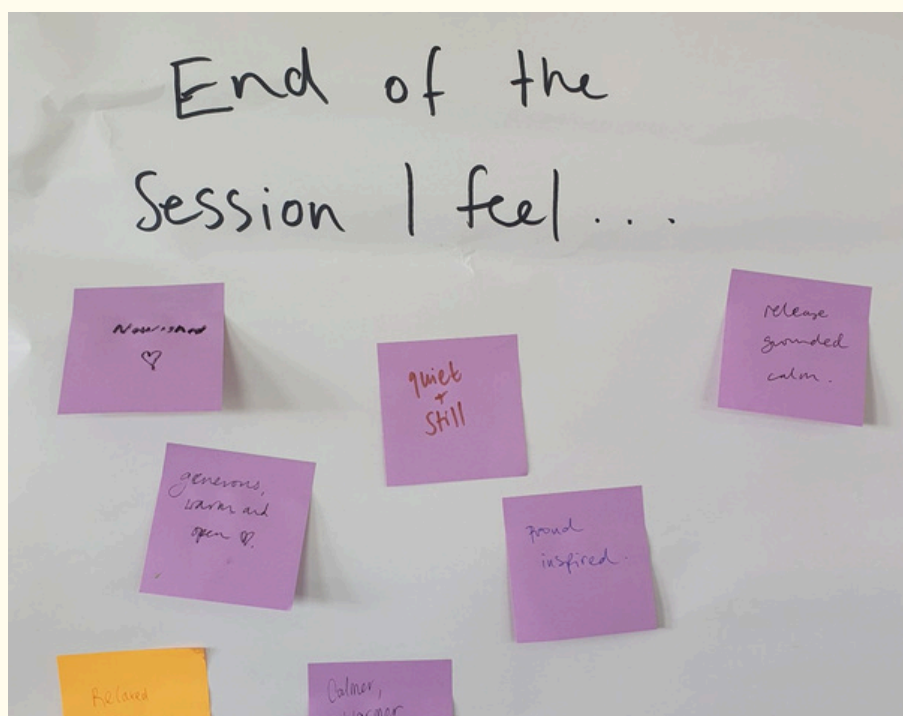
61% average drop in feelings of isolation – every participant finished the programme no longer feeling alone in their experience

65% average rise in self-compassion scores – the largest increase of any measure

39% average rise in confidence about moving forward

36% average rise in ability to talk about their birth without feeling overwhelmed

Across all five measures, no participant declined on any measure – every recorded change was either an improvement or a maintained high score.



What participants have told us...



Several themes emerged through our feedback process, highlighting the ways that the group is having an impact for participants:

Moving from isolation to connection

"Helped me further understand myself"

"Gain a sense of peace, alongside other mums"

Making sense of the body's response - not just the story

"A breakthrough for me... applying it to my births was insightful (and difficult)"

Self-compassion replacing self-blame

"I feel less self-blame for my experiences"

Reclaiming agency and control

"I no longer feel trapped in freeze or fawn mode"

Safety as the foundation for everything else

"Catherine and Oli created a safe and supported space and encouraged us to go at a pace that felt right"

Confidence about the future

"It is life changing to know you can trust your body"

Underneath these themes sits an important structural finding: several participants had either accessed no support prior to joining, or had been referred to NHS services but not yet received any. This confirms the programme is filling a genuine gap in existing service provision, rather than duplicating it.

Funders

Our work would not be possible without our generous funders. This year we are grateful to have received funding from:



Financial Overview

Income

Contracts	£23,069.21
Grants	£4,216.00
Donations	£101.40
Participant contributions	£2,940.61
Total income	£30,327.22

Outgoings

Facilitation	£23,274.23
Venue hire	£3,081.50
Refreshments	£507.00
Administration	£270.00
Clinical supervision	£210.00
Assistants	£3,374.80
Printing	£69.25
Other	£2,331.54
Total outgoings	£33,019.32

Note: £1,386 of the cost of the Monthly Wellbeing Programme came from funds raised in the previous financial year.

Corporation tax payment was higher than anticipated this year, due to funds raised in our second year carrying over into our third financial year as profit.

Contact Us



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