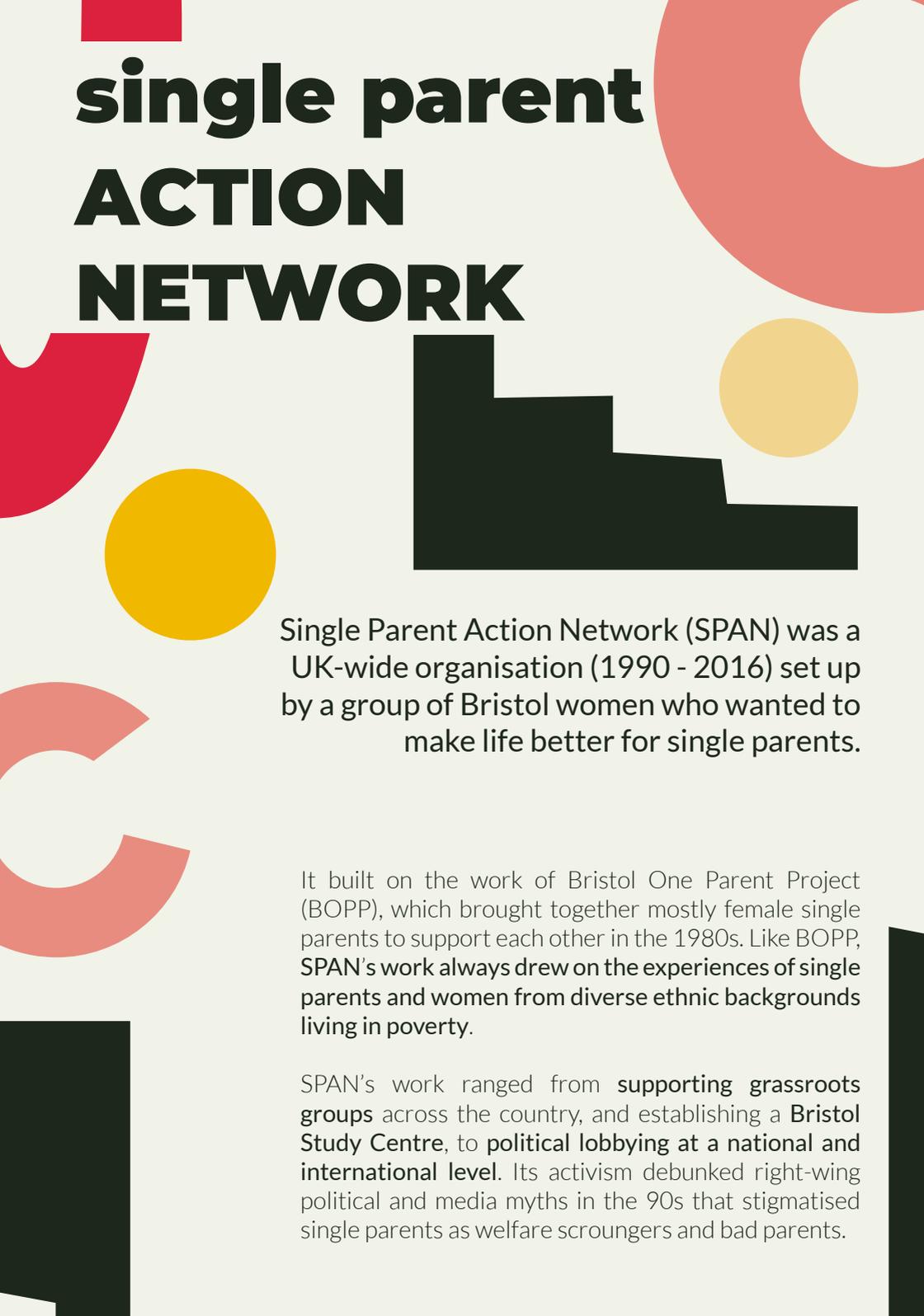


THE SPAN

A Hands on History Project



www.thespanproject.org.uk

A decorative graphic featuring various geometric shapes in red, yellow, and black. There are several large, overlapping shapes: a red square at the top left, a large red circle on the right, a yellow circle in the middle left, a black stepped shape in the middle right, and a large red shape on the left side. The background is white.

single parent ACTION NETWORK

Single Parent Action Network (SPAN) was a UK-wide organisation (1990 - 2016) set up by a group of Bristol women who wanted to make life better for single parents.

It built on the work of Bristol One Parent Project (BOPP), which brought together mostly female single parents to support each other in the 1980s. Like BOPP, SPAN's work always drew on the experiences of single parents and women from diverse ethnic backgrounds living in poverty.

SPAN's work ranged from **supporting grassroots groups** across the country, and establishing a **Bristol Study Centre**, to **political lobbying at a national and international level**. Its activism debunked right-wing political and media myths in the 90s that stigmatised single parents as welfare scroungers and bad parents.

about our PROJECT

SPAN: A Hands-On History Project is a participatory research project that involves members of the public in **co-producing historical research**. It is a **collaboration between Wellspring Settlement** (formerly Barton Hill Settlement), **the Feminist Archive South**, and **the University of Bristol**, and is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

We believe it is important to bring new voices into the discussion of the past. This seems very important when writing the history of an organisation like SPAN and its many working-class and black activists, which put the experience of single parents at the heart of its work.

From April 2019 to March 2020, a History Group has met weekly at Wellspring Settlement. Since April 2020, due to the Coronavirus, the group has been meeting online. **Our researchers are mothers, single parents, volunteers, campaigners, activists, business owners, graduates, artists and more.** We have been learning about research, looking at the SPAN archive, interviewing people who were there, and planning how to tell the story of SPAN.

our research QUESTION

We want to find out the impact of SPAN and explore its story by looking at how it supported single parents, its culture, and the political and social context.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

We have commissioned the artist **Carrie Reichardt** to design a piece of **public art** featuring archive documents

We have designed a range of **limited-edition mugs**, drawing on the SPAN archive

We have made a **short film** with **Calling The Shots**, reflecting on the history of SPAN

Lorna Henry has been helping us evaluate and learn from the project. Her **Evaluation Report** will be available on our website in early 2021

The **SPAN archive** has been catalogued and will be accessible to researchers in the Feminist Archive South, in the University of Bristol's Special Collections

We have **interviewed 30 former SPAN workers, volunteers and service users**, and their stories are available in the SPAN archive

We have spoken about our research at the **Modern British Studies Conference** in July 2019

We are also working on a number of **academic publications**, which will appear soon and will be available via our website

single parents TODAY

Single parent families
make up

22.7%

of all family units in the UK

of
single
parent house-
holds are headed
by a single
mother

90%

39

The average age of a single
parent

Changes to the benefit system since 2010 have most impacted single
parent households.

45%

of single
parents were
in work

1997

69%

of single
parents were
in work

2017

Single parents were
expected to look for work
when their youngest child
was:



2008



2017

Single parent
households are
more likely to
be in low paid
work and to
be affected by
rising housing
costs in the
private rental
sector.

of all
households
affected by the
benefit cap were
headed by single
parents

71%

Aug, 2017

Single parents have the highest poverty
rate among working age households.

of
single
parent
households
were living in
poverty

47%

2016

of
single parent
households will
be below the
poverty line

63%

by 2022

Sources:

<https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/what-we-do/media-centre/single-parents-facts-figures/>
<https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/One-in-four-a-profile-of-single-parents-in-the-UK-compressed.pdf>

the project

TEAM

THE HISTORY GROUP: Jenny Barke, Senior Research Associate
Yvonne Deeney, Researcher
Sharon Evans, Researcher
Rifat (Roofi) Hamid, Researcher
Muna Hussein, Researcher
Jude Hutchen, Community Worker
Amber James, Researcher
Josie McLellan, Project Lead
Yanhong/Margaret Nie, Researcher
Amal Omer, Researcher
Bianca Ramshaw, Researcher
Jendaye Selassie, Researcher
Jess Wheeler, Researcher
Becky Whitmore, Researcher

EVALUATION TEAM: Tim Cole, Co-Investigator
Lorna Henry, Project Evaluator

ARCHIVE TEAM: Vivian Latinwo-Oladije, Archival Fellow
Ellie Pridgeon, Consultant Archivist

STEERING GROUP: Nicole Andrieu, Project Administrator
Sue Cohen, Community Consultant
Catherine Lecoite, Chair of Management Board
Annie Oliver, Community Inclusion Manager

Thank you to everybody who has been interviewed and supported the research.

