

FAMILY DAY REPORT 2025

In association with The University of Sheffield and Sheffield Children's Hospital.
Supported by the Steel Charitable Trust and the Jack Petchey Foundation, 25th October 2025



STAMINA

INTRODUCTION

Families of children who stammer often report feeling isolated, and struggle to find accessible guidance and a supportive community. Our Family Day events aim to fill this gap. It is a space where young people meet others who stammer, feel understood, and gain confidence, while parents receive expert advice and connect with other families navigating similar challenges. While we have been running in-person family events at our STAMMAFest conference for several years, this was our first time designing and running a stand-alone Family Day.



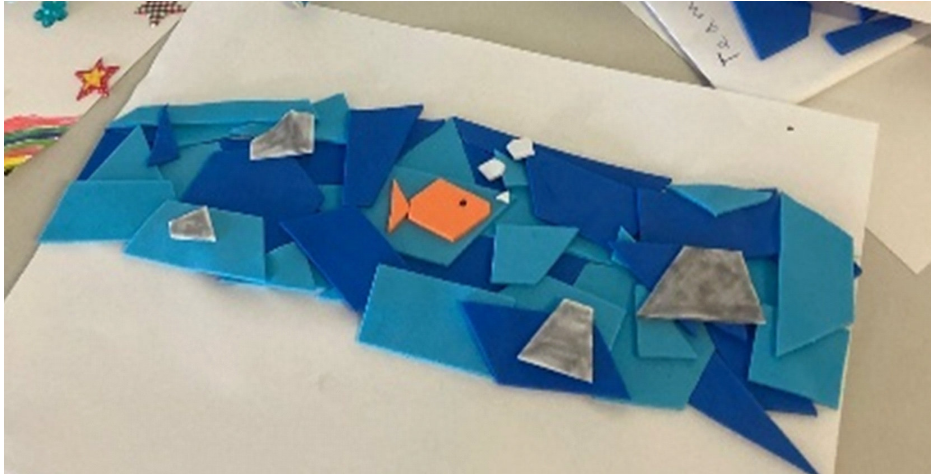
AIMS & OUTCOMES

AIMS

- **Expand Family Day to an annual event**, to reach more children and families each year.
- **Increase participation**, ensuring that families from all backgrounds and regions of the UK have the opportunity to attend.
- **Provide diverse activities** tailored to different age groups, interests, and family needs.
- **Equip parents with knowledge and strategies** to support their child's confidence and communication skills.
- **Encourage ongoing engagement**, strengthening the wider community of support for families beyond Family Day.

OUTCOMES

- **A15% increase** in attendance on 2024.
- **Higher ongoing engagement** from families with STAMMA, with increased attendance at follow-up events and workshops, e.g. STAMMA's Minecraft Club.
- **Parents reported feeling empowered** in supporting their child's communication.
- **Increase in self-esteem and confidence for children who stammer**. Children felt less anxious about stammering and more resilient to cope with challenging talking situations.



Left: Stammering Flag designed by Rodaidh, 14, who wrote on the back: "This flag is a metaphor for stammering. The fish is a person who stammers negotiating through the river of stammering with rocks representing getting stuck on words, but keeping going and trying your best regardless."

THE DAY

Attendees

There was a total of 74 attendees, with two families unable to attend on the day. Seven families came from South Yorkshire, while others travelled from Essex, Hampshire, Cambridgeshire and Glasgow.

We had children of all ages from 3 to 15, with the average age of 9 years old. Of the 37 children who attended, 65% of them stammer. Although not as high an increase as we had hoped, we were pleased with a 15% growth in attendees from 2024,

Children & Teenager Sessions

Children were divided into three groups based on their age; 3-7, 8-9 and 11-15. Sessions catered for children who stammer and siblings. Within each age group children were divided into smaller groups, each led by a Speech & Language Therapy (SLT) student. Each student remained with their group across the activities, being their point of contact throughout the day.

There were three workshops. Each was facilitated by experienced SLTs or adults who stammer: Nic Maddy, a specialist SLT from Barnsley; Bob Adams, a performance artist who stammers and founder of the Doncaster Stammering Association; and Claire Bull, specialist SLT and partner lead from Sheffield Children's Hospital.

Every child had the chance to get involved in a range of different games and activities. These included exploring the concept of stammering as a suit of armour, designing their own stammering flags and exploring their communication through movement-based circus skills games.

Parent Sessions

Parents and carers had three interactive sessions: a panel session with adults who stammer discussing their experiences, a Q&A with a specialist SLT, and time to discuss their own experiences with other parents. They explored different experiences of stammering and new ways of supporting their children. They relished the chance to ask questions not just to SLTs but to each other about how they had dealt with challenging situations and their worries about stammering.

Afternoon Session

For the final session of the day, parents and carers joined their children for joint sessions exploring stammering and what they had learned. Children and teenagers also shared what they'd created during the day.

HOW PARENTS DESCRIBED THE IMPACT OF THE DAY

HAS THE DAY CHANGED YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CHILD AND THEIR STAMMER? IF SO, HOW?

"It has made stammering an easier subject to talk about."

"I wouldn't say it's changed our relationship but the things learnt will help me when my child becomes more aware of her stammer. I should be better equipped to support her when that time comes."

"I think now she knows she isn't the only one and met a girl her age at the family day, it's helped in accepting her stammer."

"It has become more positive. Originally she hated the way she stammered and received a lot of bullying at school. This year her teacher is more understanding and she enjoys being with other children so she can be herself without feeling like she has to try and hide it."

"It's prompted some chats we've not had for a while around stammering."

"Be more open talking about it."

WHAT WERE YOUR FAMILY'S FAVOURITE EXPERIENCES OR MOMENTS?

"It was great to meet other parents and hear their experiences, especially parents with older children that had good advice."

"My daughter absolutely loved the activities over the day. I found the adults sections very informative and the talks from the panel inspiring."

"Getting to know other parents and other people's experiences. The children enjoyed flag making best."

"My daughter enjoyed all of the crafts and being with other children who stammer. As a parent I find it so useful to listen to people's experiences and support as this has helped me learn and parent in an effective way."

"Listening to adult stammerers was really interesting and informative. Kids loved all the activities and getting to mix with kids like them."

"Meeting other families."

"I think talking to other parents was very useful."

WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST TAKEAWAY FROM THE DAY?

"It was reassuring to see older children and adults that stammer living happy, successful lives."

"Listening to the panel speak gave me comfort knowing that a stammer doesn't have to hold you back. I am very optimistic about my child's future."

"The difference in people's experiences is so vast and ranging from good to not so good."

"Being around other families and the support."

"Postcode lottery of support! Importance of a mix between acceptance of stammering and support for those who stammer."

"That we're not alone and there is support out there."

"Jack got to meet other children that stammer in person."

HOW DO YOU THINK FAMILY DAY WILL AFFECT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY IN THE FUTURE?

"I hope it will become a regular event that we will attend. It has also helped my son realise he isn't the only person that stammers."

"It has helped me have more of an understanding which will prep me for the rest of my parenting journey."

"Hopefully being able to meet new people and catch up at the next one will be great for us. Knowing the support that is offered has made a massive difference."

"My daughter looks forward to family day and I look forward to listening to further experiences and research."

"Opened up conversations with us. I'll definitely be advocating more with schools re my child's stammer."

"Be more open talking about stammering with siblings."



HOW WAS IT FOR FAMILIES?

We asked families about the impact the day had on them and their children. All 12 families who completed our questionnaire gave the day a 5-star rating and said they'd be 'very likely' to recommend the event. Most enjoyed the sessions with 91% rating the activities as either 'Good' or 'Great'. In particular they loved the morning sessions with 83% rating them as 'Great'.

It's clear that attendees valued being around other families with children who stammer. 83% of respondents said that sharing their views, exploring other people's experiences and 'knowing they were not alone', was a highlight of the event.

Importantly, families told us that the day helped them start conversations with their child who stammers and their siblings.

The return of some families from the 2024 Family Day gives us the confidence to believe that these events have a significant impact for the whole family. Since attending, two families came to our parent-led peer support group, and two children have joined our Minecraft Club. One family has already booked tickets for our 2026 Family Day.

REFLECTIONS

Matthew, dad to Spencer, 6

"Definitely come to Family Day next year. You don't just get help with information, your kids can meet other kids who stammer and you can speak to other parents who are going through similar things as you. It takes a lot of weight off. It's nice to be able to talk to people that don't judge."

Rob, dad to Ella, 8

"I've barely had the chance to speak to her today! She's been off playing with the other kids all day, she's been having such a good time she hasn't needed her dad at all! As a parent it's both heart-wrenching and fulfilling when you realise your child doesn't need you because they're safe!"

Maisie, 13, Spencer's sister

"It's been really good to listen to other people who stammer, not just my brother Spencer. From today, I have learned that people's stammers are different, not everyone is the same, and that I can stand up for Spencer in the future."

Natalie, Mum to Charlotte, 11

"She used to be very sad about it, but she doesn't feel like that now, and that change came after the first Family Day on the way home she sat in the back and she went, 'I am actually really proud that I've got a stammer. I can say now that it's part of me and I'm not ashamed that it's part of me. It's just who I am'. And it was just amazing. It was so lovely to hear her say that."

Emma, mum to Marcy, 8

"It made her know she's not alone, and it was so interesting to hear other people's stories. I mean, my dad stammers so I heard stories from him which were quite miserable, whereas at the event we heard some very different stories from other people who stammer. It was nice to hear different perspectives, and, for my daughter, just knowing there are other children in the same position."



We asked families about their biggest takeaways from the day:

- 42% felt more confident knowing how to support their child.
- 25% felt more open talking about stammering with others, such as their child's school and their child's siblings.
- 25% felt more optimistic about their child's future.

Three months later, we followed up with three families. All reported that since Family Day they feel more confident correcting people who share misinformation about stammering and that they have a better understanding of their child's experience of stammering.

Since the day, one family has begun their journey with Speech and Language Therapy, while another said that the event '*alleviated worries for myself. My child accepts that she may struggle speaking fluently sometimes but that's okay as there are other children who do too.*'

Rachael, mum to Ismail, 7

Wrote post event:

"It made a big difference. We were very close to not coming because we just were a bit apprehensive. ..But he really loved it and so did his brother. From our point of view, it put a lot of anxiety to bed because it was all new to us. We'd been speaking to GPs, trying to get help for my son. And we just keep reading on NHS websites: 'early intervention, early intervention is key.' So, we were rushing around frantically trying to get this magic early intervention. And of course, that's not a thing with the NHS waiting lists at 12, 18 months where we are.

Whereas speaking to some of the professionals at Family Day and also the parents and some of the older kids, it didn't seem like it really was the most important thing. It was more about building the confidence in the child rather than getting treatment, which is what I think the NHS websites kind of lead you to believe, you're waiting for with this early intervention. So, it took a lot of anxiety away for us as parents.

We weren't sure how to bring it up to his brother, he is only four years old, and he was starting to mimic him a little bit, just repeating, because he just didn't know. Whereas now I think he just accepts that some people stammer and it's okay.

Before Family Day there was a lot of outbursts, there was a lot of upset, crying. We've had absolutely none of it. We've not had a single day where he's been upset about his stammer. We have engaged with a speech therapist, and he's just said, no, it doesn't bother me. So, we've not been seeing her because it's not frustrating in the same way. And I think even the way the stammer presents, it's just there, but it's not making him angry. It's not frustrating him. It's just there. And his confidence has grown massively in school as well.

It was pretty much after that family day because nothing else changed other than that. He really, really loved it. They both loved it. They've been asking me for months, when's the next one?"



VOLUNTEER SLT STUDENTS

As part of our collaboration with the University of Sheffield, we worked with 10 Speech & Language Therapy (SLT) students training at the university. Many do not get the opportunity to interact with people who stammer on their course, and graduate without experience in this area, as one of our SLT students reported:

"Despite being in my final year as an SLT student, I had yet to gain any experience interacting with or providing support for people who stammer, yet I know this may be a significant proportion of my caseload in the future."

Our aim was to give these students that experience and to foster an interest in working with children who stammer. We wanted to give them



an insight into the needs of children and their families so they'll be better equipped in the future.

Feedback from has been very positive, with students rating the event 4.9 out of 5 for volunteer experience.

We will run a follow up session with the SLT students to find out what they learnt from the experience and how they plan to take these skills into practice when working with people who stammer.

"I loved every moment! Everything was so well organised and I felt really supported by the staff running the event."

I learnt so many invaluable skills that I would never have been able to learn on placement, particularly having the chance to interact with so many different children who stammer in a fun and friendly environment that they felt comfortable in, not like in a clinic during placement."

Also being able to see how stammering can impact a family dynamic was really interesting and something I always consider in my clinical work."



THE FUTURE

This event has shown us that, with support and assistance from local partners, we can run a successful day for families of children who stammer outside of our bi-annual conferences. We want to continue to run these days as part of STAMMAFest, but also to take this format and use it to run separate events every other year.

We took away these learnings:

- Families would benefit from an earlier finish time, especially those travelling from afar, and with younger children.
- Advertising over the holidays was challenging, so we will explore different times of the year to hold Family Day.

Long term, we would like to work with universities that offer Speech & Language Therapy courses so that Family Day could be incorporated into their courses as an official placement. This would mean that students would gain valuable insight and experience and placement hours from being part of the event, and we could involve them in more of the event's design. At present there are 24 universities across the UK which offer speech & language therapy courses. Alternating between these would allow us to hold events up and down the UK, making them more accessible for families.



THANK YOU

Thank you to the **Steel Charitable Trust** and the **Jack Petchey Foundation** for your support for this initiative.

Your contribution has impacted the lives of children and teenagers who stammer and their families. Family Day has empowered children who stammer and their parents and siblings, and will do for many years to come, to know they aren't alone, to feel normal, to feel confident to talk about stammering, to feel there is a future. Through our work with The University of Sheffield, we also inspired some of the next generation of Speech & Language Therapists to feel confident working with children who stammer, and understand more about the experiences of them and their families.

Family Day 2025 would not have been possible without the support of the Steel Charitable Trust and the Jack Petchey Foundation.

We also have to thank our lead volunteer organisers: Claire Bull and Lucy Dyson, and our brilliant volunteers: Beth Martin, Bethany Howell, Bob Adams, Dave Nash, Dean Ridge, Ella Cook, Emma Pieters, Heidi Degenhardt, Jen Ryder, Jenny Packer, Lydia Thompson, Mia Toulson, Mollie Richardson, Molly Drury, Nell Hallam, Nic Maddy, Susie Lloyd, Thomas Nash and Tom Farrow.

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