

# Using the New Mum Star™

The New Mum Star is designed to be used with women who need support as they prepare to be mums and after their baby is born. It is primarily designed for young, first-time mums but can be used more broadly. You will probably complete an initial Star reading – and possibly one or more reviews – with a service user when they are pregnant and continue working with them, and completing Star readings, sometimes up until the baby is two years old.

The New Mum Star resources consist of:

- The New Mum Star Chart, Notes and Action Plan
- The New Mum User Guide, with both brief visual scales and detailed scale descriptions
- An illustrated summary of the Journey of Change
- The short illustrated Scales and Flashcards for use with mums
- A web application for online completion at [www.staronline.org.uk](http://www.staronline.org.uk)
- This Guidance for Workers
- An alternative New Parent Star Chart, Notes and Action Plan, Scales and Flashcards for use with birthing parents who do not identify as a mum.

The New Mum Star was developed by Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise in collaboration with the Family Nurse Partnership. The process involved workers, managers, service users and associated professionals.

Completing the New Mum Star is intended to be a helpful, engaging and empowering process that stimulates and focuses discussion and provides a useful, shared basis for an action or support plan. It is a flexible tool that relies on the skills of the professionals using it, as well as on a degree of understanding and trust between them and the mum. The Star is designed to be used one to one; the aim is to have a genuine interaction and complete it collaboratively.

Background and further information about the Outcomes Star suite of tools can be found at [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk).

## Before you use the New Mum Star™

### Make sure that you have received training in using the New Mum Star

and that you are familiar with the materials and know when and how they are used in your service. It is vital that you understand and use the Journey of Change underlying the scales – **stuck, starting to engage, trying for yourself, finding what works** and **self-reliance**. This will ensure consistent and reliable information as a basis for support-planning and for use by your service. You also need to be familiar with all the scale descriptions, so you can unpack and rephrase them as needed.

## New Parent Star materials

We also have an adapted set of materials for the New Mum Star which are designed for birthing parents who do not identify as a mum. The New Parent Star materials are ideal to use with people who are due to give birth or who have already given birth, but do not identify as 'mum'. The adapted materials include Star Chart, Flashcards and Scales. Please note that the New Parent Star materials are not suitable to use with parents who are not the birthing parent – this is because all materials are specifically designed for use with people who are pregnant or post-partum.

## How to introduce the New Mum Star™

Before you introduce the Star to someone for the first time:

- Devise a short script to introduce the Star in a way that feels natural to you and clear for those you are working with
- If you meet with the new mums you support in groups, it can be useful and save time to explain the Star to the group before starting one-to-one work within individual sessions
- Consider giving mums who are interested a copy of the User Guide to read before the session. Although this is quite detailed and relies on someone being comfortable with reading, the whole document is worded in accessible language, so it can be shared.

When introducing the Star:

- Explain that people may start anywhere on the journey, can move both up and down on the scale and that 5 is the top of the Star scales but not the end of the journey
- Be clear that this is about establishing where they are and building up a map of their world, experiences and journey – it is not about being judged or being awarded an overall “score”
- Let the mum decide which scale to start with or choose one that is concrete and may be easier to discuss, such as the first three scales (“Life skills”, “Your health and well-being” or “Looking after your baby”).

Some suggested phrases for introducing the Star include:

*“The New Mum Star is a way of tracking your journey and finding out about your strengths and the areas where you need more information or support.”*

*“The Star tells us where you are now and what needs to happen next, and it helps you and me plan our work together.”*

## How to complete the New Mum Star™

**Complete the Star collaboratively with mums** in a way that responds to their needs and abilities.

The aim is to engage them in meaningful discussion, and to listen and learn about them, rather than to complete the Star as quickly as possible.

**Use the scale descriptors as a basis for discussion** about the chosen area, or have an open discussion about the area, and then use the scale to place the mum on the Journey of Change. The brief visual scales in the User Guide are designed to be used directly with mums. Although the detailed scales are intended primarily as a resource for workers, they are written to be accessible, so feel free to refer to specific points for clarification with mums. Avoid reading them out in their entirety because of their length.

**Always use the scales** – these are designed to reduce subjectivity, otherwise one person’s 2 could be another person’s 4 and the completed Star won’t be a useful basis for completing the action plan and your service won’t be able to treat collated Star data as reliable for reporting purposes.

**If you don’t agree, have a discussion** – this can help you learn about the mum and help her reflect on her situation and see it in new ways. If a mum is able to engage meaningfully and is at 3 or above for most of the New Mum Star areas, encourage her to take the lead in placing herself on the scales. You may need to be more directive for mums in the **starting to engage** stage. Those who are **stuck** in all or most areas will not discuss the Star meaningfully and you may need to do a worker-only reading. Encourage mums with low confidence to see their strengths, and others to be more realistic.

**If you can't reach agreement, record both views on the Star**, labelling which is your opinion and which is the mum's, using the Star Notes to record points from your discussion. Use your professional judgement to decide when further discussion is not helpful.

**When you have completed all of the scales, join the points to create a shape.** Mark each point on the Star Chart and join the points. Encourage mums to do this and to create the shape. This applies whether you and the mum are completing the Star on paper or on screen, for example using the Star Online.

**Recognise external factors.** While the Journey of Change focuses on the young mum, there may be societal factors or other conditions beyond their control – and beyond the control of your service – which make it harder for things to improve. These may include poor housing, financial difficulty or lack of suitable mental health provision or other services. These also need to be acknowledged and recorded when using the Star. Your service may then be able to use this information to identify gaps in provision, plan future developments or raise issues with policy-makers.

**If you are working with the father or other co-parent as well, complete a separate Star for them** and use it to generate actions they can take. This version of the Star is created for mothers, so you may need to verbally adjust the language in some scales to be appropriate for them.

Pages 6-8 have the responses to some Frequently Asked Questions.

## How to use the completed Star as the basis for a support plan

Look at the shape of the completed Star together and prompt the mum to reflect on it as a basis for what to do next. Ask questions such as:

- Is the shape of the Star an accurate picture of how things are for you now?
- What does it tell you about what is and is not going well?
- What are the strengths that you bring to the areas that are going well? How might you apply those strengths in other areas of your life?
- What is it most important to address first?

Once you have chosen the areas to be included in the support plan, further motivational questions for each area include:

- Where on the journey do you want to get to and by when?
- What needs to be done to bring about this change?
- Who is responsible for these actions? When can they be completed?

**Complete the New Mum Star Action Plan** or use your service's support planning documentation. The Journey of Change provides valuable pointers for thinking about the goals of support with the mum and achievable, realistic actions:

Seeing the Star visually helps me to see that I am changing, that things are happening, that there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

**Service user**

The Star is really respectful for clients.

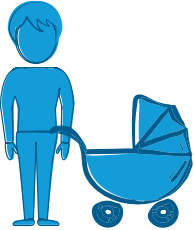
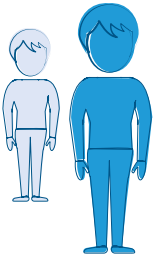
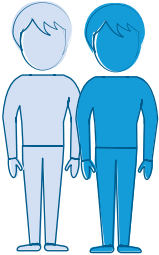
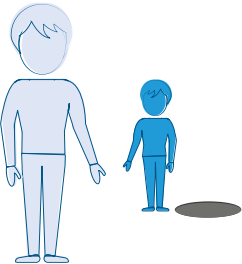

**FNP supervisor**

It helps us to have challenging conversations.

**FNP family nurse**

The Star brings everything back to the baby, so it brings real clarity to the mum.

**FNP family nurse**

Journey of Change stage	Goals of keywork
<p><b>Self-reliance (5)</b></p> 	<p>At this stage, a mum is helping her baby to thrive, looking after herself sufficiently well and no longer needs support from the service, so the main actions will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing to reinforce the learning</li> <li>• Building and reinforcing support networks outside of the service</li> <li>• Ensuring the mum knows how to spot the warning signs and seek help again if needed in the future.</li> </ul> <p>Example: if a phone call needs to be made, the mum makes it independently.</p>
<p><b>Finding what works (4)</b></p> 	<p>At this stage, a mum is finding ways to look after herself and to be a mum, and her baby is benefiting. The focus of support may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping mums to reflect on how they have overcome problems and how they can learn from this</li> <li>• Celebrating their achievements</li> <li>• Supporting them to deal with manageable difficulties themselves and offering more support through setbacks or larger difficulties.</li> </ul> <p>Example: if a phone call needs to be made, at this stage the worker may help the mum prepare for it and make sure she has all the information she needs – and be nearby if it is a difficult call – but the mum makes the call.</p>
<p><b>Trying for yourself (3)</b></p> 	<p>At this stage, a mum is trying new things for herself and may give up or struggle to keep going when these don't seem to work, so goals and actions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offering sufficient support and encouragement</li> <li>• Helping mums to identify what is working and make changes where approaches are not working</li> <li>• Helping mums to take actions themselves rather than doing it for them.</li> </ul> <p>Example: if a phone call needs to be made, at this stage the mum may make it but with the worker nearby to take over if it becomes difficult.</p>
<p><b>Starting to engage (2)</b></p> 	<p>At this stage a mum will accept some help from your service but does not take the initiative and may not believe in her ability to be a good mum. The approach may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving the situation by giving practical support</li> <li>• Setting up appointments and perhaps accompanying mums</li> <li>• Helping mums to set achievable goals with guidance on practical steps</li> <li>• Building on any signs of greater confidence and initiative.</li> </ul> <p>Example: if a phone call needs to be made, at this stage it will be made by the worker but with the mum present and giving her consent.</p>
<p><b>Stuck (1)</b></p> 	<p>At this stage, a baby is not able to develop well or is at risk and the mum may also be at risk but does not recognise the problems or willingly accept help. Actions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on safety – preventing or minimising harm</li> <li>• Providing feedback and information</li> <li>• Providing practical and proactive help, perhaps directly with the baby where needed, even where the mum is resistant</li> <li>• Developing trust and starting to build a relationship.</li> </ul> <p>Example: if a phone call needs to be made, at this stage it will be made by the worker alone.</p>